

Safarnama/सफरनामा

June - July, 2016



New Socialist Initiative (NSI)



Following topics were being discussed-

1. Understanding India :- Economic politics and society
2. Secularism and Communal challenge in India
3. Feminism in Neo-liberal times
4. Marxism and Culture



New Socialist Initiative (NSI) organized its bi-annual meeting at Sambhaavnaa from 18 to 23 June, 2016. These meetings were part of the process of Development of a program understanding and political action for left and progressive politics in India.

The program saw the participation of more than seventy from various states like Karnataka, Delhi, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, UP, MP, Gujrat and West Bengal.

Nayi Dishaygin, 10 days, Summer School



A group of 22 motivated young people added to the monsoons pitterpatter in the Sambhaavnaa Bodhaksh during the 10 day summer school, Rethinking Development, **Nayi Dishaygin**. Participants in this had close to 50% law students. the unique experience as always with the theme of connecting with nature, connecting with co-travelers and most importantly connecting with the issues of the most oppressed of the people in our society.

Participants shared possible action plans of working on the self, the community to build political perspectives and not to look away but rather face the difficult realities of the world.



Sessions were kept, interactive and were co-facilitated by Ravi Chopra, Manshi, Himanshu Kumar, Prakash Bhandari, Flzachta and Madhuresh Kumar. We had Shamsul Islam, a writer, who taught political science at the University of Delhi and Rakhi Sehgal from New Trade Union Initiative as additional resource persons.



Youth For Swaraaj



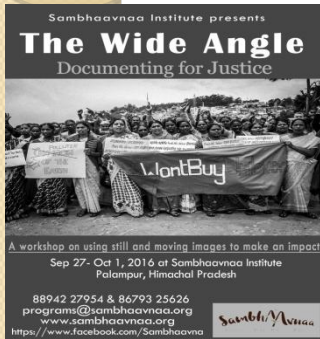
Youth For Swaraaj, a 6 day, youth camp organized by **Swaraaj Abhiyaan** and Yogendra Yadav, workshop facilitated by Yogendra Yadav, Prof. Anand Kumar, Prashant Bhushan, Rajeev Godhra and Manjul Bhardwaj at Sambhaavnaa for youth to discuss about social change and youth leadership.

Youth For Swaraaj, brought together **45 passionate** change makers from various parts of the country and diverse backgrounds. They discussed the revolutionary movements, Marxism and development of human society, Communalism, Gandhism, Hindutva, Phule – Ambedkar, Feminism, Social justice, Caste and Gender, Economy and Ecology, Our Idea of India, Nationalism and Reforming education.

Upcoming Programs...

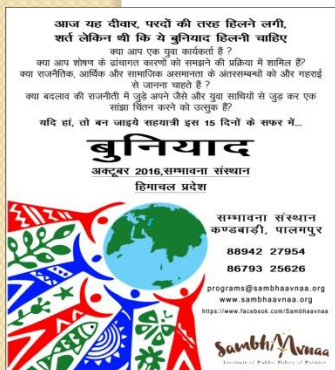
...Sambhaavnaa Karyakram

Preliminary Meeting on a Western Himalaya Vikalp Sangam - A 3 day meeting to discuss the possibility and plan a Vikalp Sangam for the Western Himalayan region. The preliminary meeting will be held from August 20 to 22, 2016.



The Wide Angle, Documenting For Justice - A 5 day workshop on using still and moving images to make an impact. The workshop will start on September 27 to October 1, 2016.

Closing The Environmental Compliance Gap - A 3 day workshop on Community based research methods for environmental justice. The workshop will start on September 23 to 25, 2016.



Buniyaad - A 15 day program for youth involved in initiatives of social change. The workshop will start on October 21 to November 4, 2016.

Summer Camp @ Udaan

Ek Nayi Udaan



“Summer is filled with breaking rules and standing a part, ignoring your head and following your heart” From making a jewellery to seeing Jupiter through Astronomy Binoculars, from yoga to Aerobics and Meditation to Science, from Trek to the Hydro Project and Toys from Trash to Pottery From farming to activity on gender discrimination from enjoying in the river to dumb charades in evening.



Story telling session by activist and theater artist Neelima ji



@ Pottery Studio Andretta



Quelling jewellery making

Udaan hosted a **summer camp** for about 31 children and 6 facilitators came from **Aravali Scholars Gurgaon**. These children were from low income families and getting good education and exposure by Aravali Scholars school. These 5 days of the camp were filled with hands on learning, entertainment, adventure, thrill and blissful experience.

