



# MY FIRST CUP OF COFFEE



When the teacher announced that coffee will be served during the closing ceremony of our annual school session, our joy had no bounds and we all cheered with applause. It was my childhood days in 1960s, I was hardly 7 years at the time. Being born in a middle class family, forget about coffee, which was regarded as a drink of the affluent and the aristocratic at the time, we were not even allowed to drink tea, a popular local beverage. But my parents did not object this time because it was a school programme.

I am recalling my childhood days at Shillong, presently the capital of Meghalaya and is known as the 'Scotland of East' because of its scenic beauty. My father was employed at the Assam Secretariat, Shillong, which was the capital of the undivided North Eastern states.

Finally the 'D' day had arrived and we all carried a pair of cups & saucers, as

per the instruction of our teacher, as there was no provision of disposable cups and plates then. I was tensed about the announcement of exam results on that day, but was excited about my first cup of coffee. All the students were gathered in the Assembly hall. My heart was beating just like a drum. After serving the snacks, coffee was poured into our cups. The flavour of coffee was quite strange to me as I had never experienced that refreshing aroma ever before. I was thrilled with the enticing aroma which still haunts me as an unbelievable fantasy. But frankly, I did not relish the experience of my first sip of hot coffee, as the taste was little bitter for my taste. I continued with my second and a third sip and very soon I found that the cup was empty. In a mesmerized state, I approached the teacher and asked for a second cup. I still do not know after which sip I started loving the taste, but it became a refreshing part of for the rest of my life.

I grew up and started visiting coffee shops along with my friends, to inhale the heart touching romantic aroma and the fabulous taste of coffee. I found the drink so much a part of my daily life that it became a life-long habit. But I never dreamed that after long 18 years of my first sip, destiny was planning my attachment with coffee in a permanent way. Today I am proud to be a part of Coffee Board team working in the North Eastern Region, busy with expansion of coffee cultivation in this non traditional belt. Almost after 50 years the taste and aroma of my first cup of coffee still lingers on.

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