



## Lessons from a day in Washington

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The day starts with looking at the clear sky. It is the privilege of technology that enables me to look at the weather forecast for the entire day and how should I take precaution when I came back from my work. Needless to say that the predictions are 95% accurate. So just the other day, when meteorologists predict that it will snow at a record of two-three feet high, which happened actually, immediately I realized that office is closed for the day. In general, people call the office days as business day. So for our school, I shall call Monday to Saturday as business days.

There are multiple ways to communicate to home to office, but the ideal and the most common way is to drive to office. In my childhood, I took various way to commute to school. I took help of school bus, rickshaw, bicycle ( in America you call it bike) or even on foot for a brief period of time ! Here we measure the distance in mile. So one mile is equal to 1.6 km. So if I say I have to go office which is located 10 miles from my home, that means I need to drive 16 km which one fourth distance from Rest Camp Kalibari (the famous Durga Puja venue in Pandu-Maligaon region) and Kamakhya Vidyalaya. The traffic heavy during office hours and often I face with traffic jam. Well we blame India for a jam but I bet nowhere in the world is jam free. The difference is how the jam is handled. Here in America, firstly, no one blows the horn of the car when in jam. Secondly, Everybody co-ordinates with each other without the help of traffic police to get pass the jam. No one violates traffic lane and people always stay between the traffic lanes. It is same as students marching in a line towards their respective classes after the Morning Prayer.

The office work is, as usual, hectic and delivery oriented. The fun part of it is you get to know lots of people who come across the world. In America, you have the greatest opportunity to learn different cultures and adopt the best part of it. One example is the Jews, the resident of Israel. They are down to earth people, can work a lot and have an eager tendency of learning and mixing with people. They can well adopt our Indian culture and even ready to have Indian spiced food. They are so fond of fish that sometimes I find similarity with Bengali food habits. The brainiest people on earth thinks that their main reason to be brainy is discipline, good attitude and good food including lots of vegetables and fish.



Coming back to office, as I said the work is delivery oriented, that means, you are assigned work that needs to be completed within stipulated timeframe. If you finish earlier, you are allowed to enjoy the remaining time. Else, you should have sufficient reason to explain why it is not completed and what is additional time that is required to complete the same. Sometimes, when I had to stay back in office late hours, I thought of how sweet were the school schedule from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. only. At that times, I used to hate the ninth period that was from 4-4:30 P.M. Now if I could go back to the school, I would love to do the ninth period everyday. Coming back to office, the lesson that we learn everyday is in office, you have more mental work than physical. Secondly, everyone needs to know the art of time and work management without which America won't have progressed so far in just 60 years. This work does not only apply to office work but also in every sphere of life.

Coming back to home from office is a great pleasure. The experience is somewhat similar to "school chuti". Winter here is terrible and it is not advisable to do any outdoor activities in sub-zero temperature (below zero degree centigrade). So the options is to stay indoor and do activities like play indoor games, computer games, study etc. etc. Summer is very nice here. As this country belongs to western hemisphere, hence the sun sets at 9 PM everyday. Sounds interesting isn't it. From March to mid November the sun rises at 5 AM and sets at 9 PM. The more sunshine brings life and happiness to the people staying out in USA. One can see lots of Americans of different ages on the road or fields with activities like jogging or exercising or playing their favorite games like football, basketball, and lawn tennis. We also extend our hand in their games after our office work. In short, summer is the best time that people can go out and do outdoor activities.

Apart from regular working days, here we have weekends (Saturday and Sunday) and holidays. Holidays are great time to enjoy. There are 7 national holidays, which is termed as long weekends. Long weekend is a term used in Western countries to denote a weekend that is at least three days long (a three-day weekend), due to a holiday falling on either the Friday or Monday. It is during this timeframe that many of us go out for distant places to have holiday. You will remember as going to Darjeeling, Shillong or other places during summer vacation.

There is a large Indian population in America. These people comprise of from east to west and from north to south. Despite some cultural differences, when you go out in the streets, you see lots of Indian people. The feeling is like you are staying in India and not in America. The Indians, as generous as they are, mix with one another and form a community within themselves. So there is no better place than here to get a integrated view of India.



role of my life fairly and with sincerity. I Still fondly remember my first dear teacher, Shaptaparna Miss of Class KG who had an adorable way of making us learn which was good enough to make soft impression on small minds. There was Maitree Ma'm (who was our class teacher in class V) whose moral lessons helped me develop my ethics and moral values. Even now I take recourse to all her words whenever I want to advise my students. And then how can I forget a teacher like Mrs. Lily Shome - so strict, so rigid, yet so motherly ! Her sense of discipline and passion for making us learn was amazing. The interesting fact of our time was that the teacher was not only strict but very concerned and loving. I, along with my brother enjoyed many such cuddles and were much pampered by many teachers, like Tapash Sir, Biraj Sir, Shuvam Sir and many others !

Teaching, I believe, even then was not directly related to material gains and commercialized tuitions. The teachers never faltered from rendering more than their due to students. It was during our School final that many teachers showed their real concern for students and the debt that I owe to many, can never be paid off. For example teachers like Kamakhya Sir helped me in papers like Social Studies at his home gratis ! Our very dear Jyotsna Baideu took all possible pains for students like me so that I could secure letter marks in Assamese<sup>4</sup>. What more, our Goswami Sir, the present Headmaster, although taught us Science and Mathematics, didn't hesitate to devote his valuable time and prepare some poetic notes on Bengali Lessons when I requested for the same.

In short, their roles in our lives were immeasurable. They were teachers par- excellence. But gone are those days of love, learning and good lessons. The present plight of our school pains the heart - it has fallen into the abyss of gloom and misfortune. It seems the very co-ordination of the teacher and the student is lost now. The students are lost in the labyrinth of misdeeds and lack moral conscience. Sticking myself to conservative view, I firmly believe that no amount of formal education will be helpful unless the students respect their teachers and teachers love their students. The vogue of English Medium Schools has considerable snatched away the lot of Vernacular Medium Schools. But dynamic teachers with impressive personality can undoubtedly play a good role in moulding the standard of existing students. After all, all that a school does is not only bringing out the I.Q. and a relative good result of the students, but also can infuse some ethics and make him to know how responsible he is as a social being.

As an ex-student of the golden era of the School, I ardently plead for some changes of the scenario of the school. I also eagerly pray for a time to come when we will once again feel proud to see our School rising up in the past glory and glittering in the crowd of institutions.