Activities @ Udaan



Exploring ideas, and coming out with beautiful best out of waste products.

Jewellery making at Udaan by facilitator **Kavita**, can Jewellery made using waste paper be so beautiful!

Yoga promotes physical strength because kids learn to use all of their muscles in new ways. It helps a child become aware of his body and how it efficiently functions.

Yoga, Meditation and Zumba dance classes conducting by **Shashank**.



Science at Udaan has no room for theory, only and only fun learning practical.

Astronomy and science practical session facilitating by **Ravinder ji**.

Activities @ Udaan

...Ek Nayi Udaan



Story telling session by Fatema Chappalwala



Walnut and Pistachio shell used to make a Tortoise.

Plastic bag turned into yarn (plarn) and used to make a flower



Waste egg cartons and some glue used to make a beautiful wall hanging



A rug/mat out of waste cloth



A newspaper basket

A raft out of bamboos and plastic bottles



Tailoring, dress making and Embroidery classes for all.



Gup – Shup Chabootra...

Solidarity with Narmada Bachao Andolan



Narmada Bachao Andolan did a *parikrama* and *Satyagraha* of villages in Badwani, Nimar at the banks of river Narmada.

Mohammad and **Shashank** were in solidarity with NBA and visited multiple villages, the team spoke to all about the increase in the Dam height by 17 metres which will result in the submergence of 244 villages and the township of Dharampuri. Team also visited Gujrat and Madhya Pradesh, the idea behind the visit was to meet activists and political organizations for outreach of Buniyaad.

A *yatra* was done in the Narmada valley as a 'call for action' for a *Satyagrah* which is ongoing at the *Rajghat* in **Badwani**. We were part of the *yatra* and one of the incidents which made me realize the great courage and generosity of the poor. The *yatra* is mainly funded by villages a collection box is circulated in each village where the *Yatra* stops to mobilize and inform people of the impending doom. Mostly the call is to give whatever one can contribute, even saying that they can contribute 1 rupee. In one of the villages a very old lady started to fold a 100 rupee note in the drop box, this caught Medhaji's eye and she dissuaded her to give such a large amount, however the old woman was adamant and she dropped the note into the box.

Our Experience @ Narmada Bachao Andolan



The *yatra* took us to days when there was no communication devices, and someone from outside would rush with *band baaja* to announce what the king has proclaimed, it was like back in the days when a town crier would go through villages sharing the latest on the kingdom.

Medha ji had to do the job of a news reporter where she had to explain like a school teacher the latest status of the Dam, the new piers addition, gates ready and to be closed soon, the **Back Water Level (BWL)** and the *dhandli* by the govt in its calculation. The 0 balance left of R&R of all villages, the lies of the government that all people have been fully resettled. She was also giving out news of the 4.7 richter **earthquake** that rocked Gujarat and the salinity ingress in the estuary and 40 kms inwards from Bharuch.



This is understandable for a non-literate, non techno crowd where not everyone still has access to information and communication technology or newspapers however even the reporters and journalists of the district level were ignorant about the andolan, policies of the government or apathy of the Narmada Authorities. The same speech that was, delivered across the villages, was shared with the local news team in a “**meet the press**” session on the last day of the *yatra*. Medha ji had put up the same chart of the backwater level, reports of fact finding teams and other pictures of the dam in front of the press. We also witnessed the apathy of people who are not directly affected by the **submergence** with houses or land beyond the influence of the project.

...Our Experience @ Narmada Bachao Andolan

One of the observations that one can quickly get that **patriarchy, caste** and other issues are not addressed by the *andolan*, as soon as you start analyzing this line of thinking the next question that arises is “can it be addressed in such a *andolan*?”.

We also visited the Dam site with one *Adivasi* man who was displaced due to the formation of **Kevadia colony** for the dam builders. He now works as a guide with the tourist to show the dam and the adjoining lakes, **Narmada main canal** and the bundhs. In a final Insult to Injury he said he cannot even talk about the issues related to the dam with Gujarati tourists as there is a strong backlash. His livelihood is now dependant on showing the death sentence of his village, community, land and culture.

