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India-Bhutan Youth Summit

3rd -12th September, 2019
Delhi and Uroli, India



**India-Bhutan
Youth Summit**

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Centre for Escalation of Peace (CEP) in collaboration with Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) and Pallavan Learning Systems (PLS), organized the second India-Bhutan Youth Summit from September 3 to 12, 2019 in Delhi & Uroli, India. The summit was funded by the India-Bhutan Foundation.

Eleven participants from Bhutan and ten participants from India came together for the summit that is aimed at enhancing the understanding and appreciation of the youth regarding the importance of building India-Bhutan friendship through meaningful conversations on various aspects of India-Bhutan collaboration. Concurrently, the summit seeks to create a pool of potential ambassadors of this special relationship in both the countries who will carry forward the collaboration.

At the end of the summit, the candidates shared their experiences and reflected on the entire programme. They submitted a programme report detailing their individual journey during the summit; the individual reports were compiled to generate this comprehensive document.

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Anshu Saikia

India



The India - Bhutan Youth Summit 2019 was a defining experience for me in terms of helping me gain introspection, bonds, knowledge, confidence and beautiful memories that I will forever cherish. I remember how happy I was when I initially received the news that I could be a part of this. There was this nervousness too somewhere, to meet and interact with new people, to be able to cope up with the program and gain these new experiences. However, the very first moment when I was introduced to everyone, all my nervousness gradually started turning into a sense of comfort -- a happy sense of comfort and confidence started growing in me. I had arrived slightly late on the 3rd, the day the summit started. Upon arriving, I was introduced to some of my Bhutanese friends with whom I was to share the room, and right after lunch, we hit it off laughing and sharing stories about each other. It was that easy to get along! We later went for our welcome dinner that was hosted by the Royal Embassy of Bhutan where we interacted with the ambassador and eminent personalities from Bhutan; we bonded with each other from the IBYS team and indulged in some delicious Bhutanese delicacies.

We then headed back to Vishwa Yuva Kendra where we were staying, packed for our upcoming trek and went to sleep. The next day, as expected started early at 5 am as we had to catch our train for Kathgodam. The train journey was one of the best ones I've had so far. We chatted, played music and sang too. We ate lots of train food and shared stories from our individual lives. We also caught up on some sleep from the night before, played antakshari and other games. Thankfully, the people from our compartment weren't that bothered by our games and music as no one complained. Before we knew it, our short but sweet train ride to Kathgodam had been completed and we walked towards our jeeps to our base-camp in Uroli. On our way, we stopped at this place called Pots and Stones to have lunch. Then we set off for our base camp. Soon we were driving over the hills and could feel the temperature dropping making for pleasant weather. My first site of our base camp was that it was beautiful. Gaurav, our facilitator explained a few things about the base camp and of course, introduced us to KPRD (Khaana Peena Rona Dhona) - the place that provided us with shelter when it rained outside and also where we had our food, sessions and chilled too. The camp had this very positive aura to it from the start and it grew to feel like home, even though we stayed there for only three days. There was a place for a campfire near our tents and we would sit around it after dinner almost every day. After a long time, I found myself more engaged and felt like a part of a community instead of being glued to my phone.

We had our introductory session that day as well, where we had to of course introduce ourselves, share our views on both the countries and lastly introduce one area where we had sufficient knowledge to impart, in case someone was interested. I am not that confident when it comes to public speaking but in the sessions that followed we had to talk. And the environment was made pretty comfortable wherein we could go whenever we felt ready. There were times when initially I didn't think I would have any views to share on certain topics. But surprisingly as the session commenced and everybody shared their bit, I realized that I too had so many things to speak about. We had three or four such sessions during our days in Uroli, wherein we discussed our views, opinions, concerns, suggestions and our

own contribution towards things that affected our environment, country and the world at large. Listening to not just my Bhutanese friends but my friends from India as well speak, I learnt that we were diverse in terms of background, but in a practical sense we had a lot of commonalities as well. There was a lot to learn from everyone and hearing them share what they knew was extremely inspiring and interesting.

Now moving on to the trek part of our summit. The impact this trek had on me was immense and intense. When I say 'intense', I also mean it was hard for me (physically, hehe!) as I had a very low stamina. But somehow this trek really taught me the importance of having a good physical endurance. Also, surprisingly, instead of feeling intimidated by the rest of the team, it was pretty inspiring. Everyone was so lively and active. In the sense that, some were laughing, dancing and singing while climbing up. Some were helping others on the way. One such incredible person was Yoezer who helped me throughout our trekking journey. She shared a lot of mystical tales from Bhutan with me. We essentially became trekking partners for two days.

Due to the rain, our trek was initially cut short by a little. So we had one day as a day out and the other as a night out. On our day out, we went to Sitlakhet. Upon reaching the top, we visited a temple and a public school. In the school, our staff members from INME, MsAnuja, asked us to form a circle. This circle constituted of the little kids from the school and us from the IBYS team. This meant we were altogether from various age groups. She told us to repeat the lyrics from the magical song/ poem - 'lambidaadiwaalebaaba'. Why I call it magical is because the moment Anuja ma'am started singing it the kids were all so involved in it. They were laughing and all looked so happy as they repeated after her. No one was shying away and even us, we suddenly forgot all age difference and were so involved in this. Later when we asked ma'am about what made these activities so special, she told us it was because to the kids' eyes, we were reduced down to their age. And so they related to us. We too felt the same. Later after lunch ma'am also taught us how to pitch tents as we would have to do the same the very next day on our night out.

Our trekking journey also two very significant 'pickings'. One was the famous mushroom picking that Tshering sir initiated. This initiative although was not accepted in the beginning as many suspected these mushrooms to be poisonous and of course were not willing to put their lives on the line. However, after Tshering sir cooked it the first day and consumers continued to live unharmed, the very next day, many (now confident) too contributed in the pickings. This remained as one funny story that we recalled throughout our journey. The second was 'garbage picking'. This was also a great example of why taking an initiative was the very first step to bring change. When our friends Thukten and Yoezer started picking the plastic bags on our way uphill everyone followed. And before we knew it, almost the entire team was contributing in removing the litter from the trek path.

Our night out was pretty special. Firstly, we had no ports there or any electricity to charge our phones and other devices. So after a point, we had no connectivity to the world other than the people in that very direct environment. We helped in getting the dinner cooked after our session for that day and then sat around the campfire to eat. Later that night, some of us sat near the fire and played a game called 7 Up -- whoever lost would have to share something personal. This turned out to be a very funny game as our staff members were right next to us and heard conversations about our personal lives with spicy details etc. It was a fun time as we shared a lot and learnt about everyone's lives back in their homes. There were lots of 'ooos' and 'hahas' involved. But some stories also left us really feeling emotional. It was overall a nice heartfelt time spent in those last few hours of that

day. After, we went back to our self-pitched tents and slept. It had later rained that night and my tent mates and I had to pull our shoes and bags inside in the middle of the night. I miss all that so much, now that I think about these unusual moments.

The next morning something beautiful happened: from our campsite on the top, we spotted among the clouds the beautiful glaciers of Nanda Devi. It was gorgeous and it soon disappeared as the sun rose further. We cleared out our camp area, packed our bags, had tea and set off down- hill towards our base camp. Later that day, we had an additional session by Gaurav that involved learning about leadership, decision making and achieving objectives collectively. This taught us a lot about teamwork that is much needed in the societies we live in today. The session tested our thinking and analytical and also our math skills (that turned out to be chaotic but insightful :p).

We soon had to bid adieu to the beautiful Uroli and to the three days of immense fun, learning, adventure and living in nature. And on our way to Delhi, we realized that we would now have to part ways with a few of the staff members who were such an eminent part of our journey in Uttarakhand-- Gaurav, Doc, Anuja ma'am, Shoaib sir and Sohail sir.

In New Delhi, an entire day was dedicated to two centres of Riti in Vasant Vihar. Here, we spent time with kids and divided ourselves into two groups and conducted activities for the children. We inculcated 'lambadaadiwaalebaaba' yet again, danced, sang and made a huge dragon that involved colouring with hand prints by all the children. I didn't realize when I got so involved with kids there that when we had to leave, I wanted to spend more time with them.

Our next stop was at a centre that was dedicated to women and men who were learning skills to work and become independent financially and mentally as well. Here, we were all given a session by a lovely teacher who taught us many significant things.

The day after this, we visited the Drishyakala centre inside Red Fort where we visited paintings portrayed by artists that depict Indian history in various forms. We learnt about different artists and their different styles in doing art. Soon after, we were taught a new method of painting known as the 'linen cut' painting. We each made our own painting. I was painting after a long time and honestly it left me with so much introspection that it felt great. We left the place with big smiles.

The following morning, we visited the Royal embassy of Bhutan yet again and this time had the opportunity to interact with the ambassador up close. It was such an honour to be able to talk to Ambassador Major General Vetsop Namgyel where he took our questions and answered them so gracefully. The interaction was very insightful wherein we learnt about the bilateral relation, perspective of government of Bhutan in many respects, evolution of their administration and the importance of building the relation between India and Bhutan through involving more of youth.

The rest of the day was spent in us preparing for our individual group presentations on the summit. Five of us also spent some time recording our theme song outside. This was an experience so close to my heart as this song was made in bits throughout the journey by all of us. It involved an amalgamation of different languages - Hindi, English, Dzongkha and Malayalam. This day was bittersweet as it was the last day of our summit. We soon presented our projects and as we did, there was a lot of encouragement that flowed from all around. This was followed by a cultural event that was beautiful. We had performances from participants from both the countries. The event truly defined harmony, effort and

love. As the event ended and the guests left the room, all the participants stayed back and we all had an emotional moment. We hugged each other, thanked one another and cried together. Our bond was something that just mutually formed. There was a lot of respect that flowed among all the participants. It was actually something so rare to have experienced. We all joined tables to form one that could together form 21 people for dinner.

There was a lot of respect that flowed among all the participants.

I would also like to thank everyone who was involved in making this summit one that we all would never forget. Thupten sir, Choki and everyone from RIGSS - Tshering Wangdi sir, Tshering Penjor sir, Tandin ma'am and Karma ma'am. Everyone was involved in helping and aiding us, understanding us and guiding us so beautifully.

I would just like to end by saying that I'm thankful to have received the application for IBYS 2019 and I'm thankful for this journey that I got to experience. And something tells me, that the bond we twenty one participants shared is something that will forever be cherished and we will continue to make efforts to connect and be the team that takes initiative to bring change and maintain harmony.

Cyril Cherian

India



Day 1

I arrived at Delhi's IGI Airport at about 9 am on 3rd September 2019. Immediately upon arrival, the baggage had been released at the reclaim area and I'd found a figure I'd seen only on TV, clad in formal shirt and dhoti. I approached him as we were waiting for our luggage and had a quick chat. It was Shri MA Baby, former minister of education to Kerala who'd been on the same flight as me. I told him of the summit that I was about to attend in between the short conversation and he gave me his best regards. It was an auspicious start. The journey to Vishwa Yuvak Kendra was beautiful. As soon as the dust had settled from the hustle and bustle of the streets, my Uber turned to a straight highway with well-maintained lawns lining it on either side. Embassies and consulates of various first and third world countries dotted the perimeter of the long roads, each having a distinct form of architecture pertaining to their homeland.

The Vishwa Yuvak Kendra where the cab finally stopped is located at Chanakyapuri, opposite the National Police Memorial. I'd arrived to be greeted by the lady at the front office who'd confirmed my arrival on paper. I'd noticed Nimrat from the brochure sent to us previously and we exchanged greetings as the lady verified our documents.

Mr Thupten had been right behind me and it was his jovial laugh that first caught my attention. He welcomed the both of us to the summit and further went on to ask of our travel and wellbeing. Choki la had now entered the scene from the dining area and he'd called me by my name which I'd found really amusing. We briefly exchanged greetings and I was soon directed to the dorms where the stay had been arranged.

I moved over to the dorms, only to find out that the room I'd been allotted had been locked. Just as I turned to move back to the reception, I find this young lad beaming with energy running towards in my direction. He gave me a firm handshake and says that his name is Thukten. He explained that he'd seen me walk towards the rooms which were in fact locked as all the delegates present were having their breakfast in the dining room. And since Rangjung had the keys to his room and was busy having his tea and toast, Thukten welcomed me to his room. He unlocked the door, held my bag and arranged for a bed in the middle of the room. After I'd settled in and rested my weary back, he waited, and we walked back together to the dining hall.

I'd learned a handful of words to get going with my other delegates while at the summit. It was one word that I'd revised in particular to start an instant connection, in a language that would soon turn out be not so foreign to most of us. All of my counterparts from Bhutan greeted me as soon as I entered the hall. The golden word now had to be used for a warm greeting. 'Kuzuzangpo la.'

The summit had begun.

The formal inaugural function began at 6 pm and Mr Arun Kapur had arrived to personally greet every one of us at the reception. He took time to interact with the assembled delegates

and found a relation to every district and dzongkhas the participants hailed from.

We gathered at the hall where officials from both sides of the deliberation had been waiting for us. Envelopes were handed out which had a few relevant documents for the summit to follow. We had one letter with a note on leadership authored by Mr Kapur himself, another one had a few currencies in Indian denomination, and yet another one where HE VetsopNamgyel, Bhutan's ambassador to India, had sent a crisp invitation card for the inaugural dinner, addressed personally to each of the assembled delegates.

We had Gaurav, an official from Bhutan's WWF and Mr Kapur interact with us, giving an insight into what to expect through the 10 days of the summit. The staff from the CEP and RIGGS were soon introduced, and a funny ice-breaking session was conducted. We then hopped on to the bus in our traditional attire, to the Royal Bhutanese Embassy located at Chandragupta Marg in New Delhi.

The air was full of smiles and energy the moment we set foot on Bhutanese soil within the confines of the embassy. Large tents had been pitched to celebrate our arrival and HE Namgyel was there to invite us to begin with the formal dinner. Starters and drinks were served and officials in Gho greeted us. It took us by surprise when HE Loknath Sharma la, Bhutan's Minister of Economic Affairs joined in to greet us in between the function. It was Wangchuk Namgyel la who really amused us with his profound humility. The speaker of the parliament, Namgyel la sat together with us for dinner and had every question within his purview answered. He joked on how easy a task it was to control the parliament as he himself had been a headmaster back in the days. Namgyel la listened patiently to every question and gave an adept answer. He waited till the last of us had finished with the food and accompanied us to the dessert table. I write this with so much detail as I can never think of a similar situation happening with ministers or a government official across this side of the border. We had a discussion even while we devoured the red velvet cake and he was such a nice man to be talking with. We requested for a photo to be taken along with him and he was more than eager to stand for one, calling ambassador Namgyel along.

Mr Kapur introduced us to two guests from Bhutan who were schoolkids invited by the PM on his visit to the Kingdom. They had been invited by the government to witness the landing of Chandrayaan2 on the moon.

Just as we left, we were yet again lucky to have met HE Dechen Wangmo, Bhutan's Minister of Health. We greeted farewell goodbyes to the gathered officials before leaving for the bus that had taken us back to the VYK.



Leki handed us fresh apples from Bhutan



Ah memorabilia! Who doesn't like these!



HE Major General Vetsop Namgyel during an interaction



The formal dinner function

Day 2

The journey to Kathgodam was unexpectedly fairly easy thanks to a really comfortable Shatabdi ride followed by a three-hour journey by jeep to the Kumaon ranges. Seeds were sown for a 10 day long experience of sharing and community in these early hours of the summit itself. It was music, the universally accepted medium of communication which first helped us to cut through barriers of region and culture. We made a thorough ruckus in the compartment on the first day itself but our co passengers were pretty chilled and didn't mind us making a bit of a noise. It was rather fascinating to see even the older adults joining in to help when we played the Heads Up game similar to dumb charades during the latter part of the journey. We helped each other carry luggage and rucksacks, especially on the final uphill climb before we reached the basecamp, which had been a challenge in itself. Hot chai and coffee were served along with some crisp bread pakora to lighten our minds and we were then debriefed by Gaurav and his team at INME for the events to follow on the days to come.

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Day 3

We volunteered to get everyone up by sunrise in order to prepare for the trek in the ranges, which would eventually culminate at its peak in the Siyahi Devi temple. A relatively silent pack of 21 delegates followed by Tshering Wangdi la, Tshering Penjor la from the RIGSS and Thupten sir and Choki sir from CEP slowly began the ascend into the chilly ranges. It was perhaps the timely intervention of the two lady officials from RIGSS that had eventually broke the cold spell prevalent both in the air around and within the trek group. Used plastic discarded by previous tourists to the site were collected in trash bags and everyone soon came together to clear the path leading to the summit. We learnt of how a small deed could positively impact the lives of many in our vicinity. The trek was really beautiful along the way and all of the pit stops had lovely views of the sleepy town below in a bird's eye perspective.

We soon reached the peak of the cliff at the Siyahi Devi temple believed to have been visited by Swami Vivekananda in his time. The long slew of bells round the temple edges fascinated most of us and we soon learned of its significance. The bells were in fact hung as a form of a thanksgiving by returning tourists to the site whose wishes had been fulfilled. It reminded me that life itself was a journey seeking eternal fulfilment.

We soon left the temple and were greeted by the local village folk who served us some hot chai and biscuits. Their warmth perhaps, proved to be more comforting than what the chai had to offer. On the way to INME's second camp we had a brief stop-over at the local village school where a weekly health check-up was taking place. It was such joy to interact with the little school kids and the village folk, and all of us soon bonded over 'lambidadiwaalabaaba' taught by Anuja ma'am. The innocent laughter and smiles by the little ones made our hearts melt.

We moved over to the second camp after waving goodbye to the little kids. All of us were quite hungry by the time we reached and lunch was served immediately. Thupten sir had spoken of the various experiences he'd had at religious centres in his field of work during the lunch course.

Anuja ma'am taught us how to set up a neat tent which was a great learning experience. The pack had then 'joge-joged' into the ferrying jeeps back to base camp where hot soup had been served, followed by a scrumptious dinner before bedtime.





Day 4

We started the day off with some hot south Indian idli, vasa, sambar combo, though I opted for the cheese on toast. Now this had caused many to ask of why I didn't prefer the traditional food from 'down south' and I was left explaining how every piece of steamed/baked dough on the plate was specific to a particular state in the region and clarified that it was never a staple south Indian breakfast. Jokes apart, my counterparts claimed that the breakfast had been really good and it fortified for the hilly ascend.

We packed most of our stuff like the previous day, but we carried extra bottles of water along with some cereal, grains, dried fruits and chocolates for some extra boost. We also took our sleeping bags, as we were planning to camp for the night on the hills. We tried learning a bit of dzongkha songs along the trail, and taught the brothers some songs in India's regional dialects.

Tents were pitched as soon as we arrived by the excited lot, and Gaurav spoke about the self-centred attitude that the world lived by. We prepared our own food for the night and were assisted by Anuja ma'am. Groups were then formed based on the level of expertise in cooking and others split further away into stargazing and music. It was a pleasant night under the stars and the crunchy egg dish turned out pretty well, much to our surprise.

Perhaps the weirdest thing to do after the quiet dinner was to play the infamous 'truth or dare' next to the fire under the watchful ears of the organizers. We should have known that every one of our actions were supervised throughout the summit and we all laugh to it when Gaurav pulled our legs about something he'd heard the night before in between the sessions.



Day 5

Day five was day three of our trek which was spent in the INME camp for the most part. The major part of the trek involved returning to the base camp from the camping site through a neat short cut through the woods. We woke up to a bit of water in our tents due to incessant rains in the hills at dawn. But luckily, someone had managed to arrange all our shoes neatly under the shelter of the tents. After having a good morning tea with the view of the clouds touching the Uroli ranges, all of us were called to line up by Anuja ma'am in a way that covered the breadth of our camping ground. We collected every bit of waste from the campsite. The idea was to leave the site as it were when we'd come in initially. The tents were dismantled, rolled and packed, and all of us took a smiling group photograph with the misty mountains behind in sight. We'd soon left the site, marching one after another through pine lined forests. Tshering la from RIGSS encouraged all of us to collect some fine shamu along the way so that we could cook the delicious shamu datsi while back at camp. For the rest of the day, Gaurav had put us in a great learning experience with his insightful stories and classes on leadership and how we could change the world with a little change in our perspective. The evening was spent with our brothers explaining Bhutan's rich tradition and cultural heritage. All of them spoke of their hometown, pointing to a guide book they'd bought to gift to the kids at Ritinjali later in the summit.

Phuntshok shared her story and sweet candy, going in to detail on what it took to make guram. Tshering gave us a concise history class on Bhutan and its leadership. Rangjung taught us some Buddhist prayers he had brought along in his phone. We sang and laughed through the night by the campfire, feelings so familiar like in the song.



Day 6

We woke up late on the 6th day and ran for breakfast. Soon afterwards, all of us had grouped together for one last session by Doc Apurva where he'd taken a little time to rush us through

the days of trek. Tiny black strings were handed out and little colourful beads were given to each of us. The two beads signified our appreciation and thankfulness to the fellow delegates, along with a third which represented our commitment to achieve something. The whole exercise had left me teary eyed and the love in the circle was overwhelming. After the activity, it was time to thank the wonderful staff at the INME campus. The food we'd been served was amazing and they made sure that everyone had their fill even after the stipulated time had exceeded.

So we pulled our luggage and began moving from the base camp into the jeeps waiting down below. Unlike the speedy ascent to the camp when we'd arrived on the 4th, the descent was slower and more gradual. Memories of the days gone by were still afresh in our minds and it took a bit of time to convince the soul that the trek was sort of over.

The jeep ride back to Kathgodam had been fun. We swiftly passed through the Kumaon cantonment ranges, loudly singing pop songs and waving at friendly locals rather excitedly. Our jeep had Anshu, Nimrat, Tshering and Jatin and I remember even the little man driving our jeep had his hand in tune to the wave like fashion we flashed through the windows. Nitish and Zainab from the jeeps behind had adequately responded and followed suite but the rest of the lot were fast asleep.

