

### Appendix 3

#### A Snapshot of Child -9(Sarla)

*Please note this character sketch was done, in June 2002, before I named the children (cf. Chapter 2 – p.34). Hence I have referred to them as Child 1 or C1, Child 2 or C2 and so forth, as that was the practice I followed while writing data up till June 2003.*



**Drawing of Child 9 –Sarla done by Samir in April 2003**

Picture a happy, bubbly girl with a huge smile on her face. Think of a jumpy puppy dancing around you, moving in rings around you or going away for a short time but the minute someone comes near you always coming back to take her place. At all times

first to take her place next to you. Someone who happily holds your hands and you feel the warmth coming through. Her hair is always partly tied back, the front part is and the rest left loose. As if she is finding a middle path, a compromise, between a school rule that asks girls to tie their hair and the fashion statement which suggests that smart girls leave their hair loose.

Journal Class 4 -2.2.2002

- She is dyslexic, with short-memory problem.
- Cannot complete a sentence without help, She even speaks in incomplete sentences. “I always do only.” She said when I asked her if she would try to remember something
- Has a mild speech problem (cannot say ‘sh’ and ‘rr’).
- Does not do well in school and
- Has a concentration problem.

Her mother is very worried about her school marks. She attends remedial classes in school. Her class teacher revealed that the ‘buddy system’ works well with her. The teacher observed that she picked up concepts in math easier through her ‘buddy’.

She often wears ‘coloured’ clothes for my class even though the school rule states that all children should wear the uniform. I asked her mother about that and her mother said that the children should be allowed to wear ‘normal’ clothes on Saturday, the day of the drama class, as everyone in the building ask questions about the child going to school on holidays. Her mother is very glad that her child comes for these classes; however, she is at the same time embarrassed that the child needs extra help. This embarrassment reflects in the child attitude too. The reply I got from C9 as an excuse for not wearing her uniform was: “Miss, Saturday no one should wear uniform.”

There is a lot of discrepancy in what she actually is and what everyone around her reveal about her. Sometimes I am surprised they do not see it and I can. I appreciate that the teacher with her 50 class students does not have time or the energy to see each child as an individual. However, what about the SENCO who met her in a one-to-one and what about her parents?

### **Lack of confidence**

She has a tendency to cling and that was the first indication of her lack of confidence that I noticed. She is the one child who always has to stand near me; there is no way she will give up that place to any one. No amount of persuading could make her change that place. Ultimately after a few classes I gave up, I let her stand near me if that is what made her comfortable.

There are other signs too, some that upset, worried and embarrassed her mother.

- She is very childish and does not behave like children her age do. She lacks the maturity of a normal ten year old.
- Her friends are younger than her as she cannot communicate with children in her age group.
- She is not well behaved in public places; she behaves very childishly in restaurants. Her cousins of the same age behave fine.

- from 1<sup>st</sup> Parent Interview

I noticed that sometimes C-9 does behave childishly, however not always. I believe this kind of behaviour was manifested because of her lack of self-confidence. However, in a class of only ten children, all within her age group, her behaviour is normal. Her drama class friends treat her just the way they treat the others. It must be observed that in my class there is no competition and this is one of the reasons she enjoys coming. She does not have to put on a mask and hide behind it.

Her lack of confidence was evident from her behaviour in the class. For example when I asked them to do the work sheets C-9 was the only one to ask for an eraser even before they had started writing.

Swaroop:           Who needs the rubber before we start?

C9, why do you need a rubber? It's called an eraser, why do you need an eraser?

C9:                   I think.

Swaroop: Why do you think? Why do you think beta [child]? Why do you need it even before you start? First you have to write something, only then you can erase. Why do you think of erasing something before you start?

C9: Because it can be when you will not give (*laughing nervously*).

Swaroop: Because you may not give it when I need it. (*Saying the sentence for her so she can hear the correct sentence*)

But you must have the confidence to not to want to erase.

C9 it does not matter if you do not have it, we shall slowly build it up.

What do you say?

C9: (*Smiles*)

Swaroop: (*remembering that they will soon be using fountain pens in school*) What will you do when we write with a pen.