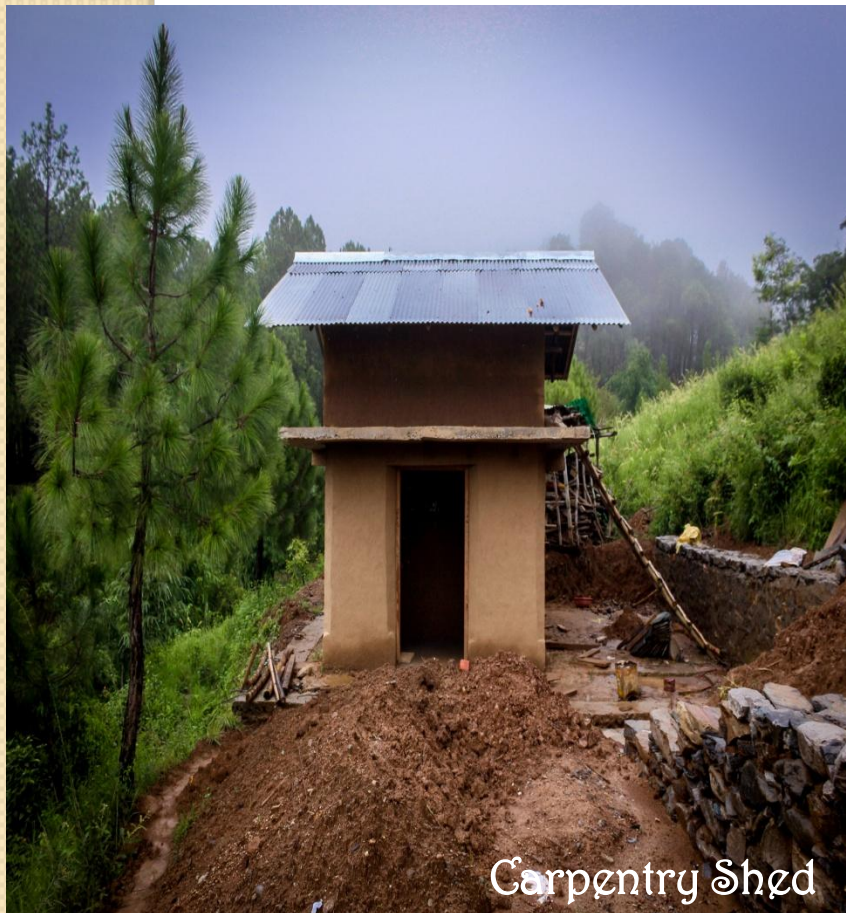
One of the key takeaway was that we need more political education with the youth like we do in **Nagi Dishagin, Swaraj abhijan youth camps and Buniyaad**.

All the debates and disagreements is only to sharpen our intellect, it can be a preparation, a course in intellectual self defence. However we should work with all progressive people who are working in whatever capacity, we don't need discord but need to work with people of all shades and the need to “Full Spectrum Resistance” against the powers which want “Full Spectrum Dominance”.



...Gup – Shup Chabootra

The construction of the **Carpentry Shed** and renovation of **Cow Shed** and **Ware House** are finally complete! We are hoping that the new buildings will be put to good use by the staff.





Volunteer

Excerpts from the concluding sessions of
Nagi Dishagin (6 weeks) summer school
workshop - 2016

It was a month of rich learning, coupled with challenging insights. Not only was I able to get a perspective on various political issues, I saw myself grow as a consequence of dealing with the continuous input of asymmetrical information. I learned how to cook a few things that I really like to eat, made new friends, enjoyed the walks, the books and discovered a lot of my own biases that silently influence my understanding of things. Silently, but efficiently. The people around here are warm and welcoming, the air is fresh and the dogs are well taken care of. On top of that, the view is great. You should really come here. – **Ansh Baid**
(Presently doing Bachelors in Liberal Arts from Ashoka).

In the summer of 2012, we initiated a program called **Nagi Dishagin** at Sambhaavnaa. Over the last four years a series of people have come together in facilitating this process of collective consciousness building amongst young people wanting to engage with issues around them and explore their own role in transformative politics. This **video link** <https://www.facebook.com/Sambhaavnaa/videos/1248498988517568/> provides a glimpse into this year's dialogue. The pedagogy of this program has been dynamic, being shaped by each and every participant who has connected with it. Thanks to **Ansh Baid** for this compilation.

Farm to Plate

Trying to grow as much of the Institut's own food needs from our **organic farm/garden** and orchard, which is by definition unpackaged. Much work needed to improve this!

Gradually, trying to replace items we purchase from the market with Substitutes **Plum and Pear Jam** made by Kitchen and Farm staff.



We had good vegetables and fruits produced these months!

French beans - 60 kg

Squash - 20 kg

Potatoes - 2 quintal

Onion - 2.5 quintal

Lady finger, Eggplant, Radish, Plum, Peach, Pears etc.