The long journey with the dancing and loud music thoroughly exhausted each one of us until the jeeps came to a halt beside the pristine Bheemtal lake and it was indeed a sight to behold. The outer edges were laced with lush green shrubs of every kind, and the Himalayan mountain ranges lay behind in magnificent serendipity. We clicked a handful of photos and left soon as we'd been a little behind schedule with just an hour left for our train to depart. We arrived at the sleepy town of Kathgodam to the restaurant that had served us previously. After a decent lunch and a failed lemon challenge by Rangjung and Tshering, we jumped back into the vehicles that took us back to the station in the nick of time. We arrived exactly five minutes prior to scheduled departure and soon took control of our coach with the music and merry dancing. Though I've not been extremely fond of train journeys, the shatabdi express has changed my whole perspective of rail travel. It was my first experience travelling on a train in such a classy compartment. The food and services provided throughout were a class apart. Even our Bhutanese brothers were left wondering if the rush and chaos they'd seen of the Mumbai morning rail commutes on YouTube were false information. The six our journey back to New Delhi had been satisfyingly good, but we'd have to finally wave goodbyes to Doc, Anuja and Gaurav.

The sweltering Delhi heat took us head on as we stepped onto the platform from a plush air conditioned coach. A head count was soon taken by Choki la and we moved towards the exit. We soon boarded the bus and went back to the Vishwa Yuvak Kendra in Chanakyapuri. The bus travelled along the edges of the Rajpath and Rashtrapathi Bhawan and the India Gate as Thupten sir briefed us of the activities that lay ahead on the next day. We reached the VYK by 10 and soon rested our weary bodies at the dorms.

Thukten and Leki had said that they had no American fast food restaurants back home. Laksh insisted we buy them some burger to give them the taste of it. The food was soon arranged and everyone had their fill. Oh yes, we'd specifically ordered veg burgers but I believe calling veg burgers 'burgers' in itself is close to criminal.



Day 7

We began early in the morning at the Vishwa Yuvak Kendra with a light breakfast. The tourist bus had arrived exactly on time and we left at 8.30 am sharp from the centre. It took us through the diplomatic districts, the avenues of the rich and affluent and finally to the lesser known alleyways and urban slums of the national capital region. It was this bright sunny morning with the sun shining above in full glory. The heat therefore, and the

perspiration as a result of it, was predictably unbearable. We soon started off slowly into Kusumpur Pahari and what met the eye was a sorry sight. People had been lining up early in the morning behind tanker lorries carrying water. The narrow roads through the dwelling had been congested with plastic containers that had been arranged haphazardly to carry water.

We reached the kids centre at the edge of the dwelling and were overjoyed to see the smiling, welcoming faces. All the kids wore a broad smile and welcomed us with the traditional namaste. Our lot was immediately split into groups of two, with the first group occupying the top level with the younger kids and the second, among the older kids in the basement level. The instructor wished us and introduced the little kids to the group. We were initially overwhelmed by the outpouring of love by the tiny tots but Tshering soon came to the rescue with her vibrant rendition of 'Iambidadivalabaaba' which had the room in splits. The room had livened up and everybody was seen waltzing to the tunes of the action song. The kids were then made to present some of the poems they'd learnt at the centre. The history of Bhutan was enacted in the form of a play soon afterwards. The Dhruk dragon was drawn on craft paper and the kids made a lasting hand impression on them in jolly colours. The kids were really happy when chocolates were handed out, and we'd returned to more dancing.

It was about 12 noon when we left the dwelling after bidding goodbyes to the little ones. The bus had been waiting for us beside the Chinmaya Vidyalaya school whose students were seen outside sipping on frozen milk and drinks to escape from the midday heat. We boarded the vehicle to begin our onward journey to the Ritinjali office and the Second Chance school, where lunch had been arranged. After a bit of an interaction and activity with the students at Second Chance, we left the office after having tea.

The bus then took us to the plush upscale Ambience and Promenade malls in the other part of town. The first thing the group had done was to rush to the food court and have a quick snack. We had all sort of diverse cuisine on the table ranging from American, mediterranean to the far eastern. We then had a good time visiting stores and clicking photos while the rest of the group were busy window shopping. The bus arrived at sharp 8 pm and we returned to the VYK to settle for the night.



DAY 8

We hopped on to the bus at 8 am to leave for the Red Fort in Chandni Chowk. Some of us acted as tour guides to our friends as we arrived at the high security entrance to the fort manned by vigilant security guards. The red sandstone fortress had a heavily walled garden in which there was another bustling market inside where various handicrafts trinkets and memorabilia were sold for keen tourists. The CISF headquarters was visible in the distance inside the walled perimeter.

We arrived at the Drishyakala Art Gallery, which is a private venture under the Archaeological Survey of India. The façade emanated a world class aura of sophistication and was a work of art like the many exhibits it housed inside. On the inside, works by prominent Indian and International artists were recreated to stunning precision and detail and the soft lighting on these exhibits provided a subtle niche to the whole effort. We were guided by a jubilant Ms Harpreet Kaur who had been a wonderful resource person through our linocut workshops. The staff at DAG gifted us colourful puzzles neatly packaged in magnetic boxes and the whole experience had been fulfilling.

It was past afternoon when our linocut pieces of work finally took form and we were really hungry by then. We ate at Haldiram's in Connaught Place and sampled every dish on the menu. The sweet lassi was the ultimate take away of the afternoon after a tiring day in the heat.

The next stop had been Sarojini market, filled with all the men and women on Earth. We split into many groups, with one among each well versed in Hindi. We grew accustomed to the hawking by the vendors in a short time but were surprised to find out that none of them entertained bargaining. After having spent one hour we realized that Thukten and Tshering had separated from the group and there wasn't any means of communicating with them. We separated into little groups to go on a searching spree along the nooks and crannies of the market. They were finally found happy and smiling at 8 in front of gate 5 where we'd been told to assemble at the stipulated time.

On the way back to the VYK, Thupten sir briefed us on the activities planned for the next day. At the centre, we quickly regrouped after dinner to practice for the final closing ceremony to be held on the next day, way into the night.





Day 9

Technically the final day of summit, we dressed in formals to meet the charming Ambassador HE Vetsop Namgyel once again to gain from his vast trove of knowledge and experience serving under the many premiers in the Kingdom of Bhutan. Always open to questions and way too keen to answer them, the ambassador was a thorough gentleman when it came to accommodating his guests. We deliberated on areas ranging from education, health, technology, eco-tourism and climate change and all of us had a lot to gain out of this exercise. HE Namgyel gave us a brief history of the country and how its leadership had transformed over the course of the century.

We quickly grouped for a photo and tasty hot momos were soon served with a cup of tea. All of us had eaten to our hearts content before we left to the bus awaiting our arrival. I shouldn't forget to mention how the group had wished a lovely 'Onashamsakal' in Malayalam just as we'd reached the embassy. We came returned to the VYK just in time for lunch and we had a payasam like dessert this day, in a way to commemorate Onam I guess.

Jatin and Phuntshok conducted a small session to budding entrepreneurs from his college while we had our lunch, and both the sides had equally benefitted out of the exchange. It was then to our dorms to prepare the slides for the presentations that had to be done, briefly summing up the whole summit. There was a short recording session of the newly minted IBYS anthem outside the Kendra. Sushanto ji and Thupten sir had choreographed the frames and lighting while we were left to sing in the heat.

There was an interactive session with the IBYS alumni from the previous year followed by an interaction with the former civil servant and member of the governing body of CEP Mr Vijay Chhibber which was really informative and gave clarity to many pressing issues that were relevant in the country.

The closing ceremony began right on time when HE Vetsop Namgyel arrived and the opening addresses were given by the guests assembled. Joint Secretary North Shri Piyush Srivastava graced the occasion once it started along with officials from the Home Ministry

and the Ministry of External Affairs. Our original anthem for the IBYS had been recited and it was such joy to see the whole audience sway to the tunes of 'Feeling So familiar.' A Bhutanese folk dance had been enacted followed by rendition of AR Rahman's 'Vande Mataram'.

There was a heart touching performance by Mr Bipul Chhettri on the plight of a farmer whose trees were axed. We closed the performances for the night with a farewell song where the house stood in circles holding our pinkies together hippity-hopping to a slow song which grew in pace as the song progressed. HE Namgyel, owing to his military background, was truly the last man still standing without a glint of sweat on his brow while all the others were left panting after Karma had advanced the song to a fast paced number as it drew to a close. All the guests thanked each other and left and it was just the participants now in the hall.

We exchanged gifts and all was well until we heard a wail from one of the corners. The indomitable Karma Yeshe was sobbing seeking comfort on the shoulders of one of the participants. This act had a catalyst effect on every other participant and the room was literally filled with hugs kisses and sobs. A smiling Sushanta was seen running in the midst of all the tears, happy to have got material to include in his documentary to follow. He certainly had a field day.

We had a fulfilling last supper with all the delegates seated together across tables arranged to form one long table. Reminiscing the days of love and fun as we shared rasgullas.

It was what followed that was the show stealer for the night. The Gho's and Kira's changed hands as was with the Juba, Mundu, and Salwar kameez. Each of us wore each others' traditional attire and it was such a true cultural exchange. Choki la had come to bid goodbye to each of us before he left. We clicked many a photos and danced to the famous Panama song, and made merry through the night.



Day 10

For the first time in 10 days, we'd woken up early to the tunes of the alarm at 5.30 am. The buses to the airport had arrived and saw them off to their homeland. It could have been a scene from a Bollywood song as we held hands and were separated while blowing farewell kisses.

We reached back at the VYK and had breakfast along with Jatin, Jaseel, Nitish, Vidhi, Anshu, Zainab and Thukten sir and Sushanto ji.

Back at the airport, the final boarding announcement was made for the flight travelling to Kochi. I located my seat and finally settled in to open my satchel with a book and a notepad. A tiny note with a message on it had slipped out of the book as I'd taken it out of the little bag.

Kadrin Che :)

The summit had ended.



Jatin Sharma

India



Anxiety, loneliness and hunger would be the three most dominant feelings I can think of right now, when I recall the time I took a cab from Janakpuri to Vishwa Yuvak Kendra. Being the youngest of the lot and probably the one who had done the least amount of amazing things amongst the participants, I was naturally feeling out of place even before reaching there. Eleven students from Bhutan, nine others from India, all set to go on an adventure that would be one of the best memories of their life, something they'll talk about when they turn 70. I had no idea that the nervousness would turn into excitement so soon, and the strangers into loved ones



Thukten, Karma Yeshe, Cyril, Jaseel and Lakshya were the torchbearers for me during the first few hours of the summit. My beautiful roommates, I already knew that this journey was going to be wholesome. The first interaction that we had as a group of 21 was with the entire group that made this summit possible for us, including Mr. Arun Kapur, Mr. Thupten Tsewang, Mr. Choki Wangchuk, and Mr. Tshering Wangdi amongst many others, my immense love and respect to all of them. After a brief orientation and several cute ice-breaking sessions, the 21 of us were still clueless about each other's personality, but we had seen the passion in everyone's eyes and acknowledged the fact that we had amazing company. I will be honest here, Indians and Bhutanese alike, our eyes popped open when we saw the 2000 rupees that we got for no apparent reason, along with all of the accessories -- an extremely warm gesture by the team!

Highlight of the day – The Royal Bhutanese Embassy, a grand, picturesque, elegant, conservative and ultra-fine specimen of Bhutanese architecture that blew me away. We had our welcome dinner hosted by the embassy in presence of several diplomats and ministers from Bhutan, including the Ambassador of Bhutan to India - Major General Vetsop Namgyel. Down-to-earth and humble would be extreme understatements for the very

persona that these gentlemen had. They sat with us like we were old friends, answered our queries, asked questions and didn't get up from the table until we did (Ema Datsi Debut). We learned tons, we ate tons and we made some unforgettable memories that will always remind me of one of the highlights of Bhutanese culture – humbleness.



After the visit, we retired at VYK and waited for the morning, half of the night spent sleeping and half of it spent gossiping with the brothers I had just discovered. I had never felt so comfortable with new people ever before in my life, and I couldn't be happier about it. The first day of the summit was everything I expected from it and a lot more. I made friends and memories, experienced a plethora of emotions and learned a lot about Bhutan as well as India in terms of geography, politics, religion and demographics. Full throttle excitement for Uttarakhand!



4th September 2019, New Delhi – Uroli

It was a blur, the journey from YVK to NDLS Railway station, because of the sleepiness from a night of almost no sleep. The only memory I have is of me trying to explain my hometown – Delhi – to this beautiful human/pumpkin hybrid named Tshering Yangden. This was more or less my introduction to her, and it transformed into a close, bittersweet companionship by the end of the journey. The station arrived, the train arrived, the breakfast arrived and it was followed by laughter, conversations, music, laughter, conversations, more food and then suddenly it came to a halt. I started discussing our families with one of my Bhutanese companions (I would prefer not naming them), and for the first time realized how difficult life



can be even in the land of happiness, and how different it is to my own. The journey came to an end after another round of snacks and conversations and we were at Kathgodam.

On the way from Kathgodam to Sitlakheth, we got to have a lunch buffet for the first time, and it was delicious. With filled stomachs and empty brains, we set off in a jeep to our base camp in Uroli, where we were welcomed by an astonishingly beautiful cottage with several camps outside it, a huge ground and surprisingly good washrooms. It was everything I expected, and more. I forgot to mention that the jeep ride again served as a great catalyst to fasten our bonding with each other, five hours full of singing, talking and laughing with occasional hiccups and arguments. I was already starting to notice the similarities more than the differences in our cultures, with the biggest jolt being Bollywood. Some of the Bhutanese knew every single song and movie our cinema had ever produced and strangely, even my knowledge was less than a mere half of it.

After resting at the base camp and some more fun, we were introduced to the staff at INME: our smooth doc Apoorv, Mr. Gaurav amongst many others, and we had a sweet round of introduction with the participants. By this time, the participants had started to know each other a little deeper and we knew who we were connecting with, who we would be close friends with and sadly, who we would just say hi and bye to. I think that it is natural though, you cannot be friends with everyone. Even so, at this particular summit, I liked every single person and I wish I could be friends with all of them. Followed by an amazing dinner buffet, we all set off to sleep, obviously after lounging around and having fun for a while. A day well spent, a sleep well deserved.



5th September 2019, Uroli

Trek day 1 and 2

The rain gods were in our favour and not in our favour at the same time, so we had to compromise by driving half way to the trek, and trekking the other half. The morning was beautiful, the breakfast was great, and everyone had a very positive aura, looking forward to the journey ahead. If I had to describe the journey in one word, it would be 'conversations'. I talked to Tshering, Nitish, Lakshya, Phuntshok, Cyril and many others on the way about a plethora of topics ranging from the Buddha to the life of an average person in Bhutan to the value to forgiveness to our dreams and expectations. The temple at the top of the hill was beautiful, and the Anganvaadi on the way to the Sitlakheth campus was such an amazing learning experience. Sitlakheth again, was filled with food and luxury, giving us no room to complain about anything. We were tired, but our souls and stomachs were full.



Upon retiring to the basecamp afterwards, we had our first discussion session. The topic was, “how we see ourselves as world citizens” and there followed several questions on the same regarding our dreams, hopes and expectations from the world as global citizens. Astonishing, I would say, the amount of perspectives and extremely unconventional inputs we got. Just 21 young people who have barely seen the real world, who haven’t even started their professional lives yet, with so much knowledge and acumen, I was pleasantly surprised. Crisp, articulate observations and statements were shared, and I left the room with a belief that even though both of the countries’ citizens have a slightly different story



to tell, their expectations from the world are more or less the same – a safer, greener, more peaceful world which isn’t fuelled by greed. The discussion was followed by dinner and a night full of music and conversations again. Slowly, the conversations were getting deeper, and the silences were disappearing.

6th September 2019, Uroli

The next day was the full-on trek day, and the beginning was very similar to day one. We got up, snacked up, packed up and trekked up the hill. This time though, I remember the conversations being more personal, more indulgent, and sad. We visited a temple on the way where people tie bells after their wishes get fulfilled, and munched on our packed lunches as soon as we got to the summit. Tent pitching followed it, after we got a teamwork lesson by Gaurav, and we were all set to have our second discussion, where we had to speak about our dreams, hopes and expectations as national citizens instead, for our own country, and the things that we’re proud of and worried about. This discussion was difficult for someone like me who had little knowledge about politics, governance and the intricacies of my country, but somehow, after listening to everyone, I was able to articulate my raw thoughts as words that were not utterly rubbish. The verdict according to me was that the Bhutanese were much more clear about their country, possibly owing to their superior sense of nationalism as a “One Nation, One People” Kingdom, and India’s vast diversity that makes it harder for us to talk about it as a single entity.

The discussion carried on well into the night, and was followed by dinner preparations by the participants and the staff, resulting in an overly delicious, “crunchy” egg curry. Another night full of music and conversations, and then we drifted off in our unevenly pitched tents, under a starry sky.



7th September 2019, Uroli – Basecamp

Starting the day by cleaning the hilltop, following the principle of “No-Trace Camping” we trekked down for about an hour to reach our basecamp from behind, a very clever route. Our dreams of sleeping were shattered when Gaurav announced that he’ll be taking some sessions with us, but we realized later that those were actually pretty amazing and well worth skipping a morning full of sleep.

A game of mathematics where only Neeraj and I got the answer right :P that taught us how easily we get influenced by others and how a simple mathematical question couldn’t be answered by seemingly smart adults, just because of a lack of confidence. It was followed by a subjective question where we were forced to think beyond our constrained

We learned how to respect each other’s opinions and how to acknowledge the fact that our right can be someone’s wrong and vice versa.

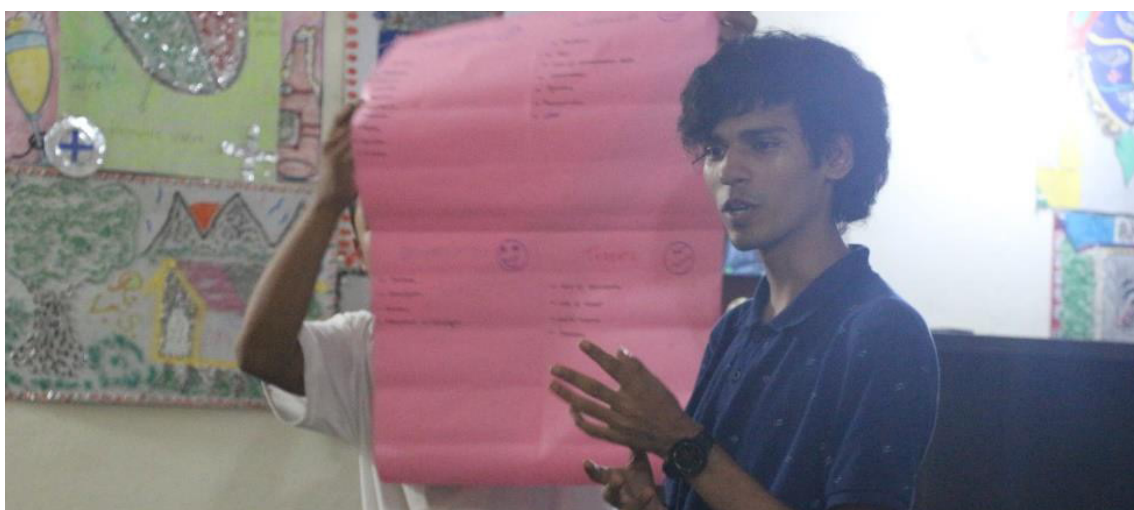


minds and work together to rank five people in order, which we obviously couldn't, and we learned the fact that objective measurement of subjective variables should be done whenever possible, instead of simply following the rule of majority. We learned how to respect each other's opinions and how to acknowledge the fact that our right can be someone's wrong and vice versa. This was followed by an amazing lunch buffet, after which we were given a choice to either attend an adventure sport or sleep, and oh boy, no one slept.

The Friendship Ladder

Wooden steps, had to be climbed along with a partner, both had to reach the top otherwise the task was a failure. Surprisingly, no one failed. Amazing instructions by the staff, ground-breaking motivation by Karma Yeshe and a feeling of embarrassment because literally everyone climbed it motivated Tshering and I to do it, and we did it! She was almost flying on the last step but we succeeded, and we learned that Jatin isn't as weak as he looks, and that collaboration is the way to go, not competition. A smiling duo can be seen in the photo below. J





After this activity, we all went down to have some rest and had dinner, slept all the way into the morning and cherished our final day in Uroli.

8th – 9th September 2019, Uroli – Delhi

The most emotional morning so far, started with a session known as ACT – Appreciate, Commit and Thank. We were given three beads each for A,C,T and we had to hand out A and T to the people we would like to appreciate and thank, just one each, and keep the C for ourselves to commit to something truthfully. Now this was hard, there were so many amazing people there who deserved appreciation and so many beautiful people. But we had to decide, and with teary eyes, we did that and spoke words filled with love and respect for our companions. This was followed by an appreciation session for the staff that took care of us, and Lakshya made a sketch for them, a lovely gesture. It was time to leave Uroli!

One amazing jeep ride later, the best one so far with Tshering, Cyril, Nimrat and Anshu, we had lunch and reached the Kathgodam railway station around 3pm. The train ride was supremely emotional, with us sharing our feelings with each other and realizing that we were going back to Delhi with just three days left together. We smelled Delhi before we saw it, and I'd be lying if I say it was pleasant. Maybe it was just me, but I really missed the

place we had just left.

A good night's sleep followed, finally away from the bugs and I was in a constant sad mood because of the fact that this dream-like summit was about to come to a halt.

