

Appendix 4

A Snapshot of Child -4 (Lali)

Please note this character sketch was done, in June 2002, before I named the children (cf. Chapter 2 –37). 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 Lali done by Sarla in October 2003

Though I had met her just once before I described her as: quiet, intelligent, calm, friendly and quick on the uptake (Journal: Class-3-26.1.02). She is always neatly dressed; hair oiled and tied up. Sensitive, soft-spoken, well mannered, mature, dependable are the other words that come to my mind when I think of her. A lovely child to have in ones class as she is well behaved, attentive, ready to do things and does not go out of control.

Ours is a relationship has grown in leaps and bounds since the first class she attended. She joined the drama class in the second session as she was unwell and did not attend the first class. She had no trouble mixing in with the rest. She is extremely behaved and did not complain when I had missed her when I was serving snacks in the fourth class. Actually I missed her because she was in the back and her more boisterous friends in the front took all my attention. As I write this I can still see her looking at me with doe eyes

and a slight hurt expression standing quietly behind the more noisy children clamouring for my attention.

Swaroop: A Jam Sandwich....I'm sorry, I didn't see you beta [child](*addressing C-4*).

You should have told me, 'Miss, you missed me'.

My reflections-in-action during the class were:

What a well-behaved child! In the crowd I completely missed her. She is too polite to even ask for a sandwich. I felt awful for having missed her. I can see her ...There is a table and a picnic basket...plenty of food on the table. I am trying my best to hurry up and serve the snacks. Children have crowded the table. Children like C2, C9 and C7 are demanding my attention, not aggressively but at the same time quite forcefully. There is another layer of children behind the demanding ones and behind them is C4 moving quietly in the back. Her eyes were on me all the time, which is how she caught my attention. Big, expressive, innocent eyes. She in some ways reminded me of a deer, walking up and down quietly, looking at you all the time trying to tell you some thing..... I wish I could read her mind....

Journal Class-4 2.2.2002

Also see 'The miracle of relationships' Chapter 5, p. 115.

The SENCO reports that she has mild general learning disabilities (MLD). Weak at written work, for example spells 'notie' for 'naughty' and 'twrrobel' for 'trouble'.

Lack of Confidence

Her mother feels that she is very insecure as she clings to her all the time. She told me in the first parent interview that C-4 does not leave her for a minute once she comes home. Her mother said that '*C-4 constantly holds my pallo [end of sari], even while watching TV. The minute I leave the room she leaves it with me. Sometimes she won't even let me get up to do the housework.*'

Mother-1st Parent Interview

When I met her mother again at the end of the 1st term in April 02, I wanted to confirm what she had said in the 1st interview.

Swaroop: You said that even while sitting and watching TV she holds your pallo and doesn't leave it. Correct?

Mother: Correct

Swaroop: Do you feel that it's due to insecurity?

Mother : Yes....*(and giggles)*

Swaroop: Or is it because she loves you a lot?

Mother: No, because of insecurity.

Transcript: 2nd Parent's Interview

Her class teacher said she only talks to the teacher when she is alone with the teacher.

Even I have noticed that she comes and stands near me when she wants to say something that she feels is very important but only speaks when we are alone. In the drama class she moves around quiet freely, and sits with all the other children during tea-time and also while doing the work sheets.

However I perceive that she has a 'special' relationship with her mother.

Children's work sheet- My Mother

I feel sad when my mother----Cries

I wish my mother would---- be my best friend or teacher.

She feels her father makes her mother work too much and that he 'troubles' both her mother and her.

Children's work sheet – My Father

I get angry when my father—twrrobels (sic) me

I feel sad when my father --- twrrobels my mother

She had drawn stick figures whereas at her age she should have been progressed developmentally to draw two-dimensional arms and legs in correct proportions (cf. Lowenfeld, 1945); this suggests she has a low concept and low self-esteem. Another interesting detail I noticed was all the figures in her drawings looked like feminine figures even when they represented males. I believe this suggests that she identifies greatly with her mother.

(Note: peer debriefing (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and outcome validation (Anderson and Herr, (1999) confirmed the above assessment.)

Draw a picture of your father



My Father



My Mother



My Brother

Drawings from worksheets

C4 comes from a lower income family, wherein present times the family is probably finding it difficult to make ends meet. C4's mother in the 2nd interview explained how difficult it was to make money last. She even explained how as a result of monetary problems her husband's nature had changed in the last five years. She also gave an account of how she struggled with her first born, taking him to the speech therapist and to Nair Hospital, which is quite a distance from their residence. She clarified that she had

discontinued the boy's treatment as she was finding it too taxing and extremely expensive. Her husband had a habit of drinking. Additionally, her mother-in-law would come to their house and fill his ears with talks about his wife's behaviour.

C4 had been observing all of the above and thus started reacting negatively towards her father. C-4's feelings of sympathy for her mother seem to be growing stronger and stronger. Additionally, the fact that she does not seem to be doing to well in school was making her a very insecure girl.

Teachers' multiple-choice questionnaire January 2002

Teacher's answers in bold

At desk **sits quietly** / fidgets all the time / sit lifelessly /
Anything else

Any nervous habits bites nails / **wanders around aimlessly** /chews on pencils
constantly restless (taps pencil, changes position, drops things
and picks them up, etc)

I notice she does have a habit of wandering around, however, she is not blank but she seems to be preoccupied. Giving the impression of somebody who is a bit troubled, somebody who wants to talk but does not know where to start. I believe these are private introverted signs of misery that are being interpreted as signs of insecurity. Moreover, her teacher suggests that she lisps, though I have not noticed any speech defect. Possibly she lisps in the normal school class due to anxiety?

Her relationship with her father's is difficult for me to categories. He has a drinking problem. In the evening when C4 is studying he constantly disturbs her like calling her or repeatedly asking her to do something or the other for him.

Mother: Now, he knows that his baby doesn't like it in spite of that he'll go on doing that, more and more often...Now if at night...Her father knows that she's studying...even then he will go on C4, C4, C4...

Transcript 2nd Parent interview

Her mother revealed how sensitive the child is when she answered the question:

What relations does she have with her brother? Positive

Give reason for your answer:

- The mother told of instances when something the child does naughty and then when her parents shout at her, the brother, who is mentally challenged, gets very upset and starts throwing a tantrum. Moreover he too gets very upset with her. Additionally, he gets very upset if their mother yells at her, whether it is the child's fault or not. Then even he starts yelling at her. Thus there is a great uproar in the house. So now if anything happens and the mother starts talking loudly, C-4 reminds her how her brother gets upset, and requests the mother to not shout in front of the boy.
- Cries behind closed doors so as to not upset her brother who does not understand why she is crying and gets very angry with her.

1st Parent's Interview

Children's worksheet –My Brother

I like it when he [her brother]- Smiles...even though he doesn't talk, then also (sic)

When my parents get angry with him I feel- very, very, and very sad

Lonely

Her parents think she has no friends. And has no one to play with in the building and has no 'best friends'. However in the 'My Friend' worksheet C-4 suggested she has lots of friends. However, at the same time wished her mother would be her best friend as written in the 'My Mother' worksheet.

Truant

Not obviously truant but would rather not go to school.