
REST OF MY FAMILY

Campaign #1 : Drive For Change





Rest Of My Family

Introduction

The whole of humanity is one big family but somehow, over time, we have lost that connection with one another. Our struggle for individual survival has taught us to draw a circle of 'me and my' around us and we consider only certain people, places and things as our own. By the very design of this paradigm, the rest of the people, places and things in this world fall outside this circle of love and compassion.

And, in this societal race of securing more resources for ourselves and our loved ones, most of us have forgotten our relationship with one another at large. There are some of us that have fallen out of everybody's circle of 'my' or have been left too far behind in the race to survive.

This project is an attempt to connect back, re-discover our relationship with and understand our responsibility towards the larger family that we are a part of -- the rest of our human family. Hence, it is titled '**Rest of My Family**'.

'Rest Of My Family' is an effort to connect back and de-fragment our highly fragmented world. To introduce the people we meet on our journey to rest of the world, and connect their lives through direct action.



We, [Piyush Goswami](#) (documentary Photographer/filmmaker) and [Akshatha Shetty](#) (writer/journalist), have been travelling for a few years into the heart of rural India understanding, experiencing and documenting different cultures, social issues and common challenges faced by the people all across the country.

4-5 years of travelling, meeting people, living with different communities and documenting our experiences and stories along the way have given us a great deal of clarity on the current social scenarios (ranging from lack of infrastructure, poor sanitation, education, water, electricity, female infanticide, untouchability, etc) and on how our creative tools could be used effectively to address and tackle these issues.



Throughout our journey, we wished to tell stories of those who were forgotten; be the voice for those nameless faces. But as we got deeper into the lives of different people and began understanding fundamentally the issues they were facing, we learnt a valuable lesson. Although our hearts were in the right place and we were passionate about sharing their stories with as many people as possible, we realised that this alone added no practical value to their lives. Merely documenting about their lives and sharing their story wasn't enough!

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More than often, these people feel used by us urban folks who approach them with fancy gadgets, cameras and laptops. They are faced with empty promises and have therefore lost their faith in humanity. Hence, so far we have been doing whatever little we could do from our end to help these people out. This was our way of restoring their faith in humanity; of giving them hope and in the process encouraging people to come out with their stories.

But we realised that we still needed to do more.

