

## PRONOUNCEMENT OF GIPSY PUPILS ABOUT THEMSELVES – CONCLUSION OF A RESEARCHED CARRIED OUT IN BORSOD COUNTY

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*I summarize consequences of a researched carried out in a little settlement of Borsod county, called Rakaca with school-leavers of the local primary school, in which we could say about mostly such pupils, families in which parents are low-educated, they don't have any chance of work, living is expected from benefits, where parents send their children to school because of fearing of the fine, who can only dream of a better life, possibility of better living. My searching methods were: observation in classroom, interview, questionnaire.*

**Keywords:** minority education, wrong social situation, family socialisation, lack of knowledge

### Roma or Gipsy?

According to "Magyar Értelmező Kéziszótár" the following determination can be found beneath phrase of gipsy:

*„Living scattering in countries of Asia and Europe, having Indian origin, belonging to a folk group having dark skin, being associated with that...  
Synonym: roma, dark skined, (biting) smutty, smoky” (Eőry, 2007:175).*

Of course word of Gipsy is part of Hungarian language having place in culture and it is argued how it can be exchanged a word having similar meaning of a foreign language in an aggressive way. Ex-president of republic, *László Sólyom* (2009) also stood by word of *Gipsy*, and used it in more speeches in front of public.

Official word using seems to prefer thus phrase of *Roma* e.g. „*European Roma Strategy*” and „*Program of Rome Integration Decade*” or „*First Roma World Congress*” (London, 1971) or further in name of *National Roma Local Government* applied to word usage of European Union. Naming of all people having Gipsy origins in the world became plural forms of *Rom*, namely *Roma*, which was accepted in London (8-12 April 1971) in the First Roma Congress by members belonging to different Gipsy groups. This way name of *Roma* means community of the Gipsy folkgroup.

Phrases are changing in literature as well. I felt this phenomenon during reading *Gyulavári Tamás and Kállai Ernő* (2010) – who has also Gipsy origin like someone writing the following lines and using phrase of Gipsy in his issues on a regular basis. As for me I – as a II. year student of Professor

Förrey R. Katalin – decided to use word of Gipsy in my issues right of which was confirmed by lectures dealing with ethnicities in a national conference called „*Education is the most effective tool with which you can change the world*” (Eger, 16-17 November 2011). Whether confiding or changing of regime thought the fact phrase of *Roma* should take the place of pejorative stereotyped word of Gipsy?

Sentencing of the Gipsy doesn't come from changing its name. Significant part of more and more differed Gipsy society is going to live in deep poverty as unemployed from state benefit like the questioned ones admit this fact in my thesis as well.

### My studies at College, then at University

As my origin I also considered myself a Gipsy man, I grew up in a family of three children. I had opportunities to educate and train myself during my life. After finishing my studies at the College and at the University my professors encouraged me to apply for „Education and Society” Education Doctoral School at University of Pécs where I could go on my studies and I am going to reach one of the greatest aim of my life. Focus theme of my doctora thesis is discrimination in public education as for Gipsy children and their special education problem.

My intention became stronger at Károly Eszterházy College of Eger so that my scientific interest should be Gipsy children as they are from my blood. They are those people whom different systems attempted to change, experiments were carried out with them, who had to move with their parents together, who haven't changed so much inspite of every outsider attempts. They are fixed by habit systems and traditions inherited from the ancient ones. They are those living among inhuman circumstances in the XXI. century as well, they suffer from hunger, cold, poverty and that's why they are criminals several times for living.

They are those who don't like going to nursery or primary schools, whose God is their parents, for whom family life can be considered almost a sacral one, love, being together and living for each other are the most important segments. Demand level of large part of the Gipsy is modest, their idol is very special, they deal with their future almost hardly, and they live for the very moment in a circle.

We also know the fact and furthermore we can experience that tolerance of mass society can be waited for some time if it is about the *Gipsy/Roma*. Habit of having stereotypes inherit as for them we could say. Mass society tends to make general theories.