Ritinjali Day!

During the summit, we were asked to prepare some fun activities for a workshop at Ritinjali on the 9th, so we did! The learning centre was situated in the slums of Vasant Kunj, and it was quite a walk to reach there. The Bhutanese could finally see the other side of Delhi, the side that shows how painfully bipolar the city is, and how the broad highways and tall buildings mean nothing when so many people are living in such harsh conditions. We met the kids there, we separated into two groups and had an hour full of fun and laughter as an attempt to brighten up their lives for at least a brief amount of time. We sang, we danced and we talked, and we all learned so much from each other. Tshering did the 'lambi daadi wale baba' like a pro and I am proud of her for that. After the kids, we met some adults in another centre known as the "Second Chance School" where we had a really engaging, interactive session with a teacher until the evening. It was a wholesome day, full of learning experiences, fun and bonding.

Right after the workshops, we went to Ambience Mall for shopping, and oh boy did we have



fun! The Bhutanese got to try food from various American food chains and got to shop from brands that aren't available in their country, although most of them were just waiting for the next day – The Sarojini Day!

10th September 2019

The final 2 days, I feel like crying again.

A smoggy Delhi morning with yawning kids sitting in a luxury bus right after breakfast, beautiful. We went to the Red Fort and got a private tour of the Drishyakala Museum, and the Bhutanese as well as the Indians got to learn a lot about the navratnas, Indian history in general and about various art forms that we never knew existed. By now, we were feeling like family and everyone was so comfortable with everyone that it became our comfort



zone, one that we didn't want to break. After the tour, we were introduced to a painting technique called Lino-cut Technique, and we got a chance to do it! (Picture above)

After the workshop, we were all set to do some shopping and a lot of bargaining at Sarojini Nagar! The Bhutanese were super excited to get gifts for all the eager friends and family back home, for themselves and as far as I could see, mostly for their girlfriends. Mountains of shoes, clothes, more shoes, bags, key chains, phone covers all over the place! We were divided into groups and started shopping and having fun, until we realized that some of our Bhutanese friends wandered off alone and they didn't have Indian sim cards so there was no way to contact them. Of course they were smart and mature enough to report back right on time but our little hearts were jumping out of our bodies for an hour! My favourite moment from Sarojini? Tshering's "Zulm matt karo humpe, 35 size dikhaado".

It was night-time, our second last night together, and we knew it. Instead of sleeping, we spent the first few hours of the night preparing cultural performances for the farewell that was about to take place on the next day, with a lot of imminent personalities and alumni coming to see what we had gathered during this beautiful summit. We prepared songs and dances, created memories and learned more about each other's culture. At one point in the night when the Indians and the Bhutanese were preparing their own performances, it kind of felt like we're separated again, but the feeling was temporary, because in the morning we were back to being a family, eating together, having our last breakfast on the same table.

11-12th September 2019

The last day. The last 24 hours. The last breakfast, the last lunch, the last dinner, the last everything, at least for a while. The day started with a visit to the Royal Bhutanese Embassy (for which I borrowed a kurta from our Director ji, Susanta, and pants from Cyril, and slippers from Lakshya), for a meeting with Major General, the ambassador of Bhutan to India. We talked about our experiences so far, and discussed several aspects of Bhutan, India, and Indo-Bhutan relations from various perspectives. This was followed by a round of snacks



that made me remember the session I had organized for my Enactus teammates back at VYK. We reached the centre an hour later than expected but even then, had a beautiful session with Tshering and Phuntshok as the main speakers explaining Bhutanese history and the business culture, respectively (Guram chocolates are delicious by the way). We skipped lunch for it. After that, we practiced and recorded the theme song for the summit that five of us created during the past few days. We named ourselves the Indo-Bhutanese Youth Band – Rangjung Dorji, Cyril Cherian, Anshu Saikia, Tshering Yangden and Jatin Sharma. The song consisted of Dzongkha, Hindi, English and Malayalam, band photo can be seen below.

After this, we got busy with alumni sessions and preparations for our cultural performances and the presentation that we had to give in front of various diplomats and ministers as our farewell function. Our speech was extremely emotional yet super easy as we had a ton to say, took us 10 minutes instead of five that were allotted to us, adding to the misfortunes of our amazing MCs, Nimrat and Leki Bumpa. After the speeches, we performed our cultural pieces and everyone in the hall gathered for a Bhutanese traditional dance, led by none other than our very own Karma Yeshe. There was also a Nepali folk song performance by Mr Vipul Chhetri that won everyone's heart.

Tears, tears and more tears followed the ceremony as everyone cried their hearts out. "I want to eat something, I cannot cry without eating", Tshering kept saying this while crying,



and I will always remember this. We cried, we hugged, we cried more and the rest of it is just an emotional blur, I cannot capture it in words. We had our last meal together, and everyone set off to enjoy their last few hours with this newly found family. We sang and danced, with happiness and grief amalgamating in our hearts. The sleep was short, and the night was painful.

At 7 in the morning, it was time for my loved ones to leave. I went with them to the airport, stood with them in the line and I didn't take my eyes off them until they disappeared into the crowd behind that glass wall that was separating us. This wasn't the end, this was just the beginning and I promise to meet them again soon, as soon as I can, and as often as I can. I love you, my fellows, I love you with all of my heart.

Karma Yangchen

Bhutan



We the elected eleven candidates with four officials from RIGSS started our journey on 12th September from Paro airport around 7 am and were received by Mr. Choki Wangchuk at Indra Gandhi airport (India). Upon reaching the airport, we travelled by bus towards Vishwa Yuvak Kendra where we met and interacted with the other participants. By 4 pm we gathered in the conference room for an ice-breaking session where we were introduced to the officials we were going to intermingle with during our stay. After the introductory session, along with the participants who were to observe the Chandrayaan-2 in India, we headed towards the Bhutanese embassy for a dinner. We met with Bhutanese ambassador Vetsop Namgyel and the speaker from Bhutan during our dinner. By 9 pm we retired for the day after having received instructions for the following day.



Introductory session

The next day, we started our journey around 4:30 am towards New Delhi Railway station and rode the train to Uttarakhand where the participants sang, interacted and enjoyed the view of the Indian scenery until we reached our destination. Breakfast was served on the train. I thought that it would be difficult to interact with the other participants, but as soon as we met each other, it was like meeting old friends. We shared our thoughts and views on the program until we reached Kathgodham. The bonding between the participants went well. As we reached there, we divided ourselves into five groups (mixed Indians and Bhutanese in each group) and rode drove to Uttarakhand. Lunch was served in one of the restaurants on the way. We had several rests in between the journey exploring the view of the environment and tasted local cuisines. It took around five hours to reach the base camp (Sitlakhet campus). Finally, at around 5:30 pm we reached our base camp, where the participants got into three to be in a tent. Having settled in our tent, we gathered for an introductory session followed by dinner and a bonfire.

On 5th September we had our first trek. We had our breakfast and tea at 6: 30 am followed by a briefing on the activity of the day. To reach the base camp we drove for two hours. Our destination o was Sitla temple. We started our hike with the instruction from the coordinator. As we climbed the uphill participants were fully engrossed in communication, captivated by the environment, traditions, and cultures of the community. Our hour walk was a meaningful one as we cleared trash along the way until we reached Siyani temple which was believed to

be 600 years old. We were welcomed with tea and snacks. Afterward, we visited the primary school near the temple where students and teachers were celebrating Teacher's Day. We interacted with the students and took part in an activity coordinated by Mrs. Anuja who guided us during our hike. After spending 30 minutes there with the students, we headed towards blue camp for lunch. There, we had a meaningful session on tent pitching. It was a practical session where we were made to pitch tents by following the instructor's instruction and it was a new learning experience for me. I think this is an important skill. We will need this skill because we need to know how to pitch a tent when we go for camping. After the session was over, we returned to our base camp.



Activity with the students



Lesson on tent pitching

Post resting for half an hour, we gathered for a rope ladder climbing activity. We were asked to pair up in order to climb the rope ladder. Through the activity, we learnt about teamwork and the importance of communication between teammates. The team succeeded when the members had good coordination and communication skills. Participants then gathered in the dining hall for a discussion on the theme: 'the issues that concern me; my desires, hopes and expectations as a world citizen.' Participants shared their opinions where I realized that everyone was equally concerned about the condition of the world we were living in. For me, the most concerning topic was global warming and today's youth. I hadn't thought much of the effect of global warming up until I got out of the airport in India. The essence of air was different: it felt thick and warm and it turned out that the temperature in India was double of Bhutan. The youth speak of their worries about the world but only a few work towards lessening those worries. This concerns me the most and my only hope is to let the youth realize the condition of the world we are living in.

The following day, on 6th September we had our second-day trek. We took our lunch box along with the required materials provided by the officials. We were accompanied by a doctor and the officials. It was an uphill walk for around 4 to 5 hours. Despite the scorching sun, the participants enjoyed the atmosphere along with the experience provided by the new environment which included adventure and the landscape of the valley. The scenery was mesmerizing to watch and the birds chirping were soothing to listen to.

We engaged ourselves with picking garbage along the way which lead to collecting of Sisi Shamoo, (mushroom) for dinner which was fun. Participants helped each other with carrying bags as the uphill walk started to become harder. The fact that a few hours ago I was at the bottom and covered distance up the hill gave me immense satisfaction and a sense of achievement as I climbed the hills. We crossed one of the oldest temples to reach Banegad camp where we were supposed to camp for the night. Like the night before we made a team

of three per tent. Not long after that, the jeep carrying our mats, sleeping bags, tents, and the necessary items for dinner reached the camp. Team members pitched their own tents,



Tents pitched by the participants.

and helped other teams until all the tents were pitched.

Discussion were centred around: "My views on society, governance, politics and democracy. What makes me proud?" in a popcorn style took place before dinner. Every participant shared his/her views and concerns. The foremost thing that concerned Bhutanese participants was the sovereignty of our country and the political and democratic system we had in our country. Discussions ended productively with some jokes and meaningful talks. The participants then engaged in preparing dinner and everyone ate around the campfire. The cold air, the magnificent sunset followed by the clear blue sky made me realize that I am truly living my life.

We woke up to the beautiful foggy scenery over the Banegad camp on 7th September. We ensured that we left the camp clean as we had found it. After the cup of tea and snacks, we walked downhill which took around 1 and a half hours to reach our base camp. Once there we spent around one hour on our chores. Then we gathered for a session on reflection and learning cycle which was led by Mr. Gaurav Saklani who was one of the facilitators. He took us through the learning cycle. We were asked to solve a math question regarding the loss sustained by a shopkeeper after selling phone cover with fake 1000 notes. And the other one was to choose the best and the worst characters from the story, to which we had



Morning weather



Session by Mr. Gaurav

come up with different answers and views. Through that session, I came to learn that, every

person has their own perspective and ways to lead.

After taking an hour's break for lunch we gathered for a discussion on the theme: "My future: What can I contribute to bringing a change from this group?" Every participant dreamt of a virtuous future. We came up with plans to help our world as dutiful citizens. Everyone had committed to be a responsible citizen from that day forward. We didn't realize the night had come since all were involved in serious conversation of their commitments and dreams as a citizen. We ended our discussion with dinner followed by setting a camp fire in front of the dining room. All were involved in an exchange of information on culture and traditions of their own countries. We talked of our views on the program with each other and the bonding between participants seems to develop further.

The time in Uroli came to an end. We gathered for a close-up session where we were made to give beads to the person we were thankful to and the person whom we appreciated. We then drove to the train station, exploring the lake on our way and had lunch at Uttarakhand where we started our train journey back to Delhi around 4 pm. We checked in Vishwa Yuvak Kendra at 9 pm where we were briefed on the next day's program.

On 9th September, we were taken to Ritinjali , we had to walk through a small town to get there. As we walked through, I witnessed people in queue with buckets in their hands rushing for water that was pouring down from the tank of the truck. It was really surprising to see people fighting over a drop of water. It struck me with strings of thoughts. What if our country too was in such situation? Would people survive? Is there a way to not face such situation ever? It was hard to imagine myself among those people fighting for water. It was only then I realized how important the conservation and preservation of natural environment was, and why it was one of the pillars of GNH.

We got to interact with students where we shared a story on Bhutan through acting to give a glimpse of our country. We spent around two hours with them, playing, talking and energizing with the activity on hand painting. After that, we headed towards the Second Chance School. The school was started in 2003, as a built-up learning facility by NGO named Ritinjali in Delhi. It's a school for disadvantaged young adults who unfortunately had to end educational chapter early in their lives. We were welcomed by the staff there and to familiarize ourselves with each other we played a short game on introducing ourselves by walking around according to the instructions of the instructor. We did a group activity on



Interactions in Ritinjali

SWOT Analysis (strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats) concerning today's youth. A member from each group presented their final analysis to everyone. After that, we got to explore the Ambience mall during our leisure time.

The next day, we visited Red Fort which is one of the historic monuments located in Delhi, built-in the 17th century (1639) by Mughal Emperor Shahjahan where architectural elements, museums, and halls were found. It was a great opportunity for me to learn about the nine famous artists whose artworks were displayed in the museum. Then we did an activity on



Art carving activity

art carving and painting where every individual got to draw, carve and paint. It was a new experience and learning for me.

On the last day of our stay in India, we visited the Bhutanese embassy once again. There, ambassador V Namgyel shared the history of India-Bhutan relationship. He also talked on the heritage and cultural links between India and Bhutan. He talked of the importance of youths to have the right attitude for a successful future. Then the participants prepared for the presentation on the Youth Program followed by a meeting with youth summit alumni and eminent persons. By 5 pm we gathered for a final farewell, honoured by Bhutanese ambassador and other important guests. We the participants made a presentation of the 9 day youth summit, performed cultural items which was followed by a speech by the honourable ambassador. The youth summit, 2019 ended fruitfully with the distribution of certificates for 21 participants by Ambassador. Ten days of the youth summit program helped me to realize the importance in building the India-Bhutan relationship and the roles and responsibilities of the young citizens of the world.

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Karma Yeshi Bhutan



The India-Bhutan Youth Summit (IBYS) was an event held from 3-12 September, 2019 in India. The IBYS was started in 2018 by the Centre for Escalation of Peace (CEP), in collaboration with the Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS). The program aims to a cultural exchange of leadership ideas, governance, ideas of peace, friendship and to have fun and understand more about India and Bhutan. A total of 20 students from Bhutan and India participated in the ten days summit. The eleven university students from different colleges of Bhutan lead by the officials from the Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) and a total of nine students from India who were graduates and university students between the ages of 18-24 led by officials from CEP.

When I was informed about the summit, I was bit worried. I felt I wouldn't be able to utter any words and was unsure about representing my country well. Travelling for the first time abroad gave me the opportunity to experience a new environment -- every single minute, every step I took was a great learning and exposure for me. Travelling abroad by flight, train and by different modes of transport which I had never experienced before itself was a great learning experience. The different landscapes, different people, a completely new world made me understand the life in another part of world and made me think futuristically.

Starting from the day we reached India, I got a chance to taste Indian cuisines and to know more about the background of the Indian dishes. Like in our country climate, trade among different regions, religion, influence culinary practices. I developed a special liking for chaat which is a mixture of potato, crisp fried bread in curd (dahi vada or bhalla); gram or chickpeas and tangy-salty spices, with sour Indian chilli and saunth (dried ginger and tamarind sauce), fresh green coriander leaves and yogurt for garnish, and other ingredients use in samosa making.

During IBYS we were engaged in various activities like four days trekking at Uroli, Uttarakhand, followed by a visit to Ritinjali, slum area, Second Chance school, Red Fort, and a session with the Bhutanese ambassador, which ended the summit with our presentation in Delhi.

We started our journey from Delhi railway station at 5:30 am. It was an exciting journey as I came to meet different people from different religious background from India. They also informed me about the different types of religion existing in India like Hinduism, Christianity, Islam making India a diverse country. Because India is so diverse often people are not aware of what is happening in another part of the country. From the Kathgodam railway station we had lunch and started our journey towards INME base camp at Uroli.

The five hour drive in the jeep was tiring but I came to know more about Indian culture and traditions while sharing details about Bhutan with our Indian counterparts. Uroli has a similar landscape like the Punakha district in Bhutan. On the way as we do in our country, we collected garbage below and above the track way which helped me a lot in team building while collecting garbage.

The different landscapes, different people, a completely new world made me understand the life in another part of world and made me think futuristically.

After a half an hour's walk we reached a well-known temple in Uroli. I have heard about the Hindu temple before but never visited it. During our first day trekking we have got chance to visit a temple called Syahi Devi temple where it is belief that if your wishes are fulfilled after visiting that temple you have to go back with a bell and tie it outside the temple as a token of thankfulness. By going around the temple we can see many bell hanging around the premises of the temple which shows it is not just a belief but reality. That temple was built in 800 BC for the wellbeing of sentient beings by the great master of the Hindu religion.

We have also visited a community school where there were only 20-30 children enrolled. At the same time we met a doctor giving advice to the parents and the students in that village. By interacting with them I came to realize that we are quite lucky compare to that village where they told they are paying for education and healthcare. And also I came to know more about the health and education policies in the country. People were welcoming, humble and friendlier compare to the people that we met on the way towards Uttarakhand. I came to notice the impact of globalization to the mind-set of the people.

We walked towards Sitlakheth camp site and had lunch. We were trained how to pitch the tent which is really important for trekkers like us. After reaching back to our base camp, we were engaged in climbing on the friendship ladder. That taught me how to handle life, how to work with friends, cooperate and help, and to trust to your partner which also made me recollect the saying 'nothing is impossible'. At first, I felt scared but when they demonstrated they motivated me to be the first person to come forward to start the climb. As we started climbing, it was really easy because of our trust and help that was rendered while climbing. It was a great and quick success and we were the first to reach.

In evening session, we had a discussion on 'how do I see the world today?' Being a student, I can see the world today as opportunity, source of problem and me as the solution for that problem. What are the issues and things that concern me and are relevant for our future? Change in culture and tradition, change in climate, global warming are the important issues that concern me and are relevant for our future. And as a world citizen, what are some of my desires, hopes and expectations? As a world citizen I desired to hope, to expect, to have human rights, peace, without discrimination or insult or defamation in the society. From this discussion I have learnt the importance of changing ourselves first then our country and then the world rather than changing the world first, then country and then ourselves.

The second day started by a one-hour jeep ride and then we started hiking. It was bit different compared to the previous day. We started walking from the small town towards the village. As we know globalization has an impact on rural cleanliness, we found a lot of waste thrown on our path. We collected the garbage in plastic bags which motivated our counterparts, and we started collecting it together. On the way we even came across the well-known and expensive mushroom which is usually seen in Paro, Thimphu region i.e., Sisi Shamu. We were glad to introduce that mushroom to our Indian counterparts. They were not sure at first that it could be consumed. It diverted our talk with our counterparts and they asked us to share about our culture and tradition, cuisines and all; in due course they also shared about the agriculture system in their country and even they shared about the crisis in their society.

After reaching the camp site we had lunch and we were briefed about the evening program. Before the program we were told to pitch our tent and all selected their own comfortable site. Our facilitator noticed us selecting our own comfortable site, he told us to gather again and I came to learn selfishness is less important. Human beings are selfish with ego so to have trust in each other, to build friendship, to have fruitful result at last reducing

selfishness and ego is very important. Those two of that factors need to be done away with in order to yield worthy results. Our evening session started with the discussion, 'what are my views about my country?' Bhutan is a small, independent, peaceful, rich country in terms of culture and traditions and all the Bhutanese live a simple and peaceful life. What do I think of the society, governance, politics, democracy, political parties etc.? With the introduction of democracy to win the election political parties are campaigning with some impractical manifestos. So, I felt it is affecting the society, good governance and all. What makes me proud? My country's rich culture and tradition, Gross National Happiness; it is a small but independent. The forest coverage in our country makes me proud to be Bhutanese. What concerns me? The impact of modernization, like the infiltration of western culture via the social media have resulted in a change in eating habits and is a concerning issue in my country.

Third day started with the cleaning of the camp site which is a must for the trekkers. We walked towards base camp and had breakfast at the INME restaurant. Our facilitator had started our session with some valuable stories and made which was the best character and bad character from the story. From that story and the math question he made us solve, I came to know that in life we will come across the same, similar, good and bad things – challenging situations. After lunch we started one game to see the team corporation within boys and the girls where we took a helium filled pipe which could fly away if it was not handle carefully. From that game we came to know that we were becoming more than friends within a short period of time. After that we started a discussion about 'what do I think about of my future?' As a student leader I think I will be the most active and helpful leader in my country. If not, I will be a leading food entrepreneur in my country being a food science student, I know some ways to make money with food.

What are my hopes and desires? My hopes and desires are to fulfil my parent's wishes and to do my duty to my king, duty to country and the people. What am I willing to contribute or strive for in order to bring about change? What help and support networking opportunities from this group can be of help? I have planned to start a similar summit called Rural-Urban youth summit along with my Indian counterparts in my country aiming to exchange the life in the village and the life in town through letter systems. The idea came with my experience, being from a farming background it is very difficult to adapt in the town. Including from the way they cook, the way they live is completely different and I faced difficulties in coping up with them. I once asked one girl residing in town about the fruiting of walnut but she replied saying that we get walnut like potato not by fruiting from the walnut tree which is really concerning to me. And also, I have planned to conduct an advocacy seminar in college and nearby schools. From this discussion I came to know more about commitment, collaboration, team work and realization.

The fourth day started with the session of bead sharing. Among three beads first and second were for the person whom I appreciated and the third one was for our own commitment. It was really difficult for me to select the person whom I appreciated most as I appreciate all the participants.

We started our journey towards Delhi from Uroli based camp in the jeep. While travelling we were asked to reshuffle our friends and choose to come with our camera man in order to learn some Hindi terminologies. We had lunch in the same hotel in Kathgodam and started journey back to Delhi in the train and discussed about the coming days program in Delhi.