Drive For Change

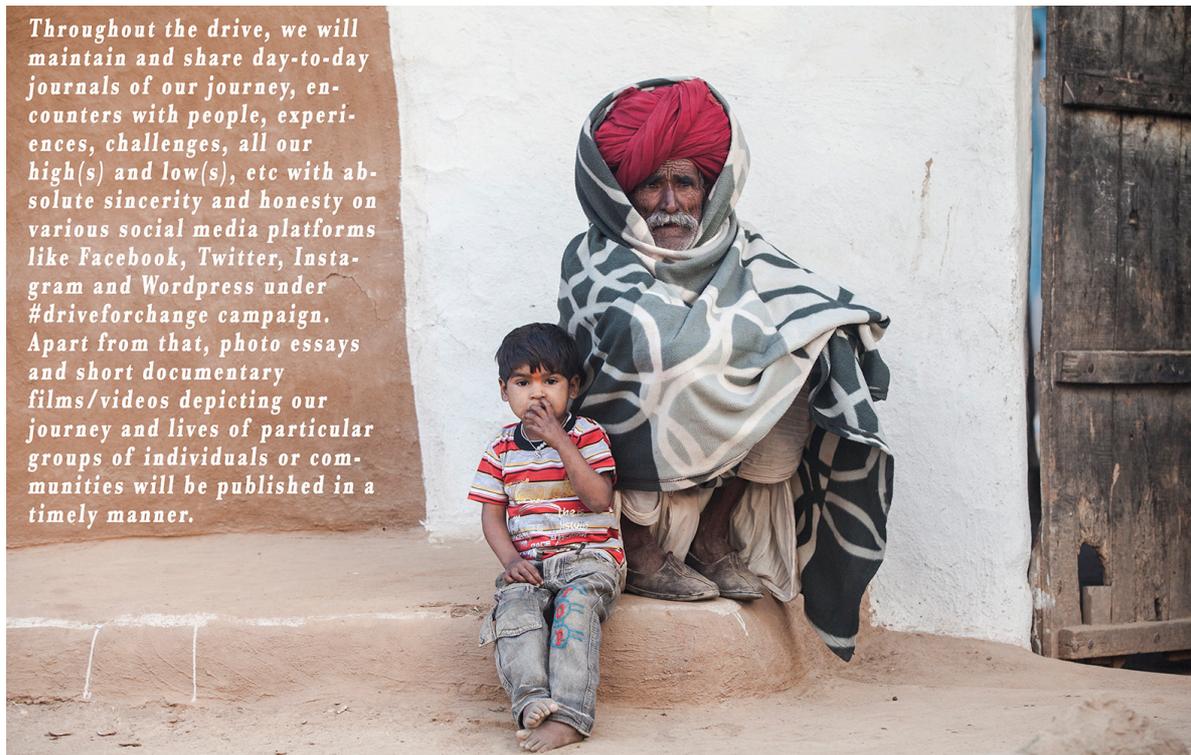


#DriveForChange

With this understanding in mind, we now aim to start '**Rest Of My Family**' with its first campaign **#DriveForChange**. As part of first leg of this campaign we will embark on a drive through different regions of India non-stop for an entire year.

Through this journey, we will focus on highlighting the social issues and human interest stories, documenting the triumphs of the ordinary man despite all the hardships they face constantly, and help these stories reach a larger audience and wherever necessary run crowd funding campaigns to extend necessary support to the individuals and communities that we write about.

We hope to connect the ones who need help to the ones who can help.



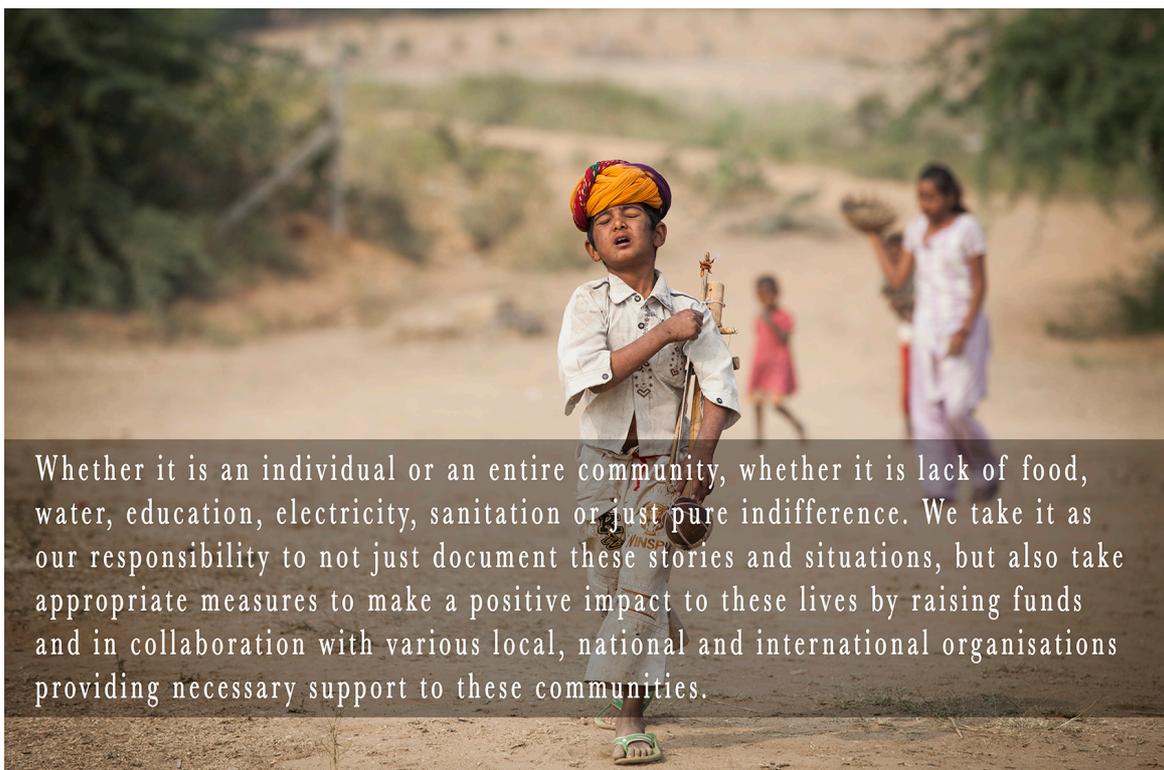
Throughout the drive, we will maintain and share day-to-day journals of our journey, encounters, experiences, challenges, all our high(s) and low(s), etc with absolute sincerity and honesty on various social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Wordpress under #driveforchange campaign. Apart from that, photo essays and short documentary films/videos depicting our journey and lives of particular groups of individuals or communities will be published in a timely manner.

