

In search of India



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H6

Awakening

"India is my country. All Indians are my brothers and sisters. I love my country, and I am proud of its rich and varied Heritage. I shall always strive to be worthy of it. I shall....."

Hundreds of time, national pledge transpires through my mind, it was just some words but today I realised the depth of these lines and it brings me in a state of proud and despair. I travelled 11000km, an inner journey, and journey of awakening, "Jagriti Yatra" I wanted to touch the soul of India, I do but in tears. Now, I can visualise the problems that we had been facing for years. Some faces, few moments still haunting me.

India lives in villages, when the development proposed by Mahatma Gandhi was ignored and when mahatma has commercialised the gap between soul and body of India elevated. I visited Sabarmathi ashram. It was a realisation; a great idea was buried there. We are told to remember the idea and not the man; because a man will die one day, but idea is immortal it can change the world

I started the journey as clamorous person I wanted to know as much of people I can but later I open my ears; I study how reception works, became silent and started observing people I come across. I have seen the power of ideas, power of enterprise, and people who dedicate their life for idea

I have seen the power of ideas, it can transform human race. The story of Tilonia is an epic. Tilonia is a village in Ajmer district in Rajasthan. It is home of the NGO, BARRFOOT College working in the fields of education, skill development, health, drinking water, women

empowerment and electrification through solar power for the upliftment of rural people. Founded by renowned social worker Bunker Roy, in 1972. Women empowerment at barefoot college is not relying on wearing traditional dress during women's day or debating the role of women.

I can feel the energy, motivation, and depth of words of that 60 years old woman, who



speaks in front of 500plus people. In the past 38 years, the college has trained more than 15,000 women in jobs ranging from construction work, education, metal craftsmanship, toy making and solar engineering, to mechanical repair and fabrication, health care, water testing, handicrafts, film making and social activism.

I was able to feel the emotions of india at Tilonia, not only me but the co-yatris were also exposed to the real India

Shot in the dark

I reached Lok amanya Tilak Terminus by 5.00 in the evening. I travelled alone from Calicut to Mumbai, without knowing a single person from Mumbai, nor did I make any attempts to get contacts of my Co-travellers. I have the complete

freedom to decide, what the next moment was. Sometimes actions were strange, meaningless and crazy. But that craziness is exhilarating, enriching and it make you energetic and it was my first journey outside Kerala.

Imagine the feeling when you get down in a city like Mumbai, and you don't know where to go, what to do, whom to believe the interesting thing was my Hindi was a disaster.

I roam around Mumbai, travelled in local train, met few Malayalis, eat porotta and chicken curry from a hotel run by a man from Kollam. Wondered by seeing the celebrations of prophet Muhammad birthday.

Thanks to Google maps and m-indicator

The beginning

On 24th December 2015 we, 450 young individuals from 26 countries assembled at IIT Mumbai to embark Jagriti Yatra. Little we knew the coming 15 days would be a momentous journey for us in various aspect.

Within minutes I met lot of people, Brenden from Australia sathya, adavan and started discussing development strategy for India, few others also joined with us. We were equally excited, excitement at its peak that cause us to skip breakfast.

That was the heat we possessed, all us wanted to exchange ideas. Introduction session was awesome. Flag off was memorable and "yatri geeth" I don't have words to explain. Feel the energy;

"Some of the things are changing, and some we will change

They will change only when we change;

Some things we have seen, some things we will see. Some of the things are written, some we will write;

Let's go friends; it's the season of change!

Let's go friends; it's the season of betterment!

The wind is asking us not to stop;

The sky is asking us not to melt,

The earth is asking us to touch and feel it;

Look into my eyes, and don't fear the truth

Let's go friends; it's the season of change!

Let's go friends; it's the season of betterment!

