

Journeys...of Eco Heroes

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Declaration

Some of the names of the Bhoomi fellows profiled in the paper have been changed to protect their identities.

We have used eco-centric process work and process work interchangeably. However the reference is to eco-centric process work.

Journeys...of Eco Heroes

Abstract

We live in a dynamic world that continues to change and evolve. And every new age calls for new heroes, who choose to follow the uncharted path.

Many believe that we are at the beginning stages of an ecological era. Many individuals are questioning the givens of the dominant paradigm, envisioning a more ecologically wise world and are driven to make a difference.

Bhoomi College is an alternative educational space that brings together such committed individuals. The Bhoomi space enables them to explore multiple alternatives and choose a path of their calling. Process work being an integral part of this exploration helps them to delve deep within, get in touch with their unique journeys and align with their true calling.

This paper maps the journey of a few such heroes using the framework of the Hero's Journey as given by Joseph Campbell. Through this paper we will present a few case studies of some of the Bhoomi fellows - their tryst with process work, personal transformation and the pushes and pulls of transition. This paper also elucidates the significance of process work in integrating the knowledge base with the inner convictions and empowering individuals to take the path.

Preface

Our journey with process work began with Aastha, soon after we joined Prakriya Green Wisdom School as facilitators. Prakriya is an alternative learning space started by Seetha Anathasivan who believes that process work needs to be an integral part of institution building and teaching-learning processes. Therefore, it is mandatory for all the facilitators to attend process work labs.

We were fortunate to be in a space that was in its initial phase of genesis and therefore gave us the opportunity to grow with it. For us the process of understanding some of the institutional building processes such as rethinking education; co-creating conducive learning environments; investing in each other; being in touch with interpersonal dynamics; balancing micro with macro; cluing in with feedback mechanisms and conflict resolution etc. beckoned us to expansiveness at the professional level.

At the personal level it enabled us to redefine the narrow definitions that we had held for ourselves, own our potential and anchor in faith in ourselves. It also released tremendous energy for creative expression and accepting diversity within and outside.

This, we believe, has enabled us in co-holding wholesome learning spaces both in Prakriya and Bhoomi. Process work has been our touchstone which has guided us in owning our path of being facilitators and mentors and investing in others in their journey of transformation.

Journeys...of Eco Heroes

Changing Times

We stand at the threshold of a transition from the industrial age to an ecological age. The industrial age brought with it many conveniences, comforts and an entirely new way of life and living. These changes slowly permeated into the collective consciousness and redefined the notions of good life and of success and achievement. Materialistic abundance became the dominant lens through which the world began to be viewed. Matching up to standardized benchmarks and the pressure to achieve became stronger. It also created greater inequalities in the society.

The price that was paid at individual level was quite often a skewed 'sense of self', defined narrowly in terms of accomplishments; disconnect from self and others, and alienation from nature. At the macro level, what was gradually lost was reverence for nature and disregard for community.

The education system also changed in response to the needs of the industrial era. It became target driven with a sharp emphasis on abstraction and information exchange. The anthropocentric focus gradually led to a certain disregard for all the other life forms. The fall out was degradation and despoliation of nature at a large scale. Another consequence was the inability to see the underlying, invisible links and therefore the impact of action choices on future.

Yet there are seeds of change! As it is often said '***the seeds of new emergence lies within the old***'.

The End of an Era...Different Choices

There is the story of E F Schumacher, the well-known Buddhist economist for whom a turning point came around when he was working as a farm hand. One day as he was counting the cattle an old farmer remarked, "***If you count them every day they won't flourish!***" This remark offended him because as a statistician, quantity was what he focused on. He remembered the old farmer's remark and the wisdom inherent in it only when he found one of the cattle dead. He realized that he had trained his mind on quantity and missed out on things that really mattered! [1]. Today, like Schumacher, a small fraction of people are re-examining the 'reign of quantity' and changing the narrow definition of a 'good life'. They want to look beyond mere materialistic and tangible gains and have a strong urge to live out eco-centric ways of being.

Introduction to Bhoomi

Bhoomi Network was started in 2008 by Seetha Ananthasivan, Founder Trustee of the KNA Foundation for Education, a public charitable trust. Seetha also launched the Bhoomi College in 2012 as an alternative learning space with a vision of fostering ecological consciousness and co-creating expanding communities. She has also been largely responsible for the designing of the curriculum, learning and living processes of the two 1 year Fellowship programmes [2]. The college is a hub for people to connect, share, learn from each other and form a network. It has been drawing in individuals from various stages in life and from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds. Professionals from fields such as engineering, architecture, law, chartered accountancy, humanities etc. join the programmes at Bhoomi.