There are many organisations that raise funds for causes on a generic level. For example, funds to end child labour, funds for education, funds for women empowerment, funds for farmers right etc. But these funds don't necessarily trickle down to the specific individuals whose life stories brought about an awareness in the public space to begin with.

Hence, through 'Drive For Change', we hope to make a direct impact to the lives of those people we meet and find suffering under the brink of social issues.



Whether it is an individual or an entire community, whether it is lack of food, water, education, electricity, sanitation or just pure indifference. We take it as our responsibility to not just document these stories and situations, but also take appropriate measures to make a positive impact to these lives by raising funds and in collaboration with various local, national and international organisations providing necessary support to these communities.



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The **#DriveForChange** will continue year-after-year for the rest of our lives. At the end of one year, after driving through different regions of the country as a part of this campaign, we will come out with a detailed photo journal book capturing our entire journey, triumphs, challenges and meaningful stories that restored faith in humanity along the way. This is apart from all the successful awareness and crowd funding campaigns we run together with mini documentaries, photo stories and a day-to-day journal released throughout the year.

This project is not restricted to any particular artistic medium and will adopt a multi-disciplinary approach with respect to collaboration. As the project develops we will come together with visual artists, musicians, painters, etc to create a diverse and interactive product that will enable us to narrate the stories we wish to share better.

About Us

1. Piyush Goswami

[Profile/Portfolio](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Wordpress](#)

Born in a small town in Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, for the first 10 years of my life I studied in a Hindi medium school, and in 1996 I came to Bangalore and continued my education in English medium. The switch from an all Hindi educational system to an English one wasn't easy. But in a year's time I adjusted myself to this new paradigm and went on to finish my schooling after which I joined National Institute of Technology, Surathkal in 2004 to pursue my bachelors degree in Mechanical engineering.

In 2008, after my graduation I joined Oracle and worked there for one year and eighth months. But soon I realised that purpose of my life lay else where, and after much deliberation I concluded that I wanted to dedicate my life to art and philosophy and explore both of them with absolute sincerity and honesty. Over the last few years, I have understood how these two media can efficiently come together in form of socially relevant positive action. 2010 was a turning point in my life.

Between 2010 and 2012, I dedicated myself to understanding the craft of photography and storytelling through photo essays. Since then, I have had the opportunity to document some meaningful social/cultural/human interest stories.

