

BLOG – 24.07.2015

Courage beyond the Waves

On many days we get up to read stories of disasters in one or the part of the world. Sometimes it is near to you, sometimes far. The ones happening close to us catch more attention and sympathy, if at all, than those in far away places.

Last Sunday I too was shocked to hear the tragic drowning of five young men in Kovalam beach, famed world-over for its natural beauty, but lamented for the lack of basic facilities leave aside safety measures of international norms. Four engineering/medical students, enamoured by the endless beauty of the thundering waves, moved on to the rock projecting into the unruly waters. Not many brave enough to jump in such a situation into the rough sea to save life.

Abhishek belonged to the very few in a society, where most of us even think of the blood stains on the car seat before contemplating any readiness to help an accident victim on the road. As he heard the lone man standing on the rock, crying for help to save his sinking friends, Abhishek did not think about the dangers lurking under the waves, nor about his wife, his mother or his little daughter waiting for him to return with some sweets in his hands. That evening he did not return home. Along with the four young students, Abhishek also disappeared into the vast expanse of the Arabian ocean.

Days have passed after this incident. Search is still on for his body. Newer incidents and events have pushed the prominence of this tragedy to the inner pages of most dailies. The family members continue with their hopes and prayers that Abhishek would return home; alas we know reality looks different!

Abhishek had been fighting life all through until that Sunday. Working as a basketball coach and referee, he is said to have fought every hurdle in his life with the determination and vigour of a sportsman. The intermittent earnings from coaching assignments in some schools or the occasional referee jobs at tournaments kept the hearth at home lit. The life of this single breadwinner in the family has now by all probability come to an abrupt end. Reports on the imminent plight of the family will fill some columns and debates on different media. We will continue listen to and read about his bereaved family for some more time, some very little *more* time. We will continue to get up in the mornings, reading the newspapers, having breakfast, complain about the lukewarm tea, the late arrival of the bus, traffic on the road, that our son or daughter got one mark less than the best student in the school.

Abhishek will be remembered; by those who were taught the first and best lessons in basketball, by those who might have lost a great friend, and above all by his family. Government might come forward with a “relief” amount, likewise some philanthropic minds and organizations. Will that ever match the extreme courage shown by this one Abhishek, who immediately jumped into the sea to save the students? We have seen how quickly an insurance company has *completed* the

necessary formalities to award a whopping compensation to a film actor who met with an accident some years ago. And that too, the general manager personally handed over the cheques at his residence. Not that I am jealous about the sum awarded. I am at pain to understand how many years or even decades it takes in our country to provide an appropriate compensation to the families who have lost their sole breadwinners. I remember at this juncture the demise of my friend Shaju in a car accident in 2007 and his financially distressed family still continues to hope that a suitable compensation would soon be awarded to them.

Let Abhishek's courage never go unrecognized. Let there be sparks emerging in us to think of ways and means to support his family. Let those sparks lead to more effective safety measures for all who dare!

Warmly,

Syed

Trivandrum, 24th of July 2015