When we visited Ritinjali in Delhi I came to know the importance of education, health and the value of money and not to complain unnecessarily without knowing the facts behind the

problems. We interacted with students and taught them some songs and made them draw dragons saying that we are from the dragon kingdom. We also got to know more about the situation in Ritinjali. By interacting with them I came to know that we Bhutanese were not taking the opportunity to make best use of free education facilities, health facilities, and I felt that if Bhutanese students were brought here they would realize the value of free services in our country.

After the visit to Ritinjali we went to Second Chance school where those who didn't get to pursue education and those who were forced to dropout due the financial problems were given the chance to study once more. By visiting and interacting with them they made me think we Bhutanese are the luckiest people in the world to have everything free. The facilities we have and the services we get are far better and we are proud to breathe the clean air of Bhutan.

Thanks to the support from RIGSS, CEP, Pallavan Learning Systems and the support from my college, especially President, Dean of Student Affairs, I had great time visiting Ambience mall and Sarojini market.

We later visited the Red Fort a historic fort in the city of Delhi in India. There every year on Independence Day of India, the Prime Minister hoists the Indian "tricolor flag" at the main gate of the fort and delivers a nationally broadcast speech from its ramparts. And we also visited and took part in a workshop at Drishyakala Art Museum at Delhi Art Gallery, in Red fort. The unique art museum was inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi at the historic Red Fort in Delhi. It plays to host impressive exhibition that explores the development of Indian art from 18th century onwards. On displays is an incredible array of over 400 artworks spread over 25000 sq. ft. by leading artist from India. And also, we had got chance to do art work and crafted our own art.

Session with Kutshab (Ambassador of Bhutan) was really inspiring and we were honoured to have interacted with him in a question answer session where he spoke about his concern about the youth and the future of the country. The evening session was our closing session with a presentation and cultural performance by the participants and the wonderful speech by the Ambassadors and the other organizers. It was an emotional time for the participants as it was the last night of togetherness. We didn't even know how we became so close within a short period of time which gave us this learning opportunity which will be my lifelong lesson and a memory to be cherished.



Bhutanese participants with Dasho Chewang Rinzin and staffs of RIGSS



Introduction Session



Journey towards Uroli, Uttarakhand



At wish fulfilling temple



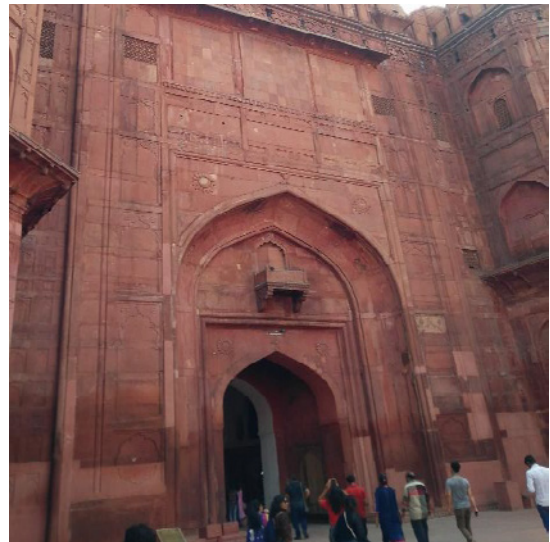
At Sitlakhet School



Evening Session



At Bhutanese Embassy



Red fort



Rintinjali students



Water problem at Rintinjali



Cultural performance by the participants

Kinley Seldon

Bhutan



Introduction

The India Bhutan Youth Summit, 2019 was nine day long program held at Uroli and New Delhi. During the summit, eleven final year students from eleven colleges from Bhutan and nine young students of same age from India participated in the program. I was also one of the lucky students to participate in such an event. It included a wide range of activities including a three-day trek in Uroli, Uttarakhand which involved discussions on collaboration of the India Bhutan relationship, interactions with children at Ritinjali and the Second Chance school. Additionally, there were visits to Delhi's famous landmarks, sessions on personal development, a visit to the royal Bhutanese Embassy, and interactions with IBYS alumni was also a part of the program.

From the moment I my travels began everything was worth experiencing. It commenced with a mixture of eagerness, excitement and nervousness. Everything was new for me. The night spent at Dharma Resort (Paro) with new friends was also an opportunity and a new experience for me.

First day at New Delhi, 3rd September

We started our journey from Paro at 5.30 am and reached New Delhi around 10 am. For many of the Bhutanese participants, especially for me, it was the first time experiencing the Druk Air Flight. After that we were taken to our home, Vishwa Yuvek Kendra. I considered it as my home because we have created lots of memories there. We talked, ate, laughed and cried together, that is why I call it our home.

After checking in, we were allocated different rooms whereby we got to stay with our Indian friends too. After settling ourselves in a new environment we were called for ice breaking session in the conference hall. At first, it was an awkward situation for all of us to open up. However, things became easier as time passed by because we were no longer uneasy. We had successfully moved into that comfort zone.

Trek Day One

We started our journey from Uroli camp to Sitlakheth camp via Siyahi Devi temple. The temple is known for fulfilling wishes and I personally feel that it was worth experiencing it -- the bells, buffaloes, the wishes. We also visited the nearby school which was located near the temple. No wonder, I felt like I was connected to that school. Like the children out there seemed so familiar. I interacted with a few children and they were so innocent but interesting that they seemed so mature at such an early age. After that we went to Sitlakheth camp/sky camp. It was just a beautiful scene to experience and was a memorable one. We

had lunch mixed with crispy arguments; we learned how to pitch the tent. There was the rope exercise (friendship and ladder exercise) peppered with talks about team work, trust and co-operation. It was fun, exciting and adventurous.

Evening session

How do I see the world?

- Through conscious mind, like everything we do externally is all caused by our mind.

Issues that concern me and are relevant to my future.

- Degradation of environment
- Global warming
- Population growth

Dreams, hopes and expectations from the world

- Let's implement in actions rather than just speaking or keeping it in black and white

Trek day 2

It took us two hours by jeep to reach the location where we were to start our trek. Trekking wasn't tiring because of the meaningful conversation we had along the way. I mostly talked about the mind especially with regard to consciousness, sub-consciousness, Id, ego and super ego with ma'am Anuja. Additionally, I discovered that the Indian alphabet is so similar to ours. I could then spot the similarities in terms of a spiritual connection between India and Bhutan.

Finally we reached our destination. After that we had lunch that we had packed from the base camp. After our lunch, we implemented what we had learnt regarding the tent pitching. That night we talked about our country in terms of policy, governance and society. Additionally, we discussed, 'what makes me proud of my country and what are the concerns and fear of some of the issues in my country?' While we were sharing our thoughts, I sensed that every individual was sharing out of true concern and their expressions reflected all of it.

After the tiring sessions, we lit a camp fire which was so fun and we enjoyed a lot.

At the end of the day, I felt that though it was difficult it was worth experiencing it for the

first time in a tent pitched by ourselves and eating food prepared by ourselves.

Trek Day 3

At 8.30 am, we came back from the night camp area to Uroli camp. Along the way, we collected garbage which was initiated by our friends. From this incident, we could sense that small contribution matter because when one started cleaning the waste, everyone did the same.

Guarav's Session

Mathematics problem

Every problem doesn't need to have only one answer but every individual will have different answers according to their situation. And also everyone has to know how to solve the problem accordingly.

Girl and the sailor problem

Firstly, when we were asked to rank them in a certain order, I wondered if we were really capable of ranking them? Are they like an item that we need to rank them according to some sort of prize? Do we really need to do that? After listening to Guarav's talk, I was just amazed that one should not judge it without being in that position.

Later we talked about our hopes for ourselves.

Commitment- I will at least pick one paper a day and dispose it in a proper place.



Visit to Ritinjali and Second Chance School



After visiting Ritinjali and interacting with small children, I got to learn how beautiful and innocent their lives are irrespective of their material condition.

Different voices met together in Second Chance school but we found something in us.

Conclusion

After successfully completing the summit, I realized that I was wrong. I always thought that Indians and Bhutanese are totally different people, be it in terms of language, culture, landscape and even perspective. But after attending this program, I came to know that I never tried to understand the similarities that we share. I was just thinking about the differences rather than the similarities that prevailed between us. Therefore I am very determined to take this relationship forward for a better future.

I always thought that Indians and Bhutanese are totally different people, be it in terms of language, culture, landscape and even perspective. But after attending this program, I came to know that I never tried to understand the similarities that we share.

Kinley Wangmo

Bhutan



The India- Bhutan Youth Summit is a program initiated by Centre of Escalation of Peace (CEP) and Pallavan Learning System (PLS) in collaboration with Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS), which aims at enhancing the understanding and appreciation of the youth regarding the importance of building the India-Bhutan friendship through meaningful conversations on various aspects of the India-Bhutan collaboration. The summit also strives to create a pool of potential ambassadors of this special relationship in both the countries who will carry forward the collaboration. Eleven participants from Bhutan and ten participants from India between the age group of 18-24 attended the summit from September 3 to 12, 2019 in India. The ten days long programme was structured in such a way that learning experiences were incorporated with a combination of academics and adventure. The program included a three-day trek across the pristine environment of Uroli, Uttarakhand; discussions amongst the participants on issues and the things that concerns us as a future ambassadors, our hopes, desires and expectations; our views on society, governance, politics, democracy; and how we are willing to contribute or strive in order to bring about change; interactive sessions with Mr. Gaurav Saklani; interactions with eminent persons and meetings with alumni. We visit places such as Second Chance schools and slums and interacted with the locals to gain a better understanding of the country and the situation people are in.

Although IBYS was just for ten days, the lessons that I learned from it are extraordinary. I could feel the positivity and the vibes of enthusiasm from the time I landed in Indira Gandhi International Airport. The first thing I experienced was the greetings from the participants and focal persons and the feeling of being a part of IBYS was mesmerizing. Young people

are active architects and in a development of a nation. The twenty one participants from India and Bhutan represented youth organizations, society, education institutions and their respective country. The participants were selected based on their capabilities, and interest to commit themselves towards social benefit and show leadership qualities. IBYS is a platform for young leaders to showcase their concerns, issues, hopes, desires and expectations from the world as future ambassadors. It is a place where they can meaningfully engage with views on society, governance, politics, democracy and find solutions at global, national and regional levels. Participants are enthusiastic to contribute in order to bring about changes they want to see and help overcome issues. Participants are from various backgrounds such as young activists, policy makers, innovators, entrepreneurs, demographers and change makers committed to combat challenges and issues that the world is facing at present and might face in the future.

On 4th September, we started our journey towards Uttarakhand. We took the train instead of the bus. Since we do not have railways in Bhutan, I never had the opportunity to travel by train, so I was quite terrified about it but my Indian friends they were used to it and they were kind enough to help me. After reaching the camp site we were briefed on the basic rules of trekking. The next day we trekked towards Sitlakhet. On the way we interacted with our friends on topics of interest. Our Indian friends were curious to know about the concept of Gross National Happiness, we explained about the concept and they were very happy to know about the unique concept that Bhutan has adopted. After coming back to INME base camp, to make our stay more interesting we climbed the 'friendship ladder'. Climbing the ladder was not just an activity to make our stay fun, climbing that ladder required cooperation, coordination and proper communication. Hence, it taught us that in order to achieve a goal, we need to have proper communication, coordination and cooperation skills among the people with whom we are working.



During this summit I interacted with the youth from different walks of life, different cultures and socio economic backgrounds. Since I come from a small country with just 735553 population, the experiences that I have had and the challenges we face are totally different, all the participants were brought up differently and the way we thought varied. So in that way I could see the world from different perspectives. Looking at the bigger picture, right from the time when I was asked to write a 150 words profile I learned to enhance my

knowledge and broaden my horizons with whatever knowledge and experiences that I got from attending this ten days long youth summit. On the flip side I hope I have contributed as many ideas and experiences to this summit, and hopefully my Indian counterparts and others from various social backgrounds would have taken those ideas to explore new dimensions and bring about positive change for a brighter future.

IBYS has proven to be a life changing experience for me. The summit is an example of how youth collaboration is possible and necessary if we want to know the concerns of young people and empathize with them. My experience in IBYS has empowered me with invaluable knowledge and encouraged me to use it to benefit my country or at least the community where I live. The experience has helped me shape my future plans and I see myself working with non-governmental organizations and working to advance the agendas of young people at local, regional and international levels. Through my participation I was able to share my concerns with the Indian counterparts. I learned about the challenges that they are facing, the concerns they have and what they are doing to overcome those issues and challenges. I could share my opinions too. Through the interaction with the Indian counterparts, I learned about exploring new innovative ideas to tackle developmental challenges. We visited slums where people live in extremely poor conditions and Second Chance schools where people are given opportunity to do things they could not do due to circumstances. We interacted with the locals and children to gain better understanding of the country and the situation people are in.

The summit is an example of how youth collaboration is possible and necessary if we want to know the concerns of young people and empathize with them.

Attending IBYS allowed me to discover a new place and learn about its people and its diverse culture. Before attending the program, though I heard about the Indian culture and caste system I did not have much idea about it but after attending the program I learned more about the diverse culture of India and prevalence of caste system. I learned to speak Hindi and learn Hindi and Malayalam songs. I thought that India and Bhutan had totally different culture cultures but after much discussion we found similarities in Bhutanese and Indian culture. At Uroli, we discussed about the issues and concerns about the world, each day we narrowed down the topic from a global perspective to regional and societal perspectives which helped me to get a deeper understanding of the issues and challenges. At that time I realized that I was self-centered, I was living in the world of 'I', 'me', and 'myself' without thinking about the people around me. I was just living for myself and my needs.

The session with Mr Gaurav was interesting and enlightening. After attending the session I realized that what I think is not always correct. Different people have different ways of viewing a situation. Rain for instance, people living in towns and cities might view raining as a problem but farmers in villages might view rain as a blessing. Similarly, different people will have different opinions on the same topic. So, we should learn to respect and accept others opinions. This session was useful and I could totally relate to it because I was a person who thought I was always correct and whatever I did was right, in every situation my decision should be right and accepted by everyone. The session with Mr Gaurav was eye opening to me and it increased my acceptance towards dissimilar views.

On tenth day of the summit we went to a historical site and to Drishyakala Art Museum at Delhi Art Gallery, in Red Fort. Our Indian counterparts told us about Red Fort and it was quite interesting to know about its history. Drishyakala Art Museum had an impressive art



exhibition that explored the development of Indian modern art from the 18th century. Each exhibition exhibited different artistic movements. We also learned different techniques of art and we made our own painting using linocut technique and doodling.

This summit has helped me enhance my skills, knowledge and capabilities. It has increased my competencies, self-esteem, skills and individually I feel that I have grown a lot. I feel like I was a different person before IBYS and now I am a different person after IBYS. I expect to further expand my knowledge and share my experiences and knowledge back home for a better future. I am committed to bringing positive change not only in the Bhutanese society but also to the world as a whole. I wish to explore new dimensions and bring about positive changes for a better and brighter future. After all we have handover it over to the next generations in a better state.



Lakshya Sharma

India



I was interning in Ladakh, when I got to know about the India-Bhutan Youth Summit. In the following three days I got down to working on the answers, video and the essay in order to send in my submission. The person of substance essay was probably the most challenging of all tasks because I had never written 2000 words at a stretch before. But when I got down to it, my first task was to think what a person of substance is? What kind of people have left their mark on history? Why do we remember them? How did they lead impactful lives? To find solutions to these questions, I revisited everything that had inspired me before, from the works of Kahlil Gibran to movies by Shyam Benegal. The answer, or the summation of me revisiting my inspirations took the form of the essay. And fortunately enough I got selected for the summit, and in these nine days, I felt that I have taken a step towards being someone that I can be proud of, someone I tried to describe in my essay as a person of substance. Here's how.

Delhi and Introductions

I arrived at Vishwa Yuwa Kendra some 30 minutes before lunch. I knocked the door of my dorm and, on hearing a collective "come in!", I entered, and met Thukten, Cyril and Karma Yeshi. We exchanged introductions then in a while entered Rangjung and Leki Bumpa and gave apples to me and Cyril that they had brought from Bhutan. Things were so formal, although Karma Yeshi was probably the first person to open up fully, with him sharing stories of his numerous girlfriends and asking us about ours, no wonder we all came to enjoy Karma's presence around us so much in the coming days. He could make the grimmest person laugh without actually attempting to do so. That evening, we met Mr Kapur and formally introduced each other at the Vishwa Yuwa Kendra's auditorium. A lady from Ritinjali conducted some fun ice-breaking sessions and games. Later, we went to the Bhutanese embassy for dinner, the invite for that dinner is something I'll always keep and cherish, I felt really privileged to have it. At the dinner, we sat at different tables, and started conversations, and while we engaged in conversations His Excellency Mr V Namgyel joined us saying, "I see very animated discussions happening here!" and then we talked about his experiences at the Indian Military Academy and Bollywood films. The honourable speaker of the Bhutanese parliament also joined us and we asked him what it's like to be a speaker and the speaker said that he has been a school principal and had a good experience of managing a classroom to which we all laughed heartily. The humility and cheerful nature of Bhutan's leaders reflects in the national integrity and sense of pride which is so high among the Bhutanese people. And that is the first thing that left an impression on me, I now knew what kind of a leader I wanted to become.



A sketch of two Bhutanese gentlemen I saw engaged in conversation at the dinner party

Uttarakhand, Uroli, and much more INME

The next morning we got up early and left for the railway station to board the bus for Kathgodam, Uttarakhand. I slept for most of the journey and couldn't be a part of the fun that was going on, but it was nice to see people singing and getting along so early on in the journey. We got down at Kathgodam and got on to our jeeps, had lunch in Haldwani then again it was a long drive to INME's Uroli base camp. INME is the name of the camp education and training company run by Mr Gaurav Saklani, our facilitator. Upon our arrival to the camp I was quite delighted because the facilities were first class. We got together in the dining hall and gave another round of introductions, by now we had talked to each other quite a bit and the formal overtone had started breaking.

The next morning after breakfast we set out to go on a trek, first in a jeep and then by foot, up to a temple dedicated to Syaahi Devi, a form of the Goddess Kali. On this trek, the highlight was Tshering Wangdi sir and Tshering Penjor sir collected mushrooms to cook despite the warnings from locals about them being poisonous. On the climb I talked to people that I haven't talked to yet, like Sonam, Kinley and Phuntsok. I was interested to hear about Phuntsok's candy business and how often the Bhutanese government provided funds for research to her team so they could find a candied replacement to doma, a betel leaf preparation like the paan because people's habit of chewing doma was causing widespread gingivitis. On our arrival at the temple, Phuntsok asked me about Swami Vivekananda, whose photo was on a board that said the caves in which he meditated were near this temple. I was delighted to share my knowledge of history with the Bhutanese participants. After our visit to the temple, we went to a school-clinic, known as an Anganwadi, where we met small children of the village and played a game called 'Lambi Daadhi Wale Baba' with Anuja, from INME, we would be filled with gratitude for Anuja for teaching us this. Later we were to play this game again in Delhi. After the school visit, we trekked towards INME's Sitlakheth campus and had lunch there, after which we learned how to pitch a tent, which was a first for me. Then we went in a jeep back to camp. In the dinner hall that evening, we discussed our vision

for the world, and we all showed concern towards the need to increase our tolerance for different cultures, the need to be more responsible towards climate change and the need to compete less and collaborate more. The role that the youth needs to play in the near future was clearer to me now, we need to collaborate, conserve and construct a future together.



A sketch of the pine trees of Uttarakhand.

The next day we packed our tents and lunch with us and after breakfast, we left for the site where we pitched tents and stayed overnight. We went in a jeep to a point and started our hike through a village, another thing about this trip that has left a deep impact on me is the opportunity to see the inventive and truthful architecture of the people of the villages, and the sheer ingenuity with which they have used stone for building is inspiring. We reached the ridge top to a Kali temple, which was now no longer functioning as the idol was stolen, few years back. The roof system of that temple was a collection of shallow domes made from large stone slabs, the beauty and the originality of this work of architecture left me in awe.



The shallow dome at the Kali Temple at the ridge top

The trek forward was not uphill, like it was so far and was very beautiful, walking on a ridge is truly a very amazing experience. We could see the higher mountains far off and the lower ones and the villages. We kept engaging ourselves in conversations on various topics, shared the histories of our respective countries. Choki and I discussed the political scenario of today and shared our concerns and opinions. Later that day we all shared our views about our respective country's policies and I learnt that day that a country's political and cultural narrative cannot be explained through a single narrative, and a single policy. A country's philosophy can't be dubbed correct for the entire country, and different opinions should be politely excepted and discussed and debated upon in an understanding manner.

We pitched our tents after lunch and then played Frisbee. After dinner later that day we all gathered around and played games and shared memories, some were very personal to us, this is when I realized how close we all have gotten, just in a few days. The conversations of course I cannot mention, but I realized the importance of opening up and sharing what burdens us for better mental peace.

Next morning, we woke up and started un-pitching our tents and then Rajenda, one of the camp managers took me to Mr Gaurav's hill cottage nearby, as I had expressed my wish to see his house, which was built entirely of stone, sourced from the hill side right outside his house. The house was beautiful and the workmanship was admirable. After seeing the house, I went back with Rajenda to our camp and we left for the base camp, which was only a 40 minute trek downhill. On arrival we all relaxed and freshened up, then got back together for another session, a very interesting one.