At 11 pm we broadened from Mumbai. Outside the window, I was able to see different landscape, culture, different weather people and life. Inside I met young entrepreneurs from Canada, Australia to large demographic dividend of india. Each and every person I come

across has a story, strong perspectives and mind blowing ideas

Interrogations

450 Of us has different perspectives, frame of mind and priorities. The crowd was not a noise making one, each of us have clear future plans and crystal clear suggestions to make india a better country. The purpose of Om praksh and prathish, representing two different dimension of India, is the same -to build a better india

Om Prakash Ram was born at a remote village in west Bengal. He was from a family; struggling to meet the two ends; that make him quit education.

He used to walk 5 km to collect water for his family. He had an accident and it was difficult for him to walk for some years.

But he has that passion to study .He put a great deal of endurance and save money to continue education He started taking tuitions and engaged in some jobs

He need to travel 50km up and down for graduation. He managed his tuitions job and studies. With immense hard work and dedication he completed his master of arts in Hindi.

He has decided to dedicate his whole life for promoting education in the state of Bihar. He chose Bihar as his field of work and committed to empower and educate the people. Hard realities of life was his university

Once India was a global university, people from various countries came to India to experience and learn our vast knowledge. As time progresses we lost that treasure and now we are mocking the system of education that expired in Europe

A foreigner, Adam woodward adapted Gurukul system of education and created a school in remote village of Karnataka. Kalkeri Sangeet Vidyalaya- Kalkeri Sangeet Vidyalaya is a charitable and residential school that supports and empowers children from socially



and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

They combine modern education gurukul system and arts with a perspective of creating a new India.

Some Students can speak Hindi Kannada Tamil English French and German. Each student is specialised some instrument or any other form of art. Actually, they challenge the current messed up system of education in India. Aadam started this school in 2002, with 18 students and now they provide education for 250 plus.

I can see a lot of people from France Germany as teachers, I met a doctor from France who take care of the health problems

There are almost 50 people from foreign countries, and working for India with great dedication.

So what bring them here?

Why don't they have a wonderful house car modern facilities two or three pets?

Actually Adam wanted to change the world, but he realised that it's impossible so he changed himself, during a visit in India; he decided to set up a school.

I met a girl from France.

At the age of 16, she got that intuition and now she is spending her vacation for children from India

What she has been doing is actually the duty and responsibility of ours

Instead of fighting for religion, beef, masjid, temple we should concentrate on our people, after all India is developing and some policies and government level discussions can't make changes, it's the responsibility of privileged people to lift the unprivileged

At Madurai the train was late by 2 hours; I met prathish at the platform.

I was introduced to him by Preethi ,a psychology student. Prathish left his MNC job to serve his NGO, supporting education of unprivileged; he was a part of that organization from his IIT days

Deepak who has been fighting against racial and caste discrimination is also a good poet. Meenakshi was the first engineer from her village Aayush wanted to start a school at her village

Each and every co-yatris has a story That was the beauty of this adventure. The Jagriti train was our home, debate room and FAB lab



Building myself

"We travel, initially, to lose ourselves; and we travel, next to find

Ourselves we travel to open our hearts and eyes and

Learn more about the world than our newspapers will accommodate.

We travel to bring what little we can, in our ignorance and knowledge,

To those parts of the globe whose riches are differently dispersed.

And we travel, in essence, to become young fools again- to slow time down

And get taken in, and fall in love once more."

-Pico Iyer

15 days, 12 destinations, single train the biggest train journey on the planet.

Yatra was an opportunity, a platform, freedom, and exposure. We laughed, shed tears, dance like there were no tomorrow.

We Challenge each other, make our standpoints clear, and presented our ideas, come face to face with social and business entrepreneurs. We were exposed to individuals and enterprises that are developing unique solutions to India's Challenges. Yes, it was my journey to see India, I only knew from books

"All this time we spent on the route;

Something happened, that I have

To think about long and hard

So much injustice eh?"

I...I'AM not myself anymore

At least I'am not same inside"

Ernesto "Che" Guevara travelled 8000km at the age of 23; I travelled 11000km at 21

Motor cycle diaries ends with a declaration by Guevara, born into a middle-class family, displaying his willingness to fight and die for the cause of the poor, and his dream of seeing a united Latin America.

"Che" Guevara is my inspiration...