C9: Cut it, cut it. [strike it]

Transcript: Class-42.2.2002

C9: Yes ! I do not like, 'I like my teacher because...'

Swaroop: You do not like your teacher at all is that way?

C9: No

Swaroop: Then?

C9: I do not like to write only.

Swaroop: Oh, you do not like do write. If I wrote for you, would you like it?

C9: Yes.

Transcript: Class-42.2.2002

Mother told me in our second meeting (April 2002) at the end of Cycle 1.

Mother: One thing I realized just two days back. It [her confidence] was not there. I now realized that..... I was...shocked when I got her exam paper...and she didn't ever...which was ten simple sentences or fifteen simple

sentences several questions were direct, which so each and every answer is different but because of her inconfidence (sic) [lack of confidence] or whatever you feel, she didn't have confidence in reading... so she didn't attempt them, the question... as the teacher didn't read it out to her. In English she ... she attempted the comprehension and Hindi she didn't.

Transcript: 2<sup>nd</sup> Parent Interview

Her parents realise she has a reading and writing problem. However, they do not know how to handle that. Her mother does realise her confidence needs to be built up, however, her father is always discouraging her. Her father (1<sup>st</sup> Parent Interview) told me that he is very proud of his son; '*man of few words*' he calls his son, like himself. When her mother came to fetch C-9 after Class1-5.1.2002, she requested me to meet the father alone and convince him not to say thing that could lower C-9's self esteem. He seemed to be '*putting C-9 down*' all the time. The mother did not approve of his behaviour but could not do much about it.

In the 2nd Parent Interview I learnt:

Mother: ...then a bit confidence just comes. If we discourage her then she really goes into her shell.

Swaroop: Yes.

Mother: And yes, father is also discouraging like ....*(and starts laughing)*.

Father: Because she never studies.

Swaroop: Yes...?

Father: What I say; do one thing at a time, if you want to study. Study properly or do not study.

Transcript: 2nd Parent Interview

### **Competitiveness disorder**

The SENCO's opinion was that C-9 was shy and quiet in a group though not in a one-to-one. She had difficulty in mixing with children, and preferred to be alone. She does not interact well in a group situation. She was therefore very comfortable in the drama class

which had only ten students. When I had asked them during reflection time why they were comfortable in my class she said, “Because there are less students.”

In the Class 2 -19.1.2002, we were playing the rhyming game. Which was very simple and yet I had to give C1 an option of doing it last, as he is too much of an introvert to start a game or be first, she too wanted to take that option.

Swaroop: ... C1 found it a little difficult. We'll start and we'll give C1 the turn last, So that, by that time he can get geared up. What do you say?

C9: I want to be last.

Transcript Class-2 19.1.2002

She compensate for her lack of self-esteem sometimes by speaking just for the sake of speaking, as if she has to respond even if she does not know the answer.

C9: Little different, we have to do

Swaroop: Little different, why? (*I am not surprised she spoke, but sometimes she speaks without really understanding, just for the sake of speaking.*)

C9: This is not good little.

Swaroop: Little? (*not understanding*) You do not like to talk so much? Or you do not like to listen too much? Please explain what you are trying to tell me..

C9: No, catch, catch why will we tell where we like? (???)

Transcript Class-2 19.1.2002

### **Teasing/bullying**

She probably has an unhappy relationship with her class friends during school hours and their behaviour towards her because of:

- her school marks;
- her childish behaviour.

As I remember I had to take C5, C4 and C9 out of their free/reading time at the end of term to complete the 1st Self Assessment sheets. As I was standing nearby when C-9 returned to her table I noticed some boys asking her, who I was and what she did, in a sort of teasing manner. She was very embarrassed and did not reply. So I asked her to tell them I was her teacher and we did an extra-special class together with only the very special children [using ‘special’ is becoming tricky! However, in India it still means special, such

as- unique and extraordinary or out of the ordinary]. And she did say that. What a relieved expression she had on her face when her classmates looked at her with envy.

