

Mukesh Gurjar

When Mukesh Gurjar came with his father to get admission in Class 8 in the Rajkiya Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Makarwali, Ajmer, he was sure that he would not be accepted in the school as he could hardly read English and was also not very confident about his abilities in other subjects. His father, Ramdev Gurjar, a farmer, was also aware of his son's obstinate nature and lack of interest in studies. He was anxious and apprehensive as he had closely watched his fashionable lifestyle and indifference to studies. He was almost ready to take him back home. In addition to farming, the family consisting of Mukesh's mother Lali Devi and two other children also had a growing business of animal husbandry. Ramdev thought Mukesh would be productively employed at home. Ramdev and Mukesh were in for a big surprise. Mukesh got admission in the school and that changed everything. Ramdev who himself was middle school pass and Lali Devi who had primary school level education nourished deep aspirations about the education of their eldest son.



When Mukesh was admitted to the school, he was understandably absent for a few days; he was simply scared and afraid of being insulted among students whom he would normally bully outside the school. The Shiksha Sambal (SS) English Field Personnel (FP) in the school decided to work on Mukesh. He contacted the family and Mukesh started coming to school. But there was no improvement in his behaviour. He used to quarrel with his peers and often abused them. He had no interest in his studies.

Mukesh somehow managed to clear Class 8 and was promoted to Class 9. The SS English FP remains directly in touch with the students of Classes 9 and 10. The FP realised that though Mukesh was indifferent to studies and had a quarrelsome nature, he was not psychologically a weak student. He was strong-willed and executed with great firmness whatever he decided to do. The FP noticed that his weak point was English. Since he could not read and write English, he felt small and tried to stay away from studies in general.

The FP knew that what was required was to create an anxiety-free situation and build on what Mukesh already knew. The first step was to gain his confidence. The SS FP started talking to Mukesh as follows:

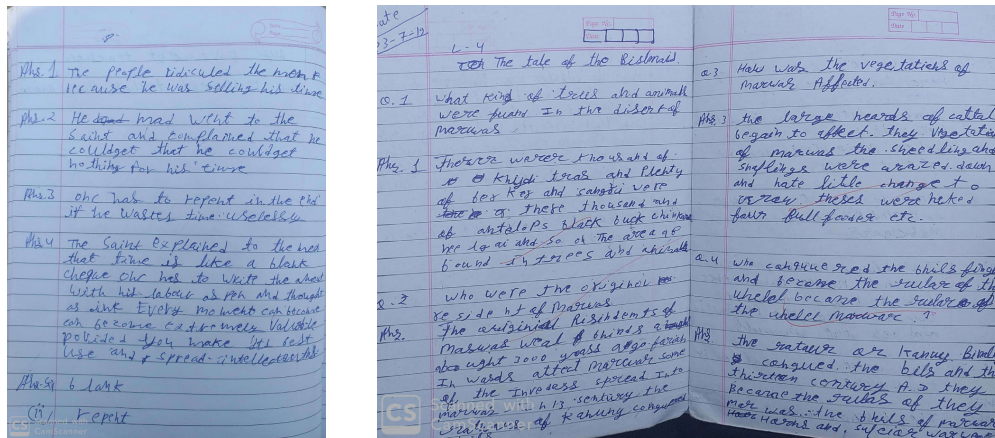
FP: Beta.. What is the matter with you? You do not enjoy your studies?

Mukesh: Madam.... I want to study- but cannot understand a concept in one attempt... Moreover, I am scared of English. I can't read a word...

FP: Beta... You must get out of your fears. It is not an issue if you are unable to understand a concept in one attempt... you can ask me to repeat it. I shall explain the concept to you again and again. I know that you can do it!! I also know you can read English with some effort. I will help you.

The address form 'Beta' worked like magic.

The words of encouragement brought a smile on Mukesh's face. He asked me how to read the English textbook. The FP noticed that Mukesh could use Roman alphabets to send messages in Hindi using WhatsApp. This enthused her as she understood that the student was aware of sounds and used this in helping the student to learn how to read. It was now easy to build sound-script networks and start making sentences with the words Mukesh already knew. After the above conversation, Mukesh started coming to school every day and was also regular in his English classes and started working on his home assignments. Sample pictures of his homework which are answers to questions from chapters in the textbook are presented below.



Gradually, he started reading the English textbooks. He passed his Class 9 examination and joined Class 10 in the academic session 2019-'20. In addition to homework assigned by the subject teacher, Mukesh also takes keen interest in solving worksheets. Mukesh was a regular student in both the summer and winter camps organized as a part of the Shiksha Sambal program.

His attitude in class has pleasantly surprised everyone in school. He is friendly towards his peers and no longer quarrels with them. He is extremely quiet and pays attention to his studies and respects all his teachers. The zeal to learn is sound and clear.

Mukesh's change in attitude has been acknowledged by his parents who thanked the teachers for Mukesh's positive changes. In helping his parents in household chores, he finds time to study. In other words, he better manages his time at home. Mukesh has been transformed from an undisciplined student to one who is responsible not just towards his studies but also to his household responsibilities.