I have already lived more than a half century picture on the Gipsy formed by mass society has hardly changed. Traditional name of *Gipsy* means a negative meaning in several countries therefore there are some who takes it to be avoided in public life. Significant groups of Hungary, mostly the Gipsy name themselves Gipsy now as well. Some question should be asked. Why may the Gipsy not named Gipsy? What will change if Gipsy becomes *Roma*? I myself never used the word of *Roma* like them neither. I would say any *Gipsy* person wasn't angry with me because of it.

The Non-Gipsy – use phrase of *Gipsy* in higher rate – choose phrase of *Roma* in a formal situation, - because of keeping rassist feature put on them or tact. Dilemmas generated by experts could be the cause of disturbance and uncertainty of average people. Several governmental documents – for instance law of ethnics (2011. year CLXXIX. Law on rights of minorities Declared: 2011. XII. 19) – apply word of *Roma* and stand beside it as well.

That tendency is against it which name of *Gipsy* is becoming more and more accepted in political usage transmitted by media.

This duality characterises literature as well dealing with the question, the categories are applied like synonyms mostly. Large ratio of people having Gipsy origins known by me name themselves Gipsy – although they feel phrase of *Gipsy* having a pejorative meaning nowadays – that's why they would like to leave it – but the same time phrase of *Roma* is strange for them as well.

Phrase of *Gipsy* is applied for pointing a life-style out in international public speech, without ethnical side according to Liègeios. On the other hand phrase of *Roma* is used as name of a nationality with general meaning and connected with policy. Because of this difference in issues of European Council phrase of „*Roma, Gypsies, Travellers*” appear (Forray, 1998).

It was time to face reality! One has to speak to people faithfully! We could speak of the Gipsy with aim of doing for them something not against them. Everybody knows the fact they have to be helped. The Gipsy having inhomogeneity mustn't be washed together. There are more thousands kinds of them. There are a lot of doing a everything for their family and themselves. I think that man can be helped who really wants it and does something to have a better future than today his life is. So as to reach this aim secrets of economy have to be taught to them, they have to learn how to spin the little money out. They should take work offered by local government and they have to work there indeed! Usury has to be seized because they ruins only each other this way! Everybody has to have the duty to tidy his flat and its surrounding! Each of the parents have to send their children to nursery or school in clean clothes and regularly! To have a nicer and better future demand has to exist for changing and mind has to be altered as well. All this can come true by active cooperation among individuals.

This formed in my inner side during my Roma studies but I could hear, read and write on the fact that expected change can come in case of the Gipsy for which we ourselves can do very much who could have got degrees from them. We also experienced the fact that some attempts already have success. Most of Gipsy pupils have been already in vocational schools, in the high school and if they are really hard-working and resolute they are able to get degree as well.

Studies of the Roma have had a more significant role in our country nowadays than ever it had. More institutes of Universities and Colleges already have expert circles, Roma Faculty works in University of Pécs by leading of Professor Dr. Forray R. Katalin searching and spreading science of Roma. Thesis, dissertations, studies are being written and scientific conferences are organised on this theme like in one of the section of meeting in Eger with the following title: *Role of education in integration of the Roma*. My experiences coming from there stimulated me to write a new study on the basis of my last research in Borsod which I would like to use in my preparing dissertation as well.

### Before research and its results lateri

I carried out a research with questionare in a little settlement of Borsod, called Rakaca among pupils of eighth class in the local primary school.

„Village behind the back of God” – this banal turning can get meaning here, in the hidden valley. The little towns like Edelény and Szendrő situated in Bódva Valley struggle for surviving themselves, they can hardly offer living possibility for dwellers of small villages among the low hills.

Altogether three buses run to Rakaca from Szendrő every day, two cars can have hardly enough room beside each other on the narrow road. Large number of the Gipsy live in Rakaca separated from outworld, work opportunities waiting for outside grant to have better life.

According to mayor having Gipsy origin most part of the population in the settlement<sup>1</sup> is Gipsy and ratio of unemployment is about hundred percent in the village. A lot of author have already written on tragic situation of Cserehát, rising poverty, large ration of unemployment, dying of some parts of villages and „phenomenon of becoming Gipsy” where it is said clearly in public.<sup>2</sup> Mass society is Gipsy in some settlements like Szendrőlád, Lak and mostly (over 75%) in Rakaca, Tornanádaska and Csenyété.