Hiking at the ridge top

Mr Gaurav then conducted sessions that were aimed at our approach towards team work and problem solving. We engaged in a long discussion on how learning happens and that it isn't a linear process but rather a cycle that follows the steps of observing – thinking/ analysing – practicing/doing – experiencing, in this order but can start at any point. He floated a math question to which four different groups gave four different answers, when there was of course only one answer and then a rather subjective question, the answer to which was based on one's value system. He later pointed out the common mistakes people make while solving problems which affects the performance of a team as a whole. The gist as I understood was that to solve a problem the people involved need to have a common

objective, establish common facts, adopt a common approach and respect each other's values in order to go forward. This session was eye-opening and definitely was one of the best things that happened in the entire summit. After lunch that day we engaged in some volleyball and then as the sun was setting Mr Gaurav and Doc conducted the last session for the day where we all discussed what we know about ourselves and how we see ourselves, and what we commit to as future leaders. We made sure that the commitments we make are not hypothetical and are applicable in the near future.

We played ball and then had dinner, the next day we were going to leave Uttarakhand for Delhi.

Ritinjali

Ritinjali works in the field of education and skill development for people living in poor conditions. We went to a school that Ritinjali runs and played with the children there, we did the 'Lambi daadhi wala baba' game with them and Tshering and I prepared a short skit about Bhutan, very simply depicting the history from the civil war period to the time when His Highness King Jigme Senge Namgyal introduced GNH and we tried to teach the children about virtues like harmony and contentment. Later we went to the Second Chance school of Ritinjali where people who couldn't go to school when they were young are given education. There we interacted and played some games and discussed the potential of the youth and their vulnerabilities.

Lal Kila – Drishyakala

The next was a day for us to unwind and enjoy, we were taken to the Red Fort and I was put to test as everyone expected me to know about the fort as a student of architecture. I did my best is what I'll say about that. We went in the fort and onto the Drishyakala art gallery where we saw original works of great Indian artists like Nandalal Bose, Raja Ravi Verma, Rabindranath Tagore, Jamini Roy and many more. We also saw the gallery depicting the evolution of the art of portraiture, this was a great experience for me as I am really interested in aesthetics. After seeing all the galleries we were taught how to make art using linocut technique and we all made artworks and it was a good way to unwind.

After this we went to Sarojini market and my Bhutanese friends shopped to their heart's content, sometimes they'd disappear in plain sight and we Indians would run around looking for them, all panicking, only to find them casually checking out some socks at a store and saying "Why do you look so sweaty and worried, is everything okay?" we laughed heartily at this later.

Meeting with The Kutsab and Farewell

Next morning we dressed up in formals for our meeting with the Bhutanese ambassador V Namgyel sir; we waited for him at the table in the meeting room, and on his arrival we greeted him and discussions started about how India's youth can play the monumental role in the near future. He told us the fascinating story of Bhutan's transition from a monarchy to a democracy, the steps planned by His highness the fourth King showed tremendous precision and a far-reaching vision. We discussed how Bhutan will step out of the huge debt and diversify its economy, and The Kutsab discussed some very interesting ideas like the potential of wellness centres in Bhutan. The good nature of the Kutsab was a very inspiring trait and will be something I will always remember.

Presentation

The afternoon passed with us preparing for the evening's presentations and after lunch we met with the participants of the previous year's summit and had an informal discussion with Mr Chhibber, one of the board members of the Centre for Escalation of Peace. The evening started with the IBYS theme song which was sung by Anshu, Tshering, Rangjung, Jatin and Cyril, and it was as amazing as we thought it would be. Then followed a series of presentations with Leki igniting light laughter with warnings of the limited time each team has been allotted. After the presentations, all the Bhutanese friends did a beautiful dance and Sejal surprised all of us with a Bharatnatyam performance. Then all Indian participants sang 'Maa tujhe salaam' by A R Rehman and then after the concluding addresses by the Kutsab we all did the traditional Bhutanese farewell dance, which Karma Yeshe led and filled with immense energy by the end. After the dance all the dignitaries left and a Bhutanese song was playing, I saw tears in Rangjung's eyes and gave him a hug, and then he said "Lakshya La, it's a sad song" and then my heart filled with gratitude and delight and also the pain of having to part with these people who had become very special friends in just a few days, and with these friends I cried, and said farewell, but of course, only for now.

**My heart filled
with gratitude
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special friends in
just a few days,**

Leki Bumpa Bhutan



By seven in the evening, after all the participants had reported to the resort, as scheduled we had our pre-departure meeting with the director of Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies. Thus, the true journey for Bhutanese participants started right from the beginning of his speech. Dasho Chewang Rinzin spoke about the importance of India-Bhutan friendship and our responsibilities as youths to carry it forward. The director also reiterated the significance of India-Bhutan Youth Summit. He told us to find ways to keep this summit moving strongly for the years to come.

3rd September;

Right from the flight experiences, it was an overwhelming experience for me as I was traveling by air for the first time. Trying to learn everything possible around me, I was very much awake and sharp till we landed at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi. The temperature and humidity were enough to remind me that I am finally at Delhi. There, we were well received by Mr. Choki Wangchuk from Centre for Escalation of Peace and then we checked into Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, and had lunch.

In the afternoon, we had an ice-breaking session among the twenty-one participants from two countries. Before that, there was an introductory welcoming address by Mr. Arun Kapur where he introduced all the facilitators. Shortly, we were also briefed on the basic things while going on trekking. Then, in different interesting ways, we were made to introduce to our counter parts taking us closer and comfortable.

We were invited by the ambassador of Bhutan to India to have dinner at the Bhutanese Embassy where we met the ambassador, a few ministers from Bhutan, and the speaker of National Assembly.

4th September

We caught the train early morning to reach our base camp, Uroli, in Uttarakhand. Not having ever travelled by train before, I was very excited to take on another new experience. The way people talk, eat and interact inside the train made me understand more about the diversity in India. After more than five hours of train journey, we finally reached at Kathgodham where we had lunch. From there, our journey towards Uroli continued by road this time.

I observed the Uttarakhand landscape as we headed towards our destination which really resembled that of Bhutan. The mountains everywhere, rivers come across time and again, and the road patterns are very much similar to that of Bhutan's. Upon reaching the base camp, it was just an amazing place to be. The simple and effective infrastructure, beautiful scenes created and the best facilities arranged by the group INME. After dinner, in the circle of twenty-one participants, we had a discussion on 'what I know about my own country', 'what I know about India and what I wanted to know about India'. It was followed by a brief instruction on the next day's trekking schedule.

5th September

The day began by climbing the mountain. On the way, it was an opportunity for participants to interact with one another especially with ones from other country. During the conversations,

I came to know more about Indian culture, about its diversity and complexity, also about its food and living standards. As I learned from my Indian friends, I also shared some of the things they wanted to know about Bhutan. A small Hindu temple on the summit, in fact our final destination of the day, reminded us to stop. Receiving the blessings from the temple, we then visited the school nearby. We were greeted by the students and teachers of the school where we got an opportunity to talk to young students. On the way back, we had lunch en-route to our base camp in Sitlaket.

As I learned from my Indian friends, I also shared some of the things they wanted to know about Bhutan.

Having arrived back at the camp, we immediately had 'friendship ladder' training where we were taught how to climb a height in pairs in which we had to use our partner's assistance. The event was fun and important. After dinner, as usual, we had a discussion in a circle. This time, we talked about the concerns of the world that could impact our future

6th September

It was our longest trekking day. We had almost three hours up the hill until we made it to the final place. On the way, we had conversations where we talked about Indian politics, about its political history, about its current form of government, etc. Indian friends too were curious to know about king and queen of Bhutan, about our constitution, our national dress etc. Upon reaching the spot, we pitched our own tent and prepared for the night. Before we broke to prepare dinner, we discussed our concerns related to our country and what really makes me proud about my country

7th September

Early morning, after having a cup of tea, we unpitched the tent and cleaned the surroundings. After having packed our belongings well we headed back to our base camp where we had piping hot breakfast. We then had an extremely helpful and very important session on leadership and decision-making skills. We were even asked a mathematical question and an analytical question from which we learned many lessons. The last sharing session was then on what I think about our future, our desires and commitments, and our commitments to take this summit for the days to come.

8th September

It was then a day to return to Delhi. We drove back to the railway station. On the way, we were also handed an opportunity to visit a lake on the way. Lunch en-route, we were able to catch the train on time. By 10 pm, we once again checked in Vishwa Yuvak Kendra and immediately retired for the day.

9th September

It was another exciting day trip for us. This time a visit to Ritinjali where we interacted with the students of the school. We even performed a few short dances for the kids. I came to understand the situation in which these students had been studying. The next destination was Second Chance School where we got to have conversations with the students there. We too had a session with the facilitator on the importance of communication. By the evening, we Bhutanese participants were taken on a tour of the Ambience mall where there many stores to look at.

10th September

The whole day was committed to the very significant visit to Red Fort. Inside, we were guided on each paintings on the wall, their importance, etc. We came to see different artists that contributed to Indian arts and literature. In the same place, we were briefly trained on how to do painting on the piece of board which can be later taken into a paper. After a late lunch, we once again went for shopping.

11th September

The emotional day. It started by visiting to Bhutanese Embassy where we got an opportunity to interact with ambassador V.Namgyel. To the questions participants asked, his Excellency answered so well that everyone was amazed by the way he spoke. We immediately returned to the Kendra to prepare our presentation. After lunch, we had an interaction with IBYS alumni followed by an interaction with an eminent person from CEP.

The closing ceremony was at six thirty. A few cultural programs were presented, presentations on the events were made and finally certificates were awarded to all the participants. Before we broke for dinner, almost all participants cried not being able to hold back tears as this was our last night together. We retired for the day late.

12th September

Early in the morning, we checked out from the Kendra and drove to the airport. We arrived back to Bhutan at 1 pm local time where RIGSS Director, Dasho Tshewang Rinzin came to welcome us back. We got an opportunity to share a few things about the summit with the director too.

Muhammed Jaseel C K

India



Royal Bhutanese Embassy, Chandragupta Marg, New Delhi: the time was around eight in the evening. I was sitting with four beautiful girls from Bhutan whom I met about an hour ago. I was explaining the location of my state on the Indian map. Suddenly a middle-aged man, who was in his late forties, came to our table.

'Hi, Kuzuzangpo.'

'I am Loknath Sharma, Minister of Economic Affairs of Bhutan.'

That was the moment where my learning days with 20 youths from India and Bhutan had begun. When I came to know about my selection to the summit, I started reading about Bhutan and prepared a few questions to ask someone working on GNH.

I was honoured and privileged to discuss my opinions and doubts with none other than the Minister of Economic Affairs of Bhutan. Mr. Loknath patiently listened to me and answered all my questions. The best moment of the 10-day summit happened on the first day.

Yoezer, me and Exo

What would you do if you have to travel 5 hours starting from 6 o' clock in the morning? Well, we were an enthusiastic group with some talented singers. We sang songs and played a few games. I had a wonderful conversation with Yoezer and we discussed the similarities and differences between India and Bhutan. I tried to explain to her how different India is when it comes to culture, faith and language. She told me stories and myths from Bhutan. I was very interested to listen to the story of the cartoon character Exo, an image of Exo was pasted on the back of her mobile phone. On the last day of the summit, she gifted it to me with a message which read:

Giving you my-favourite exo sticker

With loads of Love

-Yoezer



Trekking days

The trekking was not that challenging; we walked through some easy paths. The route and the landscape were suitable for the trekking of kids. But the best conversations I ever had in my life happened during the trek. I learned a lot, listened to some beautiful souls and shared stories of the work I have been doing in Kerala. I would say, I made some good friends for a lifetime. Kiley and Karma were with me during the three days; I felt they were my sisters from another mother.



On the third day of the trek, we camped somewhere in the mountains. After dinner, we sat together in a circle and talked till midnight. What started as a truth or dare game ended up being a session of some deep conversations, and I am proud to say that I did done my part to create a non-judgmental space for everyone to share their stories. I felt really bad when I heard a facilitator cracking jokes the day after about something he had overheard during our conversations.



On the last day, black strings were handed out and three colourful beads given to each of us. The two beads signified our appreciation and thankfulness to the fellow participants and the third was our commitment to achieve something. I was overwhelmed and had tears in my eyes when my fellow participants gave beads to me.

Learning's for a Lifetime

The summit gave me the insight on similarities of human beings despite their cultural differences and diversities. When I say similarities, I mean the values of universal significance such as the propensities towards values like democracy and justice. At the end of the day, human cultures meet in the same confluence of thoughts.

The summit created a platform for people of different cultures to express themselves. The space that the India-Bhutan summit created saw participants from different cultures assembling to co-habit co-facilitate and to co-learn. I am happy and indeed confident that I could use the space to the best level.

Bhutan is a country with great culture and the summit taught me many aspects of the land and its people. Learning about Gross National Happiness index, rekindled my plans to conduct a survey to measure the happiness of students in the present education system of Kerala. I was happy hearing about Kerala from Bhutanese friends speaking about the values in Kerala, the backwaters and its iconic representative -- the coconut tree. I found the idea of Kerala emanating from the Malayali teachers working in Bhutan.

Values are always universal but the absorption of them differs from cultures to cultures. One needs simply to fit into the value system along with its uniqueness and diversities. International platforms like this summit facilitate the connectedness of human values and prepares us to face the problems and challenges together in diverse manners.

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Looking forward

Similar to the emphasis given to creating space for conversations of cultures and discussion of ideas, we need to focus on some future projects and collaborations. The society needs to give ownership to the youth, recognize them as change-makers and create opportunities to implement their ideas.

When I was asked the ambassador of Bhutan to India how we as the youth can contribute to the India-Bhutan relationship the response was very disappointing. He asked us to 'learn and observe and wait'.

We must find some platforms where youth can be involved in addressing the problems that concern both the countries. Elevating this international platform alone can foster growth and channel the youth toward ideas of sustainable development. The future summits must, I believe, should ponder on what can be done on the side of actions and about possibilities post the summit.

Question of how to take the community together is an important one. As a part of this program, 21 skilled young individuals of diverse talents shared the same space. The organizers

could have used a talented pool of youth for more discussions and projects. Especially toward the last days of the summit I felt a lot of possibilities were unexplored. This gap raises the serious question of effective future programs post the summit. I would be happy indeed to join along with other co-participants of the concluded summit to elevate this international platform towards such outcomes and future contributions.

I'm writing all these too frankly as it's my perspective, it is the way I approach things. Whatever say may not be completely correct or when approached from another perspective, there will be something which is not possible, but I really do completely believe in whatever I have said. Ownership transferring is an important thing, and if we make sure that it will be present in the future summit, surely it will make an impact on the action side.

If it is approached in this way, a change is needed in how and in what way we should select the participants or how we are going to recognize them. We should make a guideline or a plan of the list of programs or possibilities of what participants can do after the summit. Information sharing is necessary on the last year's summit and shared with the next year's participants.

Creating a network of participants is a must and obviously it's not something which can be done within 10 days, it must be a constant process. For that, like as Bhutanese came to India, Indians should also get an opportunity to go to Bhutan. In short, it is difficult to obtain a substantial outcome of the summit over a period of 10 days, the summit should be designed like a year-long fellowship.

Nimrat Kaur

India



The India Bhutan Youth Summit which was held in New Delhi and Uroli was not only a unique learning experience but it was an amazing joyride which I will cherish for the years to come. The platform did not only enable and pave the way to the much enjoyable cultural exchange but it offered me an exposure to different realities, diverse opinions and inspirational ideas while I trekked and travelled through the serene hills in Uroli and the bustling capital of New Delhi along with the other 21 participants from India and Bhutan. The well-planned journey which began on 3rd September 2019 with uncertainty and wavering thoughts gradually took the form of an arduous and enthralling ride only to be stepping stones to some ever lasting friendships and subsequent opportunities to grow.



The trek which formed the primary leg of the summit was not only an activity limited to exploring our adventurous side as we went uphill and downhill with a few slips and slides, but it was definitely an opportunity which helped me step out of my comfort zone as I interacted and exchanged opinions on diverse matters ranging from personal aspirations, goals and interests to politics, culture, history and religion in India and Bhutan with other learned friends. This exchange which was propelled by our intellects shaped by a set of diverse experiences and lessons made me realise that no matter how different we are in regards to our professional ambitions and cultural identities, we all shared similar expectations and concerns when it came to community growth and development. Moreover, being a novice when it comes to trekking, this experience through the slopes in Uroli which offered a serene, majestic view, made me realise the importance of not only working together as a team but also staying together as one. I learnt the importance and necessity for compassion and being supportive for these are the qualities which lead to growth of an individual and the community as a whole.

En route the trek, apart from taking timely halts in order to quench our thirsts and relax our muscles, we also paid a visit to a school, an Anganwadi centre and numerous temples wherein we also interacted with the children and other locals. I believe this served as my gateway to realising the existence of different realities and how culture forms the base level support system of any given society.



Another important facet of this arduous trekking journey was the camping! All of us were divided into smaller groups of three and we were responsible for pitching our own tents in the restricted space (a skill which was well taught to us by Anuja Ma'am and the team). We all kick-started the preparations by marking our respective areas and getting hold of the equipment. By the time most of us were done with the intuitive demarcation of the individual territories, the reality dawned upon us. What needed an overall consideration of the pitching zones for a well spaced layout, eventually turned into a zigzag disordered line-out wherein we infringed upon each other's pitching zones. The disorder was soon done away with as we rearranged everything taking into consideration the ground space available, the space requisite for pitching one tent and area needed for free movement and leisure. This is one memorable experience which as per my opinion personifies the real world dominated by race amongst the rats and dominance of 'the self' over the community which includes the self. It surely made me reflect better upon the need to thrive together

as a community which consists of innumerable members with multitude needs. After this incident, I am of the opinion that to grow individually, we definitely need to work together as a team while balancing out the multiple needs of the members.



Apart from the adventure which we undertook on foot, I fondly cherish the discussions which were facilitated by Gaurav sir. Dwelling into multifarious themes which descended from concerns related to the bigger community to our individual ambitions and commitments, all of us had something interesting to contribute. Even though we hailed from different cultures, backgrounds and professions, we did share a similar vision pertaining to the global order and various challenges in the form of climate change, preservation of identities etc which we face today. This free flowing exchange of ideas and the subsequent discussions which followed every time has made me realise the importance of giving voice to our thoughts because it is only through this manifestation that we will be able to work together to achieve certain goals while pacifying the eruptions which may come on the journey.

This time-bound journey with an everlasting impact did not just end with the trekking, camping, ladder climbing and our evening discussions but also extended to include our visits to the Ritinjali where we interacted with the children from different age groups; the Drishyakala Art Museum wherein we got an opportunity to submerge in the artistic realm; the majestic Red Fort and the bustling Sarojini Market! I cannot also forget the wisdom imparted by the Honourable Bhutanese Ambassador as a part of our formal interaction at the Embassy. The opinions and concerns in relation to the prevalent issues were well founded and the road map shared for future discourses was awe-inspiring indeed. As a whole, for me, this summit was a well-spaced and multi-faceted learning experience which gave me an opportunity to grow, both personally and as a professional, amidst building some everlasting bonds over the crackling bonfires.

As a whole, for me, this summit was a well-spaced and multi-faceted learning experience which gave me an opportunity to grow, both personally and as a professional, amidst building some everlasting bonds over the crackling bonfires.

Nitish Fatarpekar

India



It is well quoted, 'If there is any country on Earth that qualifies as Eden -- not just in part, but in its entirety -- I believe it is Bhutan.' As soon as I heard from the Dean's office about IBYS, I had an immense conviction to apply. There was no strong conscious causality associated with this feeling, but rather an inner urge to get to know the values, ideas and driving force due to the anecdotes I have been hearing since a decade regarding the country. The real camp had started for me right from the application process itself. The entire period of writing the essays, recording a video and thinking through my life since the past few years was truly an enriching experience. The essays were very lucrative and required profound reflection into my own life as an adult, my core values, the motivation for my work. It was a good mirror to which I will look back at periodically.

The main camp started as soon as I entered Vishwa Yuvak Kendra in Delhi. I was greeted by the Bhutanese participants who ran to carry my bag and guided me to my room. This incident struck a chord for me. I shared my room with Bhutanese participants who I found to be very attentive and calm, just like I thought they would be. The inauguration was different from everything I have seen before. The tone set by Arun Kapur did give me more insights upon how the camp would be. The overall vibe of the inauguration was warm, soft and empathetic. It focused more on knowing people in depth rather than focusing on the intricacies of the camp. At night, during the dinner at the Embassy, the biggest learning for me was the humility of the ministers who were present at the venue. They were easily approachable, replied to questions profoundly, did not have even the slightest bit of attitude regarding their post. The best part was that they were skeptical about some of the decisions they made for their country and hence still held a very broad mind to invite ideas of change within their current systems. For me, I think that remains the crux of any democratic form. It is giving the people the ability to question and listen to the suggestions made by fellow citizens, always questioning your own decisions, using data to back up your decision and apologizing if the decision was not of the best interest. For me, the learnings from the Embassy dinner stuck with me and made me question the reality of our democratic process and the approachability of people in power.

The next day was mainly spent travelling to the campsite which was pretty far but gave me space to initiate a conversation with other participants. This is where I observed people have a conversation about their own personal lives and slowly see friendships evolve. During this journey, some interesting learnings stuck with me. To start with, the Bhutanese delegates were not much exposed to the concept of begging and hence they felt sympathetic to the beggars near the station. The Indians, on the other hand, had become more insensitive towards the entire scene of poverty within the country. This made me further research and read more about this scenario. There is a psychological behaviour called Prospect Theory which leads to psychic numbing when humans feel that their contribution is immensely minor and hence won't contribute to solving the overall problem. This numbing can also occur if we cannot personally connect with the group that is suffering. This can be seen with the lack of empathy most Indians show with Kashmir as well. Here the problem seems very big and we lack a connection. A similar situation could also be seen with Syrian refugees as well. The entire world was numb because the problem seemed too complex, immense and diplomatic to be solved by ordinary world citizens. This changed drastically

when a photo of a 5-year-old boy's body washed ashore and stormed the internet and the donations came pouring in. This was also a self-learning point for me since I realized that I have actually ended up being numb to so many problems I face every day mainly due to the scale at which people suffer. I have ignored so many generic problem statements which I had promised to work on as a child because it used to move me a lot earlier while discovering them. Especially since the last few years, I have been more involved with myself and taking more time off work that I have most commonly tried to turn a blind eye towards some major problems which plague the country. So, my initial reaction for the scene of Bhutanese giving money to beggars was a very ignorant one which amplified my numbness to the systemic problem.