Her mother said she only plays with children younger than her, and yet C9 said in her work sheet that she does not have many friends, only 5. This suggests that she would like more children to be her friends.

Another person who puts her down besides her father is her brother. In her sheet on

Children's Work sheet-My Brother-( as she dictated)

I like to help my brother because- he gets good marks.90-up [90 % and above]  
I tell everybody I'm proud of him. My  
mother says[to him] why you not proud of  
her?

She does whatever she can for him

I help my brother by doing- whatever he tells I get [his] books or a glass  
of water.

### **Communication**

Her language development is weak and tends to speak in short sentences, which sometimes do not mean much. Grammatically her sentences are incorrect but one must understand that even though she studies in an English medium school her mother tongue is Gujarati. Once in 'Continuing the Story..' session she wanted to say 'Twinkle Twinkle little star..(?) or like the sentence uttered above (p.6) 'No, catch, catch why will we tell where we like?'

I comprehend no communication problem in her relationship especially with her parents.

Swaroop: We go home and tell our daddy mummy do not we? What we did in our class.

C9: Because, they are mummy and daddy. (*I have noticed all the children have a very positive relationship with their parents.*)

Only do her parents 'listen' to her?

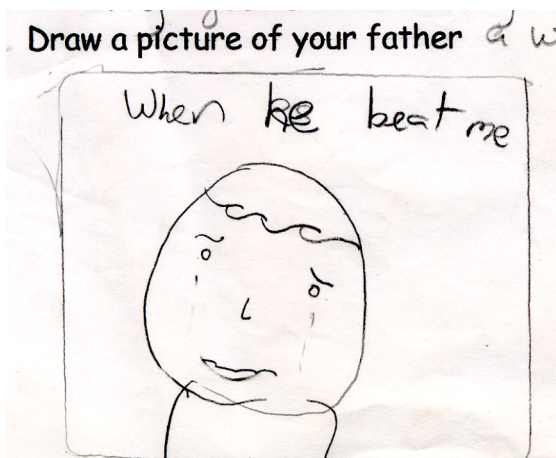
Mother: I should have patience to hear (*and laughs*) and her father is always busy.

Transcript: 2<sup>nd</sup> Parent Interview

I believe she can communicate her thoughts and ideas and desires to do so too, however, her parents seem to have little time for her. I also learnt she has a fine relationship with her paternal uncle, who seems to be interested in all the girl does and encourages her.

She could express her self well in all the work sheets and in the Self Assessment sheets (Appendix.9) completed in the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> term. C-9 was the only child to ask for the option of using ‘sometimes’ in the Self Assessment sheets, even though in the sheets I had asked for only negative or positive answers. This is because she felt, for examples, she could sometimes express an idea...but not always

In the worksheets she could communicate her feelings effectively in her drawing.



**From Worksheet-My Father**

Importantly she could communicate her thoughts in words too.

Children's Worksheet-

My Mother

I wish my mother would -be kind always give me Rs.10. If my mother gives everything what will I miss?

My Father-


I can talk to my father- ( answered in positive however she added..) Sometimes not



when he is angry  
I wish my father would- Never shout. I don't want anything from them they give me everything. I don't have words to tell I want this and that.

**Violence**

Her brother beats her, however I believe they were normal sibling fights  
In My Brother- work sheet she wrote:



I do not like it when he- Beats me  
I like it when he-I like everything...I do not mind his beating

She does not like it when her teacher shouts at her; otherwise she receives no harsh treatment from her teacher.

Teacher's Multiple-Choice Questionnaire January 2002  
[Teacher's answer in bold font]  
Classroom timid / lethargic/ **well behaved** /Does not misbehave  
Behaviour openly misbehaves when the teacher is busy /troublesome  
/talks out of turn/ **Does not to get in the teacher's way.**

She is good at drawing and likes to draw; however in the first work sheet she would not draw. It was only when she realised that everyone was having a good time drawing did she also draw. When she got down to drawing she did two figures of her 'teacher', nicely coloured.



She seems to like dancing. Her 'statues are always in a dance pose, and she even mentioned we "should have dancing in our drama class."