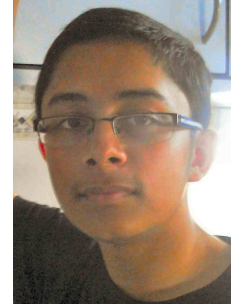


The Joy in Simplicity – Abhishek Ghosh



On Ayesha's fourth birthday I happened to glance at her home - a crumbling remnant of a house that adjoins our sky-scraper building. Ayesha is the daughter of our domestic help. Every thing looked worn and uncared for. But something seemed to stand out: the silver tinsels that hung on the poles and the child's radiating smile.



Photographer Abhishek Ghosh

It was lovely and heart-warming to see a how a poor father celebrates his daughter's birthday. They hardly have any possessions but still seemed to feel happy. I found out that Ayesha would have to leave for the village and live with her grand-parents for her education. So, this was a moment that had to be enjoyed especially because it would be a long time before such an event could be celebrated again. I could see the hope of a better life for Ayesha in her parents' eyes.

Ayesha's aunt had taken all the trouble to attend to the 'celebrations' for the guests of the neighborhood (which consisted of poor daily wage-earners) and cooked a huge pot of the traditional 'Mutton Biryani'. They watched a movie that day - 'The Anaconda'. All of them were absolutely gripped by the movie which was a translation of the American original into Hindi. The father spent a whopping Rs.4 000 (almost his month's salary) on this one special occasion. Late in the evening, when the 'birthday girl' cut her cake, the night sky lit up with fire-crackers, heralding a new beginning for the child. This, at a moment, when the girl-child in rural and backward India feels threatened of her very existence! I seem to find so many untold stories in the lives of the poor! I wished this moment of simple joy would never pass!