On the second day, the entire campsite was by itself a very calming environment. I learnt a lot about the landscape, the flora and the lifestyle of the people from the facilitators. I did feel we were given considerable luxuries and that barred the students from learnings from the resource deficient environments or from activities which would involve learning together. From some past experiences, I have realized that bonding through laborious activities has led to higher team bonding. On each day of the camp, we had topics of discussions which were meticulously designed for self-reflection. It was interesting to note how the thoughts laid forward by the Bhutanese delegates were more personal and more related to their surroundings compared to the Indian delegates which were highly generic based on the highest trending news on social media outlets and national media bodies. It highlights a highly observant and mindful approach the Bhutanese delegation follows and also tells a lot about their upbringing and social structure. One of the most surprising moments for me was when I got to know that people in Bhutan were against democracy entering the country. They were very well aware of various malpractices which happened in the name of the democratic system, which further on led to the misuse of power. But this also made me raise doubts in their high levels of trust, and low levels of skepticism in the King of Bhutan. Personally, I have never seen this much level of trust of the people in any world leader existing at the moment. During casual conversations with my fellow participants, I realized a very similar sort of problem clouds both our countries. With both countries answerable to the West, we both are subject to serving interests of the richer countries. There is heavy brain drain happening in both the countries due to higher pay, comfortable lifestyles and radical ideas which differ from our own. It made me feel sad knowing that people of Bhutan also fear the loss of their language. We have seen examples of this phenomenon across the world. The entire continent of Africa lost a major portion of their culture, languages, traditions due to the slave trade which was further contributed due to Neo Imperialism. The indigenous communities of Latin America, USA, Canada have lost their land, lives, language and culture to mass genocides and disembarking the existence of their ways of living. Some pockets of Asia did manage to preserve their cultural heritage even through a series of conquerors and imperialism, but we are making a mistake now. Even though we are all free today, it is on us to choose the right set of information we would like to get exposed to. Both the countries - India and Bhutan have sidelined their own languages at a national level and made it compulsory to get our education in English. I wished Bhutan had not followed the path of India in the case of choosing English as the medium of instruction. There is a huge difference between learning English as a language and learning everything in English. Doing this, we have actually lost access to knowledge written in regional languages and further accelerated this process making a single idea sound more appealing. I do believe that this camp was a good learning curve for me. It was not much different from other similar programs I have experienced in the past, but it did help me since I was at a very critical point in my life. This year my mental health had given up on me due to a series of events which took a toll on how I felt about my surroundings and about myself. It showed me the possibility of

some ventures I could take up after my graduation. The IBYS program also gave me a set of friends and organisations I could connect to within my fabric. For me, the program is not over. On my personal side, I have made a commitment to visit Bhutan within the next year and reconnect with the friends I made and also establish a connection in order to build a connection with the communities there. Bhutan as a country for me represents a society where I find myself better suited to. The values the people hold and the fundamental values of the country is something I can see myself surrounded with. Every time I meet someone, I always share with them a few anecdotes of IBYS and fun facts of Bhutan. The last few years have been a huge learning curve for me and the IBYS has definitely played a significant part in it. I hope that the organizers and participants do not lose touch. In order to keep in touch in a sustainable manner, there needs to be an initiation through either one or both sides. As of now, I am not sure how I can fit myself best into this complex puzzle of friendship between both the nations. Thus I hope to explore the existing friendship and be a part of the future collaborations between both these countries and its people.

The last few years have been a huge learning curve for me and the IBYS has definitely played a significant part in it.

Phuntshok D. Yangchen

Bhutan



The second India-Bhutan Youth Summit kicked off on the 3rd of September and went on till the 11th of September with eleven students from Bhutan and 10 students from India. It was certainly a great, if not life changing, experience for every member in the group. I met with the Bhutanese participants on the 2nd in Paro, Bhutan. It was both exciting and nerve-wracking at the same time. We had a small meeting with the director of the Royal Institute of Governance and Strategic Studies. In the few minutes we had with Dasho, he conveyed that we had a responsibility to not only represent ourselves individually and our colleges but also Bhutan. The talk with Dasho was really inspiring to me and gave me a sense of what the program was going to be about. Everything that happened in the summit was a great experience for me and it was all due to the support and planning of the staff at the Royal Institute of Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) and CEP.

The day we met with our Indian counterparts was really significant for me. I had read the bios that were a part of the information booklet that was given to us before the program began. It was personally quite intimidating for me as other participants' achievements were extensive which left me feeling that we, the Bhutanese, were so completely different from the Indian participants. However, after we met on the first day and as I got to know each participant, I realized that we had more things in common than I had expected. I also learnt that the differences with the Indian participants and even with the Bhutanese participants is what made the experience more fruitful. With a lot of different people with different personalities in the group, it gave me a chance to look at the same thing from different perspectives. This beauty in diversity was particularly evident during the sessions that we had in the three days we spent trekking and camping out.

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The sessions that we had with Gaurav is definitely the highlight of my experience during the summit. It really made me think of the things around me for once and not be focused on my problems for a change. During our first session we talked about the world, where I talked about how discrimination of all forms was what I feared along with the state of the environment, the effects of social media and about how aid can sometimes do more harm than good. To this I also said that discrimination can be decreased by simply being aware of what we are thinking and sharing our insecurities which not only ignite a sense of connection with others who are facing the same discriminations and problems as us but also takes off the pressure from us. Some of the things that I remember because they hit a cord with me was the concept of being a NATO (no action, talk only), it really made me think that this was exactly what was happening in the world, that we have a lot of people talking about climate change and discrimination but they are not putting their words into action. During the second session, we talked about what concerns we had about our country and what made us proud. To this I said that I was immensely proud of how Bhutan has been dealing with the rapid changes that has been going on in the recent times, the way we handled modernization with our environmental policies for example. And more importantly how Bhutan managed to find a balance between

culture, economic development, happiness and tradition. I also mentioned my point of concern which was how the Bhutanese were moving out of the country to take jobs in United States and Australia. I said that Bhutan already had a very low number of human resources and with talented people moving out and taking jobs that they are too qualified for did not help the problem of low human resources in Bhutan. The next session that we had was about our dreams and the commitment to making our dreams a reality. I talked about growing the small start-up that I had but what I really want to do is work in the field of social justice, specifically work on empowering Bhutanese women to become entrepreneurs. For this I committed to work with non-profits that worked with women and to be a lifelong learner to be constantly working on improving myself and my skills. The method that Gaurav used by making us think about what we thought of the world and what concerned us about the world, then moving on to what we thought about our own countries and lastly about ourselves was a great way of narrowing our focus and making us realize what was important to us individually. The conversations about the topics that we talked about in the sessions did not stop when the session stopped as we found ourselves talking about these very important topics while we hiked or while eating our food, which I think was great. The sessions added a lot of value to my experience.

Our surroundings were really beautiful and it reminded me of Bhutan a lot. Uroli was a great way to look at the differences between urban India and rural India. The hike in itself was really great too, I believe that since everyone at the summit did an activity that required physical effort we were able to bond faster and deeper. I think that the hike was very well planned and every activity that we did imparted some kind of knowledge to us such as the visit to the Hindu temples, the primary school and more. One of the activities that I think really made the participants bond was climbing the friendship ladder. It was really tall ladder and the distance between the rungs became longer as we climbed higher. Although climbing the first few rungs was pretty easy in the beginning, we had to help each other while climbing the higher part of the friendship ladder. I was paired up with Zainab and it really made me realize the importance of team work and it definitely made me and Zainab form a deeper friendship.

On 9th of September, we had activities at Ritinjali where we went to a primary school in the urban slums and at Second Chance school. It was a one kilometer walk which took us about 15 minutes to reach the school. During this walk we saw the conditions that the poorer community of India lived in. It was very surprising to see how dirty and smelly the place was, with all kinds of animals running around. During the walk we saw people queuing for water and we found out that they only get this water once a week. The water that these people were getting was only about 20 litres; it was very hard for me to imagine how these people lived without having access to something which is an absolute need.

When we got the school we were divided into two groups, where each group went to two separate classes to do the activity that we planned for the children. I think that the children weren't very comfortable with us being there in the beginning as a bunch of kids started crying but as time went on they adapted very well. The first activity we did with them was an ice breaker with a song that we learnt at the hike. This ice breaker certainly did help the children become more comfortable with us. After this we did a skit for the children that pretty much explained Bhutan and the concept of gross national happiness in very simple words. Then we sang some nursery rhymes with them and did an art activity as well. It was a hand painting activity where we drew the head of a dragon (because Bhutan is known as the land of the thunder dragon), we did this mainly because we wanted the kids to have something to remind them of the day we visited them and had this great interaction with them.

In the afternoon after lunch we went to Second Chance school which was a vocational training school for young adults who didn't have the chance to get education before. They were taught sewing, early child education and more. We had a session with the students in Second Chance school as well led by a lady. I think we were able to have meaningful conversations about what we as the youth had as our strengths and weaknesses and we also talked about what kind of opportunities the world had for us. Later that evening we went to the Ambience mall, which was a totally different experience as compared to where we had gone to in the morning. It really made me think of the huge difference between the rich and the poor in India and the whole world.

The next day, we went to the Red Fort where we visited the Drishyakala Art Museum. The paintings on display were totally different from the art forms that we had in Bhutan so it was very refreshing and new. We also had an art activity where we tried a printing form. The last days of the summit was quite sad. The realization that this amazing experience was coming to an end was always there in the back of my mind but it hit me when we were working on our final presentations. The farewell dinner had a quite depressing vibe to it and as expected we cried when it ended.

Joining the summit, for me, meant going out of my comfort zone and I am glad that I took part in this wonderful experience.

Rangjung Dorji

Bhutan



Journey to Delhi

With much excitement all the eleven participants from various colleges of Royal University of Bhutan situated in different parts of the country came to Paro on 2nd September 2019. The eve of our flight toward Delhi we met with the director of Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies, Zimpon Wom Chewang Rinzin. He highlighted the importance of the India- Bhutan Youth summit and encouraged us to learn as much as possible from this event which aims at creating future ambassadors of the India-Bhutan friendship. On the morning of 2nd September, Dasho also came to see us off and wished us all the very best of luck for the summit.



Bhutanese Participants with Director of RIGSS at Paro international airport

3rd September

On the 3rd of September we flew to Delhi and it was a good experience for most of us, for me it was my first flight. It was an exciting experience and I enjoyed the flight with all those beautiful view of the sky and high mountains. At around 9 am we reached the Indira Gandhi airport and were received by Mr Choki Wangchuk from Centre for Escalation of Peace. And we made our journey towards the Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, the international youth centre, and we checked into our rooms.

Later that day it we were introduced to all the officials from the organizing team, starting with the welcome note by Mr. Arun Kapur. We also got to interact with the participants from India and we introduced ourselves and also did some ice braking sessions. We were also briefed about the upcoming trek in Uroli and were gifted event t-shirts and other merchandise.

The welcome dinner was hosted by the Royal Bhutanese Embassy and we got to interact with the ambassador and the officials. The first day ended with high enthusiasm and excitement for the following journey towards Uttarakhand and the Uroli trek.



Welcome note by Mr Arun Kapur (left), participants at Uroli camp (right)

4th September

The journey towards Uroli was an early start, we were to travel by train to Uttarakhand. For me the journey was full of suspense and I was excited for what awaited us at Uroli. It was also my first train ride, and we travelled for around six hours. We arrived at Kathgodham and had our lunch there before we started our drive toward Uroli camp site. Uroli was a beautiful place and it felt like home, the road journey through the twist and turns of the road reminded me of my own country. Upon reaching the camp site we were given tea and snacks. The camp site which is run by INME was a serene and calm place to be, with all the beauty of nature intact. At night fall we sat in a circle at the dining hall of the camp with Mr. Gaurav and we spoke about our country, what we knew about India and queries about other queries. I got to learn a lot and also got to know the participants and their field of interests. We were briefed about the upcoming trek and the day ended with some interaction between participants over dinner.

5th September

For the first day track we went to Sitlathek, and had to walk for around one and half hours. We interacted our friends from India and got an in-depth explanation about their cultures. During the trek I got to share about my culture and tradition back home. The scenery was lovely so we also took some good photos. At the hilltop there was a small Hindu temple and also a small school. We interacted with the students for a while started then began descending and we reached to the second camp at Sitlathek yet another beautiful camp of INME. We had our lunch and spend some quality time enjoying the peaceful surroundings and we also learned how to pitch a tent.

Later that evening we got back to our base camp and the last activity was the friendship ladder where we a first-hand experience of team work, the activity was fun and exciting. At the end of the day we did some reflection on our concerns for the world that can affect our future. Some of them where mutual concerns and it was a good sign that the youth of our times are heading towards the right direction.

6th September

It was camp day and we went back on a hike for around 3 hrs uphill as we interacted with each other. We talked about education, health and the judiciary system in the two countries. Along the way we also picked up some wild mushroom that are also found in Bhutan. At the camp site we pitched our own tents and also helped in cooking the dinner. We later sat in a circle and shared our concerns related to our country and what we are proud of our country. After dinner we stayed around a bonfire and spent some time bonding at a deeper level.



Camp day

7th September

After cleaning the camp site and dismantling our tents we headed back to our base camp and start descending the hill. At the base camp we had a session with Mr Gaurav on leadership and decision-making skills. We had some brain teasing activities like some math questions and moral based questions. This was the last day at the camp site and the last sharing session was on 'what we thought about our future, our hopes desires and commitments.' We discussed and shared our views on what we can do as a group to continue the spirit of India- Bhutan Youth Summit.

8th September

It was time to head back to Delhi, we said our goodbyes and thanked the camps staff and made our way back to the train station. We had lunch on our way back and started our six hour train journey back to the capital. We reached Vishwa Yuvak Kendra at 10 pm.

9th September

Back at Delhi we visited a school run by Ritinjali for the deprived children of the slum area, we divided in to two groups and interacted with the students there. We did some activities with the kids like telling stories, singing and painting. After that we also visited the Second Chance school and had some sessions with the students there. After returning from the trip we went to Ambience mall and we also did some shopping.

10th September

On that day we visited the magnificent Red Fort build by Shah Jahan and also visited the Drishyakala Art Museum inside it. We saw some amazing paintings that were on display there. Later on, we also had some workshop on block printing and we also did some of our own art works. After the tour we visited Sarojini market and we explored the markets for few hours and we were back to Vishwa Yuvak Kendra. Since it was the last day we started preparing for the closing ceremony, we even prepared some traditional dance and songs.



Visit to Red fort

11th September

That morning we visited the Royal Bhutanese Embassy and had an interaction with the ambassador. We had some discussion on the matter of democracy and the political situation of our country. The ambassador was kind enough to share his thoughts, experiences and answered each and every one of our questions. Then was the closing ceremony and everyone had mixed emotions. It was graced by the Ambassador of Bhutan his excellency Dasho V. Namgyal. Songs and dances were performed by the participants and there was a presentation on the whole summit where we shared our experiences with those present. The certificates were awarded to the participants and the event ended with a photo session.

The second India-Bhutan Youth Summit was a successful event and all of us had grown together within these ten days and forged an everlasting bond between ourselves. With the commitment to keep the same spirit and continue our bond the program ended with heavy hearts, tears in our eyes and full of good wishes. The Bhutanese gave our Indian counterparts some souvenirs that we had brought from our country as a token of friendship. The day ended with a farewell dinner and though we had an early flight

The second India-Bhutan Youth Summit was a successful event and all of us had grown together within these ten days and forged an everlasting bond between ourselves.

the day after we spent the night chatting and exchanging our dresses, taking photos and creating good memories.

12th September

It was time for us to go back to Bhutan and though our flight was an early one our Indian friends woke up and came to see us off. The summit was a once in a life time experience for all of us and with a promise to keep the bond strong we left Delhi. Upon arrival we were again received by director of RIGSS, Zimpon Wom Chewang Rinzin, we had a debriefing session with Dasho and we shared our learning experiences and our reflections on the event. We bid goodbye to our friends and went our separate ways with good memories and experiences as ambassadors of the India- Bhutan friendship.



Closing ceremony

Sejal Grover India



2nd September, 2019; it was raining cats and dogs in Mumbai, my home city. Leaving behind all the pitter- patter of the rains, the people, the studies, the daily ups and downs of life I took a flight to Delhi. Delhi lives has extreme weather, and is seldom kind to a weary traveller. Nevertheless, I consoled myself, the weather was not able to shun my high spirits for the summit.

Passing through the embassy area in Chanakyapuri in Delhi to reach my destination, I was awestruck looking at the embassies or high commissions of the area. India hosts a whopping 152 embassies, and it would take only a look at this area to understand it's magnanimity. They weren't just buildings, they represented the cultures, values, and also the power positions of different nations.

Reaching Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, our place of accommodation, I took my bags and went in search of my room, while my mind was still searching for the few Dzongkha words I had learnt from the Internet. Suddenly, someone grasped my bag and asked whether I had come for the IBYS. Caught a little by surprise, I replied in the affirmative, and he took the bag ahead. I thought that maybe he's from the organizing team, and he'd been allotted the job of showing people their rooms. I said thank you and knocked at the door of my room. Five girls, stared at me with sparkling eyes, as if I was the Shah Rukh Khan coming home after my long studies in 'Kabhi Khushi KabhiGham'. I admit, it was really difficult to grasp the names at first, and they were not facing the same problem with our names, which I later realized, was thanks to the influence of Bollywood. They had already had lunch, but two of them helped me get something to eat and kept me company. I thought to myself, how sweet! This was just the first instance in the series of sweet moments during the summit.

During lunch, the person who helped me with my bags came up and sat next to me. His name was Thukten, and he was a youth from Bhutan who had come for the summit! I asked him why he had helped me with the bags, and he replied that he was sitting idly, so he thought he'd rather help. It was a rather tough pill to swallow, even for a doctor. Talking of first impressions though, the Bhutanese had definitely made a good one.

After some rest, we attended the first session, where Mr Arun Kapur and his team were already waiting for us. They handed over to us cash envelopes, and never spoke a word about it during the summit. My Bhutanese friends say that it's a tradition to give some money to children when they come after a long time, and I have accepted the explanation for lack of any other. MrArunKapur told us here that everyone was to develop a 'moral code' for themselves, and it made sense to me. Not having a set of values to live by is like trying to sail an uncharted sea. We're bound to lose our way in the midst of it.

After the introductions, both formal and informal, we headed to the Bhutanese Embassy's residence, where we were treated with delicacies, both traditional and modern, ranging from EmaDatsi to cheesecakes. What struck me was the way in which people of

Not having a set of values to live by is like trying to sail an uncharted sea. We're bound to lose our way in the midst of it.



great importance in Bhutan interacted with us. There was no air of pride, no haughty or boisterous words, a kind hello, and 'I am the Speaker of the National Assembly' or 'I am the Economics Minister of Bhutan'!

The next day, we took the train to Kathgodam, Shatabdi express from New Delhi railway station. The morning smog of Delhi made me feel breathless and my friends shared the same concern. The train journey was about songs and fights about whether Salman Khan is good or bad (Although Tshering was the only person favouring Sallu Bhai). With Anshu and Cyril singing and Jatin playing the 'guitalele' and all the rest of us prompting songs, it was a soothing pastime. If Bollywood could help people from two different cultures relate, it wasn't that bad either. Learnt some Dzongkha songs too along the way.

As we reached Kathgodam and got into our jeeps, two little girls came begging for alms. I had become desensitized to their relentless requests for help, but Kinley Seldon and Karma Yangchen were not. They went ahead and gave the girls a fifty rupee note each. This caused five more girls to come in our direction. I tried to explain to them that you need to take a stand here, but the empathy in their eyes broke the barrier I had created for myself, to not see the suffering of the kids, and I could speak no more.

The next day was our trek to Sitlakheth- the cool sojourn. The journey was more beautiful than the destination. It gave me ample time and opportunity to interact with my fellows from both India and Bhutan with topics ranging from culture, songs, mythology, demographics and politics of both the countries. I was astounded and fascinated by the knowledge of my Bhutanese counterparts about India, and also a little guilty for not knowing that much about our beautiful neighbourhood. On the top of the mountain, where Swami Vivekanand had meditated, were rows of bells signifying fulfilled wishes of pilgrims. Maa Syaahi Devi, may you help us achieve our goals throughout the summit and beyond!

We headed to an adjoining school, and Anuja enthusiastically presented a poem- 'Lambidadi wale Baba.....' for the kids. Her energy was exemplary, and she had a profound impact on our future interaction with the kids in the slums of Delhi.

Later that day, we completed the activity of the 'friendship ladder'. It was a lesson in



cooperation and teamwork. The beauty was that we were not lonely on the top, which increased the joy and celebration manifold. In my case, Yoezer Choki (my partner for the activity) was not the only person helping me. Shoaib (the instructor), Nitish and Karma Yeshi also pulled me up to reach the top. So, the victory was a wonderful collaboration towards success!

The second trek was to a campsite, where we would spend the night. The path was more enduring; and cooperation and coordination were key to move uphill without tripping on the way. Mr Tshering Penjor la and Mr Tshering Wangdi la had collected mushrooms the day before, and although we were skeptical of their edibility, we relished the Shamu Datshi. So, on this trek, I decided to help along to find the mushrooms. At first, it was a tough task; but with the right guidance, the mushrooms could be spotted like pretty lotuses in a marsh.