At Bhoomi, the beckoning has been to engage with learning holistically that includes;

- Looking at perspective building
- Gaining deep understanding
- Engaging with one's feelings and concerns about macro issues

The open ended exploratory space that Bhoomi offers allows the fellows to deepen their search, widen their perspectives, strengthen their convictions and shape their intent into action. This therefore leads to learning beyond content knowledge and making shifts at attitudinal levels.

Focus of this Paper

The paper we are presenting is an elucidation of our experience with six batches of fellows of Bhoomi College and the transformation that was evident in many of them. This we believe is largely owing to the *eco-centric process labs* that are an intrinsic element of the fellowship programme.

The addition of *eco-centrism* to process work was conceived by Seetha Ananthasivan and she designed programmes (Inner and Outer Ecology and Deep Ecology and other programmes). [3]

- weaving in nature's principles while working with participants
- engaging with concepts and frameworks to question assumptions of the anthropocentric paradigm
- reflecting through nature meditations.

Individuals thus see themselves not only in relation to their human context but also in relation to a larger ecological context.

What we are trying to establish through this paper is the power and significance of this work as an enabler. We have seen how working with the 'self' enables individuals to anchor in their convictions and honour their choices.

One of the frameworks that we have used is an adaptation of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey.

"The basic premise of this intervention is that every person can be a hero unto himself/herself. In the case of people who want to move away from the mainstream and go on a path less travelled, the Hero's journey provides an amazing framework that is at once exciting and settling. It is exciting to give one's struggles a new meaning as part of being on a heroic path; and settling because the negative meanings that might have been given to one's victimhood, struggles, anger or helplessness are dissolved. These feelings that sometimes rein in our exuberance for the journey can be made wholesome and dignified. Also unlike Campbell's much hyped individual hero, the eco-hero is someone who values community." [4]

Joseph Campbell

Joseph John Campbell (March 26, 1904 – October 30, 1987) was an American Professor of Literature, who worked in comparative mythology and comparative religion. His work covers many aspects of the human experience. Campbell's most well-known work is his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). His philosophy has been summarized by his own often repeated phrase: *"Follow your bliss."* [5]

Monomyth [6]

Campbell's concept of monomyth refers to the theory that sees all mythic narratives as variations of a single great story. This is based on the observation that a common pattern exists beneath the narrative elements of most great myths, regardless of their origin or time of creation. The central pattern is often referred to as the hero's journey and was first described in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

Twelve Stages of Hero's Journey

According to Joseph Campbell a hero is someone who has given one's life to something bigger than oneself. The usual hero adventure begins with someone from whom something has been taken or who feels that something has been lacking in the normal experiences available or permitted to the members of his society. This person then takes off on a series of adventures beyond the ordinary, either to recover what has been lost or to discover some life giving elixir. It is usually a cycle, a going and a coming. [7]

Adaptation of Campbell's Framework [8]

	Stages in a Hero's Journey as given by Campbell	Adaptation
1	The call to Adventure	The Call to Adventure
2	Refusal of the Call	Refusal of the Call
3	Supernatural Aid	Meeting the Mentor
4	The Crossing of the First Threshold	The Crossing of the Threshold
5	The Belly of the Whale	The Belly of the Whale
6	The Road of Trials	The Road of Trials
7	The Meeting with the Goddess	Integration of Feminine and Masculine
8	Woman as the Temptress	Meeting Co-travellers
9	Atonement with the Father	Fight with the Father
10	Apotheosis	Learning and Search
11	The Ultimate Boon	Owning up the Eternal Source of Power
12		Offering Back to the World

Case Studies

In this paper we present the stories of a few of the Bhoomi fellows who we see as Eco Heroes. These stories bring to light their tryst with process work and the personal transformation that was a consequence. As their co-travelers, we have seen how eco-centric process work has been an enabler in taking the path of adventure.

We collated material through a questionnaire [Annexure 1] sent out to them; through conversations with their friends/co-workers as well as our experience of them.