Problems coming from attendance of Gipsy population have become more and more in case of little villages. Natural reproduction of population is made sure though in these settlements but social problems are producing together with population on a larger scale (G. Fekete, 2001:7).

It isn't only about the fact what some socioloists have already predicted that this region would be the first closed ethnics micro one in Hungary but we could mention that as well it causes migration of rest of more educated dwellers and poverty and isolation are also going to rise. There a lot of supportless people in such a kind of settlement like content of population and local government has very tight financial opportunities. Primary School of Rakaca maintains one-one class of every year, total number of pupils is about 150. Support of going to nursery has been introduced for the poor, equipment of school and support of school books are both free, not to mention having meal in the school.

I met families collecting mushrooms, berries, herbs during my autumn visit. People living in poverty have to look after themselves because without it they couldn't live. Pedagogues teaching in Rakaca also mentioned the fact that some children go maize, grape to do so called activity „mezgerel”<sup>3</sup> and „collect hip and hecsedli”<sup>4</sup> with their families instead of school. Most of them are obliged to repeat the school year because of a lot of absence lessons.

I asked the questionares without names, with sincere answers from the pupils of the eighth year. My questions dealt with life style, growing up in the family, touching upon question of bringing up for work as well. The next dilemma has interested me for longer time: how bringing up views can be fulfilled in case of unemployed parents? Unfortunately we have to speak on such families where parents are undereducated, don't have any opportuniites for work, expect living from state grant where parents send their children to school only because of fear of fine who can only dream of better life.

“Good intention is littel! More is needed...” – Mihály Vácy writes and indeed acceptable behaviour seems to be little. Understanding, accepting behaviour of the pedagogue can be considered to be a onesided work realitonship as most part of Gipsy parents react to school life in a passive way but there some expection of course as well. Traditional procedure isn't enough against parents having regular missing children as they can't pay for

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<sup>1</sup> 60% of the settlement is Gipsy, meanwhile 40% is Hungarian (Election Results of Rakaca. National Election Office, 3 October 2010). Since then rates have become higher, according to the mayor, Béla Kiss it is about 90-95%.

<sup>2</sup> G. Fekete Éva department manager, MTA Regional Researches Centre. Norhern Hungarian Department, Miskolc.

<sup>3</sup> mezgerel = collecting crops remaining on the ground after harvest

<sup>4</sup> collect hip, hecsedli = picking crop of rose-hips, which is the fruit of wild rose being rich in vitamins

the alleged fine following procedure of putting the child into protection, this time the recorder gives them only a warning note because of their financial situation and unproved absence can happen more times as well. The child lags behind there are more and more overaged ones getting to 6-7. class of senior section by failing some time and missing those they found a family after reaching age when they don't have to visit school any more. Pupils over school-age don't enjoy being in a class and as they don't have the same interests negative behaviour can be formed from an inner effort step by step. If there is no other solution they put themselves into consideration and try to get authority and acknowledgement by little ones. Home means pattern for them and both of those gives them the result mentioned before.

I got back the questionnaires in the given class from 21 school-leavers. I had to think over number of brothers and sisters in the answers. To the question namely how many sisters or brothers you have one of them declared this way „a lot of"! Further 6 pupils' families have three children among the questioned ones and 6 pupils have three brothers or sisters beside themselves. Three of them answered they sit together with their four sisters or brothers to the family table, two pupils have five sisters or brothers, moreover three pupils answered there are nine children in the family. These numbers can say a lot and give opportunity for several results.

Under which kind of circumstances and how can these Gipsy families live? How can question of working possibility be formed for them? How can a person living from benefit bring their child up on working?

Let's see what the pupils answered to my question that „what do your parents do"? „Nothing" – 2 of 21 answers said it. More 4-4 persons answered: „they are unemployed" – or they are given „work-searching" benefit. I put the question for myself whether what parents do in the families of the other children? More pupils answered: „They are at home." A pupil wrote the following answer on the questionnaire: „They deal with everything what they feel good."