We also collected garbage along the way, and I was astonished at the amount of plastic collected from a seemingly untouched natural reserve. Most of it were paan and beedi



packets, which reflected the practices of the locals.

At the campsite, we pitched our tents, and learnt the value of taking everyone together in this activity. Cooking our meals, eating under the stars and discussing around the bonfire was a surreal experience.

The next morning awaited a pleasant surprise, when the clouds cleared for a few minutes, and we were able to catch a glimpse of the mighty Himalayan peaks, including Nanda Devi. The Bhutanese say the mountains are to be respected, and not all peaks are meant to be scaled. I agree. High mountains like Nanda Devi are best appreciated from a distance, reinforcing values of courage, determination and humility at the same time.

All the sessions during the summit were enlightening. We discussed our views, our understanding about our countries and the world, our future plans and potential areas of



collaboration which spearheaded into meaningful conversations. It gave me an insight that to bring about real change, an intersectoral coordination is essential. A doctor, a demographer, an architect, a food scientist, a businesswoman and even a social entrepreneur (all of them were there in our team). Alone we cannot make a difference but if we got together with a common goal in mind the impact multiplies bountifully.

Throughout the summit, I realized the benefits of a closely-knit, area wise small, culturally strong country. Thanks to Tshering's lesson, Phuntshok's book and LekiBumpa, Kinley Wangmo, Sonam Seldom and Rangjung Dorji's detailed descriptions about their culture from the book, I can now boast of a good knowledge of Bhutanese history and culture. The people of Bhutan have faith on their king, democracy was in fact gifted to them by their king! They preserve their natural resources, restrict tourism, have intact traditions; all of which makes their country exquisite. There are plenty of behavioural changes and great ideas that we can learn from them and incorporate in our daily lives too.

My Bhutanese friends were very happy in Uttarakhand and were comparing it to their own country. I reminded them that Delhi was waiting to welcome them back with 40°C temperature and heavy pollution!

Back in Delhi, we went to the slums and conducted activities with the kids. We took a peek into Ritinjali's work there, interacted with people from the Second Chance School and their vocational training courses. Their zest to learn inspire of trying situations was inspiring!

We visited the Drishyakala art gallery, where we studied original works of the Navratans of India. We also tried our hand at linocut painting and doodling over there. It was a fun session. Our artists in the group, Lakshya and our directorji, were there to help!

Visiting the local market, we had a tough time carrying the weight of our brimming bags and preventing our Bhutanese friends from getting lost. But, Zainab and I would proudly say that by the end of the shopping experience, we taught Yoezer how to bargain on Indian streets!

Our interaction with the Ambassador at the Royal Bhutanese Embassy and Mr Vijay Chhibber gave us better insights on the India Bhutan relationship, our strength and challenges.

In the closing ceremony, I was privileged to get an opportunity to present a Bharatnatyam dance. We also danced along with our Bhutanese friends and had a gala time. In the end, Zainab and I unveiled a poster that we had prepared based on our experiences at the summit. Jaseel, Yoezer Choki, Karma Yeshe and Karma Yangchen also played a vital role in making the poster in a tight-packed schedule.

In the end, the summit has left with me wonderful memories and a great sense of appreciation for Bhutan. I plan to work with my Bhutanese friends in devising innovative strategies to reduce suicide rates and prevalence of non-communicable diseases in both the countries. I am deeply interested in Bhutan's traditional medicine, prepared from their unique flora and fauna. I would love to visit Bhutan sometime and learn about the same. And, I will be, forever, an ambassador of the India- Bhutan friendship.



Sonam Peldon Bhutan



The India- Bhutan youth summit is jointly organized by RIGSS in Bhutan and CEP in India mainly to enhance the understanding and appreciating the importance of India-Bhutan relation amongst the youths of the two countries, and groom the future ambassadors of this relationship in both countries. Eleven students from eleven colleges under RUB and ten youths from various institutions in India were selected to take part. I feel very fortunate to be one of the participants of this summit. During the summit, we were engaged in a wide range of activities including a four-day trek in Uroli, Uttarakhand, discussions on India-Bhutan relations, personal development and sharing sessions, visits to landmarks, meeting with eminent persons, a visit to royal Bhutanese embassy and interactions with India-Bhutan youth summit's first alumni.

We had our first day trek towards Sitlakhet where the journey started with fifty minutes drive in the jeep and about two hours walk to reach the destination. While on the way we had many conversations where it was mostly about cultural differences and similarities between India and Bhutan, after hearing from our counterparts I came to know that we have many things in common which made our relations much closer. Not only this we even picked trash together on the way which was a very good initiative begun by one of our friends. On the way, we visited a temple and school and around lunch time we reached Silakhket and had our lunch. After some photo sessions we were taught how to pitch a tent in preparation for the next trek. And then we went back to our base camp where we took part in outdoor activity called the friendship ladder where we climbed the ladder with our friends from India. I found that this activity was memorable one as we supported each other to complete the task so the way my partner supported me to climb the ladder and completed the task made me very happy and kind of emotional too. After that we had our regular session at KPRD. v



The next day, we had a night-out trek away from the Uroli Camp, and on that day we learned different languages and songs from our Indian friends as well as we taught them our Bhutanese songs. It was quite astonishing to see our Indian friends learn our Bhutanese song very fast and sadly we Bhutanese took some time to learn their songs in Tamil and Malayalam. After reaching the campsite we started to pitch our own tents in groups of three and the participants cooked their own food together where Indian friends gave their own touch with multiple spices and Bhutanese participants gave our own touch with more chilies and spiciness in the curry. Altogether it turned out to be a delicious curry and everyone



enjoyed the dinner. So what I learned from that day was that cooperation, cohesion and coordination is a must to build a strong connection among friends or a team, and it is a way of forming connections for a lifetime.

We had total of three sessions where we first discussed our concerns as world citizen and the most common concerns were on global warming, climate change and individualism. On the second session we went down to the national level where we shared our views and concerns about our country particularly on the society, governance and politics. And then we talked about our future, our hopes and desire where each shared their views about the goal of the summit and answered beautifully, and we learned a lot about each other's country. Then we were asked to make suggestion about networking opportunities and ideas to collaborate to keep us connected.



Apart from this we also had some sessions with Mr Gaurav which was the most interesting and valuable one. During that particular session Mr Gaurav came up with two stories and we were asked to give answers to the questions. We finally came up with three different answers and each one of us were very sure that our answer were correct. The main takeaway from that session was that we are not always right, different people have different perspectives so we should sometimes listen to others' perception, appreciate it and accept the differences we have. Then we had another meaningful session on leadership which was also called the session of learning with Mr Gaurav where we learned about the circle of learning and how our life evolves around the circle of learning.

So what I learned from that day was that cooperation, cohesion and coordination is a must to build a strong connection among friends or a team, and it is a way of forming connections for a lifetime.

After the four day trek at Uroli we were back to Delhi where we spent a day at Ritinjali. We came to know Ritinjali is a NGO that provides a helping hand to the slum dwellers especially in the field of education and community development. So we were given an opportunity to understand the urban slums and the education system, and how Ritinjali works to bridge the gap between the young children of slum areas and the education system. We went to a learning centre which was in Kusumpur Pahari and we did many activities with the children including the song that we sang on the trek; we also did a hand painting activity with the children where we drew a dragon head representing Bhutan and we made them paint the body themselves. We also put up a small skit to make the children understand that we are from Bhutan, told them where Bhutan is and a bit of our gross national happiness. And then we went to Second Chance school where we met a great facilitator Ms Diksha and we discussed about the challenges and opportunities that we as youth have both in India and Bhutan. Right after the interactions with them we went to Ambiance mall, it was a completely different experience like from a slum and directly towards a luxurious mall. It showed a huge gap between rich and poor. So the main take away from that day was that overpopulation in India has created a huge gap between rich and poor but we didn't see this as a disadvantage rather we saw this as an opportunity as the work that Ritinjali was doing



was great and inspiring so like what Ritinjali is doing we were inspired to bring about changes in both India and Bhutan and to create a better world for everyone around us.

The next day we visited Red Fort and Drishyakala as a part of the cultural immersion segment of the summit. At Drishyakala art museum we were introduced to nine different treasured artists and were shown how the Indian calendar had evolved from 18th century. After that to unwind and have fun the people from Drishyakala engaged us in artistic activity in which we were made to do artwork using the linocut technique. After that we went to Sarojini



market where we got to experience the crowded local shopping market and buy many things at a cheaper price. We were very touched by the care that our Indian friends have given us through the crowd as they were always together with us and also helped us negotiate the price so we also got a chance to learn the negotiation and bargaining skills from our counterparts.

And on the last day all the participants visited the Royal Bhutanese Embassy and had an interactive session with the Bhutanese ambassador where he spoke about the topics which concern both India and Bhutan as how Bhutan plans to diversify its economy. We were engaged in fruitful discussions. And right after that we went back for our farewell program where we did presentations, performed cultural dances, and received certificates. It was



becoming harder and harder for each one of us to say our final goodbyes.

So all in all it was a wonderful experience for me as whatever we did on these ten days, everything was first time for me as well as many of my friends like from the flight experience, train, visiting slum areas and etc. It was a great learning experience for me as well as a great exposure. I would like to pay my heartfelt gratitude towards RIGGS and CEP for organizing such an event and giving us this wonderful opportunity.

[illegible]

All the Bhutanese participants were asked to gather at Dharma Resort in Paro, which is a few minutes away from Paro International Airport. We were to have a small gathering with the director of the Royal Institute of Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS). Shortly after arriving at the resort, the Director of RIGSS called us for a short interactive session. Director lucidly briefed all the participants about the India Bhutan Youth Summit and the intention behind such an international exchange program. The director also enlightened us about the unique bilateral relations between the two nations and why it is important for the younger generation to uphold and strengthen it. I came to understand that there was a

noble intention behind spending vast sums of money for such program.



New place, new people

After a two-hour flight we arrived at Indra Gandhi International Airport. There were many giant metal birds set ready to carry people to their destination and some were already taking off to their terminus. We checked in at Vishwa Yuvak Kendra which was a few minutes' drive from the airport. The first thing I did after reaching the hotel was to search for an AC because the heat in Delhi was unbearable for me, maybe because I stay in a colder climate. At first it was hard for me to move from a region where the maximum temperature is 23°C to a place where the average temperature is 25°C. As the days passed I grew more accustomed to the weather.

When we were done settling into our rooms and freshening up, the Indian participants started to check in one after another with bewilderment. A few of us went to help them carry their rucksacks and guide them to their respective rooms and that is how we broke the ice. Within an hour I became acquainted with the Indian participants. However, it was just a tip of the iceberg -- the new acquaintanceship was to be nurtured within a few days, and that was one of the very objectives of IBYS-2; to create a very durable and positive rapport among the participants.

We were so engrossed in our conversation, asking questions curiously about one another's views on both the countries, we didn't even notice that it was time for the welcome remarks hosted by Centre for Escalation of Peace. We hastily got dressed and rushed to the opening session. All the participants looked scintillating in their traditional attire. The ice-breaking session began with the introduction of each participant; people sounded very enthusiastic and excited about the summit.

After our introduction, focal persons from CEP and RIGSS shared the motivation behind the summit, and different representatives introduced themselves.

One of the purposes of IBYS-2 is to impart knowledge to the young future leaders and ambassadors. Indeed it was an event full of erudition and learning. I felt that the program was designed in such a fashion that the participants were imparted knowledge and were



informed about the current situation of the world, country and ourselves, sometimes unbeknownst to the participants.

My learning experience from the IBYS-2 began right away from the welcome remarks organized by Centre for Escalation of Peace in the auditorium of Vishwa Yuvak Kendra. We were given envelopes and an invitation card for dinner. As I opened the envelope, one contained a short essay about leadership and Rupees 2000 as a pocket money from the organizers. At first little did I know that the essay that I was about to unfold would be priceless, an enriching piece that every young leader should read and put into practice to bring positive change in our lives and others' too. The essay pointed out the importance of developing a 'moral code' for ourselves to guide the decisions we make and actions we take.

The decisions and actions we take, and choices we make are all from the same root i.e. the moral code. A poor moral code leads to poor judgment and rich moral code leads to better judgment. Thus, it is of immense necessity to develop a good moral code to direct our actions and decisions, which will have an impact on others directly or indirectly. On a personal note the essay was a masterpiece and it guided me to be mindful of my decision, actions and my choices.

One of the paragraphs reads:

"As a young emerging leader, you are taking on a role in the real world, where your actions would be used as examples to inspire others. Therefore, when put to the task, you should always seek to be on the path of perfection, thereby never disappointing those drawing inspiration from you, leaving legacy and a positive mark on the world".

Discussions

The program included three days trekking at Kathgodam in Uroli, which is situated in Uttarakhand. Every evening the IBYS-2 team had discussions on various topics. The first topic was 'what are the issues and things that concern me and are relevant for our future?' All the participants were sharing very pressing issues such as climate change, poverty, unequal wealth distribution, unemployment, environmental degradation, human overpopulation, health care, emerging technology and people being self centred. From the discussion I could sense that the younger generation is concerned about where the world is heading. I still remember one of the participants, Sejal said, 'We will be the last generation to witness these issues and will be the last ones to bring a change', and she made sense to me. We are at a juncture from where we can make the right turn or drive to the point of no return. If the younger generation does not realize and act accordingly then the world will hurtle towards the precipice of self-destruction.

During the discussion on the second day of the trek, we were asked questions such as what we know about the opposite country? How we view our own country as a community? What makes me proud about our country? And what concerns us? I could understand from the discussion that small and big countries both had advantages and disadvantages. The Indian participants were proud of what India is doing in terms of economy and technology. While the Bhutanese participants were proud of the nation's philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH). However, many of the participants shared the growing concern of political instability and degrading of their ancient beautiful culture and tradition.

We were back at the Uroli base camp by afternoon where we conversed on the theme, 'what do I think about my future? My hopes and desires. What am I willing to commit to achieve my dreams?' The participants were sharing their own beautiful dreams such as to become a doctor, engineer, social entrepreneur, and teacher and food scientist. I think I was the only one without a dream and a goal -- who was perplexed about the future. After the discussion I realized the importance of having a goal and working towards attaining it because without having a target we cannot hit it. All successful people in the world have a goal, have a goal



and work hard to accomplish it. 'An argument is an exchange of ignorance, discussion is an exchange of ideas.' All the discussions were enriching and it taught me many new things about India and Bhutan as well. It also made me think about where I am right now in life.

Conversations

Our conversations started from the very first day – the introductions and sharing each other's culture were all driven by conversation. I personally got to know more about India, some of the Indian cultures as well as new things about my own country, which I was not aware of. One conversation that captivated me was when Madam Anuja (trekking escort) was talking about trees as a community. She said that all trees are connected to each other and send messages to each other about almost everything. The stronger trees help the weaker ones to grow by sharing food and water. So, it struck me that if trees can be connected as a community, why can't we humans live harmoniously as a community? Malcom Gladwell has written in his book Outliers the importance of good community for longevity of someone's

life.

Further, in a conversation with one of the participants, Cyril Cherian, he was sharing about a festival called 'Onam'. It is believed to be a festival of prosperity, celebrated in the memory of a generous king called 'Onam'. He told me that during the festival no one should be left empty stomach. It was something nice to hear because nobody deserves to live hungry even for a day. How I wish everyone could celebrate it every day? Listening to such meaningful talks and engaging in purposeful conversations I acquired a lot of new knowledge, that's why the Dalai Lama rightly said that if we speak, we speak what we already know but if we listen we get to know new things.

A Day at Ritinjali

Once in Delhi, we visited Ritinjali, a slum area to meet the under-privileged kids. I had only heard about slum areas and had seen it on television but visiting Ritinjali gave me a real taste of how a slum area is. Seeing people living in slums where there is no proper water supply, no health care and no proper education, I realized that I am already very blessed and privileged to be who I am and where I am born. After an hour and half, we headed to



Second Chance school. For me the name itself was amazing because everyone deserves a second chance. The school was indeed giving a second chance to those who did not get go to school. We had a series of presentations by different groups that was divided on a random basis. The presentation boiled down to the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of the younger generation.

Super market, Super Art and Super Girl

Next day was meant for roaming and exploring the places, which included markets and Red Fort. When we reached Red Fort, I was gob-smacked by the architecture of such a huge building; people are talented with a potential to do anything. My astonishment was further blazed when we visited Drishyakala art gallery and saw some of the finest work of some great Indian artists. The most interesting part about Drishyakala Art Gallery is that we were given a chance to try our hand at lino cut painting. It was a fun show though we had to rush at the end. We also visited a local market to buy clothes and other things. Though the Indian



participants showed minimum interest in buying things, the Bhutanese participants were loaded with many bags. Some were for themselves and were gifts for family and friends.

The Last Day

On our last day we visited the Royal Bhutanese Embassy and had an interaction with the Bhutanese Ambassador. He looked undoubtedly wise, a trusted guide and a best advisor. Albeit holding a very important position for a country he had no air of pride. The ambassador was down to earth answering the questions as simply and as politely as possible. I learnt a lot from him, starting from the history of India-Bhutan relations to how to behave as an influential future leader. The interaction with the ambassador was indeed a privilege, but





more importantly, it was an enriching and enlightening experience.

The closing ceremony was scheduled in the evening, and the Royal Bhutanese Ambassador graced it. Both Bhutanese and Indian participants filled the night with interesting dance performances and songs. After the vote of thanks and the ceremony song, the fascinating evening turned into a mournful night. Participants were sad as they were to depart early morning the next day. I tried my best to hold back my tears but reminiscing the days of absolute enjoyment and the pain of departing did not let me hold it.

The summit was enriching, leaving sweet memories with enlightening experiences and knowledge. I look forward to strengthening the unique bilateral relations for mutual benefit in the best possible ways. As an emerging young leader, I look forward to developing an invincible moral code, which will guide me to the path of perfection when everything goes totally wrong. And I will miss the time we spent together.

The summit was enriching, leaving sweet memories with enlightening experiences and knowledge.

Tshering Yangden

Bhutan



I strongly believe that surprises are the greatest gift that life can grant us. This India-Bhutan Youth Summit was a surprise which came as a greatest gift for me as I experienced lots of things which I never imagined I will be able to do in my whole life. I was fortunate to be selected as one of the participants from Bhutan to take part in this summit which was held in Delhi from 3rd September, 2019 to 12 September, 2019. The IBYS which was launched in September last year, 2018 was to commemorate the golden jubilee of India-Bhutan diplomatic relations which aims to enhance the understanding and appreciation of the importance of India-Bhutan relations amongst the youths of the two countries, and to groom the future ambassadors of this relations in both the countries. This summit will be held annually alternatively in Bhutan and India every year. This year, the second IBYS was held in Delhi, India and eleven of us from the eleven colleges under the Royal University of Bhutan led by the officials from the RIGSS participated in this summit in New Delhi with ten selected youths from various institutions from India.

During the summit, we were engaged in a wide range of activities including a four-day trek in Uroli. We had discussions on India- Bhutan relations, personal development and sharing sessions. We visited different landmarks, met with eminent persons, visited the Royal Bhutanese Embassy and had interactions with IBYS-1 participants.

I was feeling very apprehensive about visiting a country where I have never been before, but the moment I met with the participants from India, they were very friendly, filled with hospitality that I felt homely all the time. Even while talking informally, we had a mutual respect for the speaker and a better understanding for each other. Above all, the four-day Uroli trek added a spark to our friendship because we were able to interact and know more about the Indian culture and tradition, its political system, its mythical beliefs, some histories of India and others relative information from the Indian mates during the journey. We the Bhutanese participants also shared information about our unique country and its traditions.



We visited some significant places on our way like the Styahi Devi temple where the people believe that if you make a wish there and if it comes true, you have to go back and tie a bell outside the temple as a token of appreciation to the goddess for fulfilling their wish. I thought such beliefs only prevailed in Bhutan but it was fascinating to know that the Indians who practice different religions also believed in such myths. We also visited a small primary school where there were only 20-30 children enrolled. I felt great to interact with those kids and see how content they were with their life. After reaching back to our base camp, we were given a task to climb on the friendship ladder in pairs. I felt scared as I knew I would not be able to complete that task but my partner helped me complete it. I learned that if there is cohesion, corporation and collaboration, then anything is possible.



The next day was the hiking day. This day was very memorable for the participants, especially for the Bhutanese participants as we were able to set an example for our Indian mates. We collected the waste that lay on our way making the surroundings cleaner. All the Bhutanese participants were not at all reluctant to pick the waste although we were from a different country. Slowly, all the Indian mates also began to collect the waste and together we contributed something valuable to mother nature. Everyone was helping each other while walking and the most interesting thing was, some of our officials began to collect mushrooms on the way but we were feeling scared thinking it might be poisonous and had hesitation to eat it also; but we were still breathing aftermath of having it, thankfully.

We were asked to pitch our own tents and we began to choose the best spot but while doing that, we forgot that we were all acting selfish. Our facilitators were observing us while we were acting so childish and when they reminded us about our immature behaviour, we felt so bad and realized that instead of maximizing the individual gain, we needed to max-



imize the group outcome. So we pitched our tents in a very particular way that there was enough space for all the people to pitch their tents as well as space to walk comfortably. This hike taught us how to survive in the wilds. We also cooked together and though there were limited food items, it was as good as a dish served in a five star hotel or as tasty as moms' cooked meal for the food were prepared with lots of love in it. The next day we cleaned our camp site area and went back to our base camp. This hiking made the bonding between us very strong as we began to understand each other more.

