



THE UNSPOKEN SIGNIFICANCE OF COACHING

FATIUL HUQ SUJOY

Contrary to popular belief, coachings (private classes outside of schools and colleges) aren't just a medium to improve students' grades or ensure admission to the university their parents want them to study in. Read on as I, a retired veteran of coachings, recollect and enlighten you with the merits of coaching I found in retrospect.

Coachings were less about the lessons and more about the people involved. A majority of kids honed their social skills in coachings. Whether it was the teachers, the mamas who collected the remunerations or the other kids who came from schools and localities you've never heard of, a friendly relation was a necessity for survival. And sometimes, out of all that hassle and awkward acquaintances, long lasting friendships emerged. All it took were lending a few class notes, engaging in a few friendly school-superiority banter or post-class tea. People who wouldn't have met otherwise, became buddies for life.

New acquaintances also meant second chances for many. For those who were bullied in school or once had an "accident" in class 1 that permanently destroyed any possibility of them ever being one of the cool guys, coaching classes came with the opportunity of making new friends and starting over.

Others used coachings for bettering their virtual life. There were often kids who would bring out their sleek Nokia phone on day one and befriend everyone

on Facebook from Opera Mini. They would later confront you for not liking their latest profile picture. A bunch of them would meet up and open Facebook "batch community" groups where the popular kids shared jokes made in the times of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar to get followers and the less popular ones aggressively complimented the jokes posted by cute girls.

Relations weren't limited to just friends. Many a lucky person found their significant other in between the classes and model tests. Maybe some (most) of them just spanned the lifetime of the coaching, at best. But a few actually survived the havoc of teenage drama, mismatched schedules, disastrous grades and a horde of aunties at their backs, and are still going strong to this day.

But coachings weren't a sweetened experience for everyone. For instance, the toppers of the schools got some brutal reality checks. Always miles ahead of their nearest competition all throughout

school or college and then to get beaten in a test at coaching by a kid who seemed to be one of the noshto squads and took flirting more seriously than the lessons is an experience traumatising enough to haunt them till the next board exam. But

in hindsight, competitions like these only brought out the best from them and readied them for another storm of reality checks that make up university.

Coachings were also the place where boys became men, where girls became women, where *farm er murgis* became their deshi counterparts. Coachings were the first instances where many students finally got out of their parents' ever watchful gaze. With that came both the pleasures and responsibilities of freedom. Also, the pocket money was a nice little addition.

Other than shortcuts to answering creative questions, coachings taught students the value of time. Although the tight schedules of coachings sucked away the joys of childhood and any motivation

to keep on living this wretched life, it prepared the young minds for the sheer scarcity of free time they'd face once they reach adulthood. Coaching trained students how to juggle time to fit in the studies, social life and a little bit of "me time".

Also, the rush of back to back coachings made way for exercises. You may think I'm joking but it's probably because you didn't experience running to a 6 pm class at 6.15 pm because the last coaching ended 15 minutes earlier (yes, earlier) with the next destination being at the opposite part of the city and there being too much traffic to concern with a ride. Unfortunately, these small sessions of exercise were usually cancelled out by the street food consumed in between coachings.

And lastly, coachings remain as the one stop destination for nostalgia. Whether it's the cramped and crowded classes with an unhealthy abundance of CO2 or getting acquainted with a variety of personalities both fun and repelling or bunking classes to check out the new local eatery, coachings have a tendency to pop up for recollection.

But other than all that, coaching is bad, people. Underage kids of the country, unite. Down with this filthy system!

Fatiul Huq Sujoy is a tired soul (mostly because of his frail body) who's patiently waiting for Hagrid to appear and tell him, "Ye're a saiyan, lord commander." Suggest him places to travel and food-ventures to take at fb.com/SyedSujoy.