Other answers:

- „father is a Friday man in the local council"
- „public worker"
- „assistant"
- „dressmaker"
- „works near a bricklayer"
- „woodcutter"
- „pensioner"

Big part of these school-leavers in Rakaca have lived so far that they know worlds of work only by hearing – then, when it's nearly time to say goodbye to the last year of the primary school.

Their parents also grew up the same way now they are mostly unemployed or work at home. Only some fathers of them usually go to work and they do only public work. Only some of the parents have skilled jobs, most of them finished only eight years of primary school or only six of them. Perhaps we can explain answering of the following question namely boys don't help their mother with house work but they carry out woodcutting or carrying that with their fathers. But the girls help more with working around the house, looking after a younger sister or brother, cleaning-sweeping, cooking, garden work occasionally or doing the shopping.

„Whether do you have an idol who you imitate with pleasure?" – the question was and the answers were shocking! Parents like patterns which should be followed didn't appear among the answers. Whether what kind of

pattern can parents give their children? There was only one pupil who signed his teacher without saying his name or subject. It can be stated that several pupils don't have any idols. Some of them who have those choice is also very interesting: e.g.: Cristiano Ronaldo, Batman, Sylvester Stallone, Guszti Bódi, Krisztián Éder (his other name SP) ... and someone's Adolf Hitler. (As attached questionnaire shows...)

Personality of the last one (whose page I am introducing in attachment) – is shocking! He is that whose father died, whose mother is an assistant, has got two adult brothers and a younger sister, who doesn't help at home, who is taught to steal, cheat, lie, who doesn't speak of his problems with his family but on Facebook or on iWiW, who drinks alcohol in his free time, who has got health problems but *SKH* (Hungarian slang: *it isn't your business*), furthermore who isn't afraid of any teachers in the school and who „is dying from tired” according to his phrases in summer holiday.

What is life like without work, in deep poverty and waiting everyday needs from the state? How important is parents't role in the unemployment families? What can school do looking at lack of family bringing up? How can the pedagogue direct career choosing and form the Gipsy child's future with the parents together?

According to *Bogdán* (1996) family can't be blamed for the child's unsuccessful things, adults haven't been able to be changed yet. *Radó's opinion* (1997) is also that other feature of socialisation in these families have to be accepted and agree with the fact that Gipsy families don't bring up their children in a wrong way, but only an other one. But responsibility of the school is significant by Péter Radó he thinks most part of education institutes educate the Gipsy children not in a right way. Forray (1991) put emphases on the factor that schools' duty to consider their socializing ethnocultural features. *Kertesi and Kézdi* (1996) think that therapy have to be directed to the families right away during compensation of disadvantages coming from family socialization.

Returning to Gipsy children: how can they take the heat because of their situation, temperament in this rushing, impatient, inhuman world? Putting the other side of the thing into consideration: whether do Gipsy families want to become equal with the so-called „Hungarian” ones (see: which Hungarian family can mean a normative sample for them)?

Long time consequences mayn't be taken from the answers of the eighth class pupils in Rakaca Primary School being introduced here but the sample showed above and thoughts said by pedagogues teaching there can give us further thinking on them.

*„Most part of the pupils coming to our school to the first class having social and socialization disadvantages. Unfortunately the children have gone only 1-2 years to the nursery school because of lack of places so far therefore these disadvantages couldn't be stopped there either. Suitable behaviour and habit system haven't formed in cases of several pupils. The pupils are motivated in a hard way they aren't interested in school.*

*It is enough for parents if the child steps from class into an other one it doesn't matter that the child should have good result. The Gipsy family and the school represent different values. Learning and right behaviour aren't values in most families. As they think it isn't worth to learn that's why they say: «Namely the child will stay at home, get married.».*

*But we try to prove value of knowledge in parents. Unfortunately there aren't any examples in front of parents in today's society because pupils learning further after school leaving exam at high school or after college can't take up their career either.”*

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