The most interesting and interactive moment of this summit was the discussion and the sessions that we had. Our sessions began from the first day of the summit. The ice breaking discussion that was done on the first day was very captivating as many interesting activities were carried out amongst the members. We all were so engrossed in those activities that we all forgot our national and religious differences and worked as one team. The questions that were asked to us by our facilitators made us wrack our brains to respond the questions. We were made to reflect on ourselves and our plans for our future. From the sessions, we came to know that we all had worries of our own, worries towards our country and worries towards the world as a whole. Everyone had their different opinions, solutions and commitments. Listening to such opinions and commitments became a factor that acted as an energizer for all of us to boost our zeal to dream for a better world. If everyone began to think like that and work towards their commitments, we shall not be far from the time when we will have a safe and harmonious earth. As a youth and a subject of the world, we should not only point at the problems and talk about it but we should work to solve those problems. We should not be NATO (No Action, Talk Only).



We also had a very interesting and enlightening session with Mr Gaurav Saklani. He told us



three interesting stories and from those stories, he made us realize the true meaning of our existence on earth and how we should accept and respect our differences. At first we were asked to solve a math problem and everyone was trying their best to find the answer to the problem. The funny thing was that there were four different answers for a particular math equation. When he asked which one was the right answer, we all began to prove that the solution we came to was right. From this activity, we came to know that we because of our ego we never listens to others' opinions. We always feel that whatever we know is correct and it should be accepted by the rest of world. This activity made us reflect on what we had been doing until now and what effects our actions have on this earth.

The next story was from a movie scene and we were asked to think and rate the four characters from good to bad. Again everyone had their different perspectives and began to argue and give reasons why the particular character is good or bad. This story was told to make us understand that everyone is different in their own ways and we should always appreciate and respect the differences that we have rather than arguing and criticizing each other. The last story was about how we should justify and handle a situation wisely. I will never forget this session as I got to learn and reflect on myself and change the way I see the world.

The session where we were given three beads with one bead to appreciate someone, one bead to thank someone and one bead to be kept to ourselves with a commitment was the hardest task for me as all the participants had many qualities worth appreciating. Everyone was so friendly and helpful that I wanted to thank everyone but since I had only two beads to give to others it was really difficult for me to choose a person to give the bead to. That time I realized that though we were coming from different regions and different countries, we had one thing in common, which is our good deeds. I was having difficulty to select two people as I appreciated everyone and wanted to





thank them. So as being a good people, we should always try to do our best so that people remember us with the warmest smile ever.

We also visited the school of the under privileged students in Ritinjali. It was the most touching moment of my life, for it made me realize how lucky we are to have this life. On our way towards the school, we saw the bitter side of India. We saw poor people living in slum areas. Their only challenge was the struggle to survive. I felt sorry for most of us complain about our luxurious, while there are people who don't even have this fortune. Seeing it from their lenses and standing in their shoes, I thank my lords for giving me this life, where the almighty gave me lot. We reached the school with a heavy heart and were divided into two groups and were asked to interact with the kids of the school. It was so hard to control the over active kids as they were not listening to us at all so we had to use different strategies to gain their attention. We did many fun activities together and I am really happy that we could spread happiness among those kids, even if it was for a short while. We also went to Second Chance school which is a school for urban deprived young adults who unfortunately had to end the educational chapter early in their lives. We discussed youth challenges and opportunities that we have as a youth and met with the Second Chance students and interacted with them.

We had so much fun at the Red. We were taken to Drishyakala Museum to see the art museum with original works of the nine jewels of Indian art and visited the gallery on evolution of portrait art. We were privileged to see the art of the great figures and we also did wood carving known as the linocut technique which was very interesting. I did my first art work in a great historical museum so I felt proud of myself.

We went to a mall and Sarojini market which was one of the Delhi's most crowded places. We could see the different living style of the people in these two different areas. It was more of like heaven and hell coming together in one place, at different intervals. The people we saw in the mall were someone from heavenly realms with no worries while the people we saw in Sarojini market were so burdened with earning a living to survive. We saw two sides of India in two different locations.

Kutsab, the ambassador of Bhutan was very knowledgeable, we discussed various matters



concerning the youth. We also had a question and answer session where Kutsab was kind and generous with his answers to clear the doubts. We felt honoured to have met such eminent figure and to get an opportunity to interact with His Excellency.

To put in a nutshell, I feel like a new born baby emerging as a better version of myself. My way of seeing the world has changed after participating in this summit and I promise to contribute the best towards the world and keep in touch with my Indian friends to make our bond last forever. I will try my best to not fall in the category of NATO and make the best use of the knowledge I got from this India- Bhutan Youth Summit-2.

**To put in a
nutshell, I feel
like a new born
baby emerging as
a better version of
myself.**

Vidhi Bubna

India



I arrived at the Indo Bhutan summit with excitement for the journey which was to begin. This was my first ever experience of attending a youth program. On the very first day, there was a dinner planned at the Embassy of Bhutan. We got to learn that embassies are designed based on the architecture of their home countries. The Ambassador welcomed us. He was extremely humble and he told us stories about his experiences at the NDA. He had some very interesting stories to tell us about his interactions with the King. At the Embassy, we tried various dishes from Bhutan. Ema Datsi was my favourite.

The very next day, we left for Uroli. I had been reading, *The Subtle Art of not Giving a Fuck* on the way -- a fantastic book which talks about only caring about what holds importance to you. I completed the book on the train journey and we reached Kathgodam. Old memories resurfaced as I had visited Kathgodam many times in the past for my previous treks. We then started our journey.

We stopped on the way and visited Kainchi temple. It was a beautiful temple which was located in the lap of the mountains. The beauty in the surrounding area filled me with awe. We had lemon water and I really loved the big size of the lemons. After reaching, I interacted with Phuntshok and Yoezer who I had roomed with. They had some really amazing myths and stories about Bhutan which they shared with me. I was fascinated to know that the people there were still very superstitious. Every local town has its own deity. They also told me about a temple where couples would visit if they did not have a baby. After visiting, the couple's chances of getting a baby increased.

I also learned that unlike India, the people of Bhutan did not have a family name. Their surnames were given to them by the temples which they visited. My friend Phuntshok was carrying a book with her about Bhutan. The book was published by her father's publishing business. I was intrigued because I am interested in writing and would love to work on a writing project involving the local people as well as the Royal family of Bhutan.

Phuntshok owns a chocolate business and my father's friend owns a chocolate factory in India. I invited Phuntshok to visit the chocolate factory to learn more about the business and equipment so that she could apply it to her business. She could also research more about the chocolate industry in India and expand her operations in the future. She also invited me to work on my book project to Bhutan and told me that her father could have opportunities for me to experience. We saw a possibility for a future collaboration. There was also an opportunity for cross economy research where we could both research different topics while we took part in a student-run exchange program.

The next day, we started trekking. On the trek, I walked with Rungjung and we spoke about the culture in India and Bhutan. He told me more about the education system in Bhutan. Education is free in Bhutan till grade 12. This was intriguing to me since education is expensive in India. I also bonded with a few people from RIGSS on the trek. Realizing that they don't have any social media handles except Facebook, I offered to help them with their social media. I am a digital marketer, video maker, and an Instagram blogger. I could help them to create better posts for their handles to spread awareness about their initiatives and programs. I realized that the business environment in India and Bhutan was very different in

the education sector. Schools and colleges in India have specific marketing companies and PR agencies they hire to reach out to the right audiences. However, the program at RIGSS was not marketed on social media.

The next day we started our trek to the other base camp. Here we had to pitch our own tents along with the group. Some of the guys in the group came to help us pitch our tent properly. On this day we learned more about group outcomes against personal outcomes. We learned to prioritize the outcome for the group when only one group had chosen the best spot with the best view whereas the other groups had not got an adequate view. We also learned that team management is important and it is essential to plan things when everyone is in a team.

The program was so intensive that though we were on the mountains, we did not get enough time to appreciate the natural beauty. This made me feel sad because we were discussing politics on the mountains and that is the last thing I would ever like to do. The mountains to me are a space which I like to enjoy by myself. The time I spend here is supposed to be me-time which I use for introspection. The time I spend in the city is used to introspect about politics and the world. It would be more beneficial if we were given more time only to ourselves on the mountains, to work with our ideas. This time could be used to create creative projects and to work on collaborative ideas example: painting, drawing, making music and artwork, which could be presented at the end of the trek. Working on informal projects works much better for bonding rather than discussing political ideas. Moreover, political conversations on the treks were too long and too forced at times. Instead of learning more from them, I often found myself zoning out at times.

Sitting together in the evening by the campfire and having informal conversations was I'd say the best part of the trip. It made us feel like home and also made us come closer. Moreover, the conversations taught us more about life. They were deep conversations and were suited perfectly to what I like to do on the mountains: introspect about life. Moreover, we got to know so much about each other, it made us realize that people all around the world have the same problems. Starting off early in the morning, and reaching base camp was fun. After reaching base camp from the tents pitched on the mountains, I respected what I had a lot more. That made me realize a simple philosophy, "you can only appreciate what you have when you experience less than what you currently have".

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I'd say the best part
of the trip.**

That night I had an interesting conversation with Phuntshok about the King of Bhutan and the Royal family. Unlike other Kings worldwide, the King of Bhutan took an effort to gel well with the people who lived in the city. He also came out to take part in the events with the citizens. K4 is the most loved King in Bhutan. I would love to write a book on him someday and probably just meet him for a conversation if I can. Stories about him have intrigued me and have fascinated me. He was the King who introduced a constitution to Bhutan. The people of Bhutan were so happy with the King that they felt like they did not need a constitution. Other countries, see masses revolting against a King. The people of Bhutan on the other hand loved the King and did not want a constitution. If I ever meet him, it will be interesting to see the personality which the King has which makes people trust him so much.

The next day we left for Delhi. Delhi felt like a smoke filled gas chamber after returning from Uttarakhand. I did not want to be a part of the city life and I surely did not want to be a part

of the crowd. Here, I was. We went to Red Fort the next day and learned more about Indian artists. This was one of the best parts of the summit. I realized that there was so little that I knew about art which had originated in my own country. I was impressed at the knowledge which the lady guide had about all the artwork. We also visited Second Chance school which was an interesting experience. Interacting with the underprivileged, sitting in the same room and learning with them helped us develop a bond. The seminar on leadership here was fantastic.

We visited Haldiram's to eat. This was interesting because I observed that some people were over ordering even when they did not want to eat so much only because they were not going to be paying. This made me feel a little disappointed because being citizens of a responsible world, it would be great if we could all see resources as collective and not order so much just because we were not paying. I also realized that the management had been great because they did not raise any complaints to us overordering. We also went to visit Sarojini to shop. However, this was not very interesting because I have already seen this place 10 times. Being a travel blogger, I like to visit new places and experience new things when I get the time. I spent most of my time here in a cafeteria instead of visiting the market.

On the last day, we met the Ambassador and he was really insightful. It was also interesting to interact with the ex IAS officer. In the evening, after the Farewell show, we all started crying. We had not thought much when the event was going on, but now that it had ended, we would miss our friends and hope to meet them again soon. We did not expect to cry, I did not expect to cry, but we did and we all hugged each other dearly. The experience we had together, the bonds we formed in the mere 10 days, the respect and love we found, were all enough to make us realize how much we valued each other.

The next day we all had planes to catch, we left the Vishwa Yuvak Kendra. It did not hit me until later how much I valued the experience and would miss my friends who I learned so much from. The overall experience of attending the summit had been nothing short of fantastic.

Yoezer Choki

Bhutan



On 2nd September the 11 participants from Bhutan gathered at Drama resort and had a pre-departure briefing on the event and how to go about throughout the program by the director of Royal Institute for Government and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) Mr. Chewang Rinzin.

Day 1 of the summit 12th September

The next day at around 4:30 am we all left for the airport and the director of RIGSS came to see us off. Our flight was scheduled at around 7:00 am. We landed at Delhi airport at around 9:30 am. We were received by Mr Choki Wangchuk from Center of Escalation of Peace (CEP). Then we registered ourselves at the Vishwa Yuvak Kendra (VYK) and had tea and we met with our Indian friends. At around 12:30 pm we had our lunch and rested as we had taken a long journey. Then at 4:30 pm we all gathered at the auditorium of VYK. We were given an invitation card for the dinner at the Royal Bhutan Embassy, some spending money and an envelope with article written in it. We had an introductory session for us to know each other better. After that the chairman of CEP spoke to us and our facilitators were introduced. At 7:30 pm we went to the embassy for dinner and returned at 9:30 pm.

Day 2 of the summit 13th September

We went to the train station at 5:30 am. I observed people sleeping on the street waiting for the arrival of their train. My friends said that they don't have a house to stay in or relatives to spend the night with and they cannot afford to stay in hotels. These gave me different views of how hard life can be to survive in a populated country. Then we started our journey toward the Kathgodam Station, Uttarakhand. After lunch we headed to the base camp at Uroli. On the way there we had tea break where we visited the temple nearby and then headed towards Uroli. It took us 5 hours to reach Uroli from the place where we had lunch. After reaching the camp we were given tents to pitch, dividing three in a tent. I was with Vidhi and Phuntshok in tent number 10. We were then served with tea at KPRD (Khana Pina Rona Dona), following that we had a session of further introducing ourselves to our friends as we were supposed to get to know each other better and also discussed what we wished to know from each other. We had our dinner after the session then we retired for the day.

Day 3 of the summit 14th September (Trek day 1)

Our morning started at 7:30 am where we freshened ourselves and had our breakfast, followed by the instruction and plan displayed for the day's trek. We started our journey to Sitlakheth by jeep till the trekking point. We slowly trekked to the Sitlakheth temple. And on the way there we also collected trash and cleaned the area. After reaching to the temple we made some offering and had tea at the tea stall. Then we visited the nearby school, gave the children and their parents some chocolate, and it was Teachers' Day at India. There was a doctor giving the parents some advice to the teachers. At 1:30 pm we had our lunch at the blue camp and were briefed about the tent making for the next day camping. We then, walked down for 30 minutes singing and teaching our Indian friends our dzongkhag songs and then we came back to the base camp via jeep. Once at the base camp we had our evening tea and snacks. We then had rope climbing event where my friendship ladder partner

was Sejal. The main goal of the friendship ladder was to help each other climb the top of the ladder which we finished by helping each other. After a while we had a session where we talked about the world crisis, my worries, some of my hopes, dreams and expectations from the world. After a long session we had our dinner then retired for the day.

6th September 2019 (Trek day 2)

We had breakfast at 7:30 am and then we started to pack for the camping site. We then start the trek from the camping site. We stopped at a house where I saw the life of a typical Indian house and I even saw how they were living with all the crops and vegetables needed grown in their kitchen garden. We even took a picture with a few of the family members. Continuing our journey we then started to pick mushrooms while walking to the camp site. After lunch we started to pitch tents with my tent mates Sonam and Nimrat. Others who had already pitched their tents were helping us. Mr. Gaurav our facilitator taught us how before pitching our tents we must look for a way where everyone is happy and not just focus on ourselves. We then started our evening session talking about our country and what worries us the most about our country. We broke for tea. After the session had ended we then made our dinner and then we retired for the day.

On 7th September (Trek day 3)

We woke up and then packed our things and then packed the tents. We made a human bridge where we cleaned the spot and checked if there were any paper or plastics which we might have left. After having morning tea we trekked downhill to our base camp. At around 9:30 am we had our breakfast and at 11:30 am we assembled at KPRD for the session with Mr Gaurav about what is learning and its process. Then we even solved a math problem coming up with different solutions to the same problem teaching us to accept each other's opinions. After our lunch we had a session with Dr Apoorv. I discussed my worries, my future plans, and my commitment to life. We even discussed some ideas on a India-Bhutan collaboration among ourselves. Then we had our final dinner at Uroli and then we retired for the day. The trekking made us come close with our Indian counterparts. We had got to know them better. As we trekked together, we sang songs learned about their country in detail and told them about our country too.

The next day we came back to Delhi from Uroli. Uroli is similar to Bhutan in context to their mountain, air and the water, but Delhi was different -- the air was different, so was everything else. Then after reaching there we were served dinner then we retired for the day.

On **9th September** we were taken to the slum area to see how the children were studying there. Life is hard for them. They did not have proper classrooms to study, nor proper tools to learn with -- all they had were hopes and they seemed happy with what they had. Even though they had dirt in their body it did not stop them from coming to school. I was sad to see people that way but I was happy too because they were content with what they had unlike the rich people desiring for more when they had all. Then we were taken to the Ritinjali where we had our lunch. We then had a session with a facilitator of Ritinjali. She made us do many activities to keep us active as it was hot and to prevent us from falling asleep. After the session we were taken to the Ambience mall for shopping. The things sold there were very expensive so I couldn't buy anything, but I enjoyed the new experience of window shopping. After we were done with shopping we came back to VYK and had our dinner.

On **10th September** we visited the Red Fort in old Delhi. The fort was built by a famous Indian king to protect themselves from the British when they were trying to rule them. Inside

the Red Fort we visited the art museum where we learned about the famous 9 artist of India and their painting style. Then we crafted our own painting and we did some oil painting and even doodling art. After the tour there we had our lunch and then we were taken to Sarojini market for shopping. The two shopping experiences are a reflection of the disparity between the rich and the poor in India. Then after shopping we went back to VYK and had our dinner and retired for the day.

On the last day of IBYS we had our breakfast and then we went to the Royal Bhutan Embassy where we interacted with General V. Namgyel. After the session we had some snacks with the Dasho then we came back to VYK to prepare for the closing ceremony in the evening. After having our lunch we had an informal talk with some of the 1st batch IBYS participants and then we had session with the board of director of CEP. Then we departed to prepare for our closing ceremony. At 6 pm Dasho V. Namgyel came in as chief guest were the participants made a presentation on the IBYS program and there was a cultural program. Then we were awarded certificates. We shed tears as we had formed a bond over the last nine days. The next day we were to go back to our country. This was the most unforgettable memory of my life.

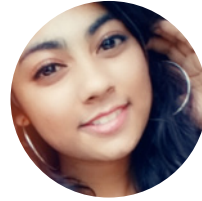
**This was the most
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memory of my life.**

Then we said good bye to our friends it was not the last good bye but a promise to meet again. We reached back to Bhutan at 12:45 pm. We were welcomed by the director of RIGSS. We had a small session with him on our experience and how we felt about the summit. Then we all departed for our destination. The next day at 5:30am I started my journey back to college.

These experiences I will never forget in my life. I promise that this is not the final goodbye and wish all my friends who are traveling near and far to be safe until the next time we meet. I got widen my thinking and changed my view of looking at the world. I got to know the lives of people in India, where the rich people are very rich, enough to lead luxurious life for another hundred year without working and the poor people not having enough food for the day only, where mere survival is a struggle. I want to sincerely thank RIGSS and CEP for making such kind of opportunity available for us. The opportunities which were created have broadened my life and fed me with more courage to face the world.

Zainab Kasimi

India



We reached the Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, Delhi, at around 12 in the afternoon. The moment the interactions with the Bhutanese and other Indian participants started, we had already started to learn. The way all of us were greeting each other and welcoming each other for the summit really said a lot of things. At first, I was a bit nervous to meet all the participants of the summit.

We had an introductory session with Mr Arun Kapur on the first day. He personally talked to all of us about our courses that we were engaged in and a little about from where we had come. He then gave all of us an envelope with a writeup about leadership. After this, we were made to do some rapport building and ice-breaker activities to know all the participants better.



The session with Mr Arun Kapur

We left for Uttarakhand early in the morning on 4th September. We had to carry the heavy bags and reach the reception. I was really touched as a few boys had come upstairs to help us out with that.

It was the first time the Bhutanese participants were to experience a train journey and get at the station. A very interesting thing happened there at the station, a Bhutanese guy asked me why there were people sleeping on the platform, and he actually thought that they were sleeping there because their train might have got delayed and when I told him that the majority of them were sleeping because they didn't have homes to sleep in he was really surprised.



Delhi Station

After reaching Uttarakhand, we were asked to divide ourselves into groups of four and five; each group was to have some Indians and some Bhutanese participants, we did that on our own without anyone telling us to do so.

After reaching the base camp, we again divided ourselves in the groups of three in order to share a tent, and again this time, we divided ourselves wisely. Actually, the fact is, had quickly developed a bond each other so we didn't really have to think so much when it came to make groups.



Sitlakheth Base camp

The three days that we spent there in Uttarakhand were truly an experience that helped us know a lot of things about both the countries.

Honestly, all what we learnt during the trek, while eating, sitting around the campfire, travelling and even staying together were actually greater than I feel the circle times that we had. The discussions were extensive: we had a variety of speakers and many different ideas that it actually helped me discover a lot of different things about my own country. We had people from different backgrounds like students of MBBS, architecture, electrical engineering, law, human development, population and development and IT to name a few. Thus, we were given diverse perspectives on the same topic or question. For example, if we were asked to talk about the issues that concerned us, the MBBS person would mostly look at that from a medical perspective, the population and development person found population increase the biggest concern; and for me being from a human development background I found the biggest concern to be the decrease in the level of harmony and humanity which is leading to a lot of destruction.

So yeah, the discussions were great because we had people from different courses and different parts of the country (almost).



Circle/Discussion time

We were also made to do some very interesting activities like the activity with the helium stick where the team effort led us to finish the task and an activity called friendship ladder where trust, helping each other and again a combine effort helped us finish the task. And that moment when you just finish it is so great that you just feel as if you have achieved something really great.

The whole summit was an opportunity for all of us to explore and experience something which we never really thought of.

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Some suggestions

- The summit would actually be complete if the Indian participants too get an opportunity to visit Bhutan and explore that place too.
- The selection for the participants for the summit can actually be done by keeping the fields or the backgrounds in mind. As in, the 10 people should be from different states and different parts of the country so that there is at least one representative of each part. Since India has a varied culture, everybody will have an opportunity to understand all the parts of India.



IBYS 2019

We have made some life-long friends who might just come together some day and really work on bringing in at least some change in the society.

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