In 2013, I wrapped up my apartment, gave away most of what I owned so I could dedicate all my time to travelling into some of the most remote regions in rural India in order to understand the most effective ways in which I could do socially relevant work with my strengths and tools. As a result of this move, I was able to deeply observe issues plaguing our society today, challenges faced by the common man and the existing gaps in our current social welfare efforts that I could fill with my skills. Over the last few years, I have been fortunate to experience, understand and document situations like continuing female infanticide, racism, child labour, dying traditions, fading tribal and indigenous cultures, religious mechanism of Hinduism that have shaped and continue to shape India as we see today. My purpose in life now is to put together and connect our increasingly fragmented and shattered world through my social work-through-art efforts.

2. Akshatha Shetty

[Profile/Resume](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Wordpress](#)

I am an Electrical and Electronics Engineer by academic qualification. After graduating from National Institute of Technology, Karnataka in 2008, I worked as a Systems Engineer with Infosys Technology Limited for about two years. I worked in technical support

assimilating everything that the IT industry had to offer. However, over a period of time, I realised that I did not belong in the corporate world. Hence, I decided to quit my job and take the plunge to do something that I am really passionate about.

I wished to live a life dedicated to exploring writing as a medium of expression. And, that is how my tryst with journalism began. I joined The New Indian Express, Bangalore in 2010. As a Sub-Editor/Reporter in City Express (feature supplement), I have had the opportunity to cover various lifestyle segments including music, dance and theatre, visual arts and cinema, literature, travel and human interest stories. Undoubtedly, this field has provided me a platform to not only voice my opinions and nurture my own individuality but also connect with people on a deeper level.

In 2013, I quit The New Indian Express and along with Piyush decided to travel all across rural India to get a fundamental understanding of issues plaguing the society today. Through my writings, I wish to share the profundity of our journey while documenting and shedding light on the fundamental social problems.

Other Current Projects

1. Artist Residency Project & Tribal Lantana Furniture/Craft Livelihood Initiative (Ongoing)

This project began with the dream to build a community where artistes of all disciplines could live, work and prosper together. We have bought 10 acres (2 acres development and 8 farming) of mountain forest land. So, we are now working towards setting up a self-sustained artist residency, yoga retreat, and a forest reserve in the mountains between Kodai and Munnar (Tamil Nadu and Kerala) in Theni District of TamilNadu. We already have the land and are working towards planning our development with architects. This is the project that got us to the Tribal Lantana Furniture/craft livelihood efforts project.

During our survey of the land we came across excessive growth of an invasive weed plant called 'Lantana' that is only detrimental to the natural eco-system. Lantana camara is an invasive shrub originally from Latin America, introduced as an ornamental plant in 1807. It

has since invaded all possible habitats in India and poses a huge threat to native biological diversity. It has invaded most parts of the MM Hills forests.

The logic behind this intervention: when one can not control proliferation of Lantana, why not make use of it The aim of this project to train the tribals and villagers living around Kurangini hills, Tamilnadu to make furniture and other utility items with Lantana weed plant, and organize them to reach the market with the products. In the process creating a new source of income for the tribals and villagers living around these hills.

We have found out that lantana is used to make furniture and have come across a few people who train indigenous communities to work with this plant and learn a skill that can turn into a source of income. We are talking to, and engaging the tribals around the forest land we bought, to take up this training so they can learn to work with lantana, achieving two things in the process.

a) Providing a new source of income to the tribals/villagers, turning them into skilled labour. b) Keeping a check on the growth of Lantana, which is better for the eco-system.

This effort will be turned into a co-operative society and slowly expanded to many tribal villages around the area.

2. Deep Monkey Crying (Ongoing)

Deep Monkey Crying is an attempt to interpret every nuance of emotion and life through different media of expression. While merging the numerous forms of art. The founders of Deep Monkey Crying are Piyush Goswami (Visual Art, Documentary, Photography), Vinayak Karthikeyan (Music Producer/Programmer), Krishnamurthy Ramesh (Sound Designer/Producer).

This multimedia art collective is bringing different artists with their art forms together to tell socially relevant stories through performance, audio visual products and literature.

(www.facebook.com/dmcofficial)