The case studies that we present here are of the heroes who are on the path to be *'founders of a new way of life.'* [9]

Manvendra (Batch 2012-13)...*The Adventurer and the Lone Warrior*

Manvendra was born into a family in a land based community in Rajasthan. His father was in defense services, which meant frequent transfers. Adapting to a new place and making new friends came easy to him. He experienced a deep connect with nature early on and enjoyed his runs through the wooded military campuses. He held his serious side privately and shared this with very few friends. What was visible to the world, was the showman and the joker. His constant companions were books which opened a very different world to him.

Engineering was a choice made for him by his parents and he pursued it till the fourth year. At that stage the reality of the choices before him hit hard. He decided to opt out of college and this was the ***crossing of the threshold*** for him. He strongly felt the need to explore the social/environmental sector and chose to volunteer with an NGO working with rag pickers in Pune. The experience exposed him to a new world and new ways of engagement. With it also

surfaced some of the questions that he was grappling with. Moving to Bhoomi College and pursuing the year-long fellowship enabled him to delve deeper into his search.

At Bhoomi, working with himself through the process work labs offered, he was able to get in touch with some truths for himself. He realized that what he was fighting with was the oppressiveness of the patriarchal system; the demands and pressure to conform to the social and familial expectations. He also realised that in being the carrier of the heritage and holder of the family honour he didn't experience the space to be himself. He was also able to legitimise the unrest he felt and own the *adventurer* within. The other significant turning point was aligning with the deep connect with nature and therefore questioning the dominant development paradigm.

Gracing *the call to adventure* and the *fight with the father* came easy to this hero. However what was really difficult for him was to touch the depths of *the belly of the whale*. Through his journey into himself he was able to feel into the pain and angst of *orphan hood* at psychic-emotive level. It helped him free himself from some of the residues of guilt and anger leading to a deeper acceptance of himself and others. The *lone warrior* could make some peace and begin to search for others with whom he could experience a greater sense of belonging.

"The more I explored this path, the deeper I could connect with myself as I was surrounded by people who spoke the same language."

Manvendra continued his journey of working with himself by attending other programmes offered by Bhoomi. This, we believe enabled him to commit to the alternative path, honour his intent and build on his convictions. At the same time he was able to accept and work with others and invest in community building.

"I have started to see people in their contexts. I don't judge people by their actions now, but always try to see them with their context in mind."

Post Bhoomi, Manvendra was able to give himself the freedom to experiment with choices beyond the known and secure. He travelled around the country, visited farms and worked as a farm hand where he gained a lot in terms of learning and experience but very little in terms of monetary returns. He persisted with his search for alternatives which took him to Green Peace Foundation and later to Alaap, an NGO. Here too what he connected with was the intent and commitment of working with the local communities in forest creation. In Uttarakhand he has been at the helm of enabling the villagers to earn wage labour while creating forests. He has helped institutionalise Alaap's method of forest creation under MNREGA for Champawat region. He has also joined the Bhoomi group of facilitators on completing his internship journey.

The Authors' Perspective: For Manvendra, one of the prime drivers underlying his identity patterns seems to be to *follow his bliss* and stay true to his convictions. Another prime driver for him is his need to live a simple and minimalist life that draws him to mountains. His action plan for himself is to create spaces for individuals seeking meaningful paths in the alternative field. His intent is to invest in them and facilitate their journeys so that they experience the support of a community.

Vasudha (Batch 2016-17)...*The Earnest Seeker and Nurturer*

Vasudha was born into a Tamil family with parents who were supportive and available to her. Father, a passionate entrepreneur who inspired admiration and respect and a mother who enabled her to see beyond the obvious, have been her major influences. They enabled her to be grounded and compassionate; to differentiate one's needs from one's wants; to stay fit and to nurture her innate trait of connecting with people. However, having such strong role models, there was also the pressure to match up to her internal benchmarks. This created a dissonance within her when she engaged with the realities outside. While this struggle was internal and to a large extent unrecognized, she deployed her energies into 'doing', in the world outside.

Even as a child, the disparity in society had troubled her and made her feel helpless. She had experienced excessive competition and evaluation during middle school years. The pain of feeling undervalued made her question the conventional system and search for alternatives. These twin streams were the seeds of her 'hero's journey'.

While she was pursuing her masters in the UK, a volunteering opportunity to teach at an orphanage in Chennai came up. On getting back to India, she joined this organization as a volunteer. She enjoyed the process of teaching; and the freedom to explore and build on. In a few years' time, her decision to quit her job at her father's factory (of managing customer relations) to take up volunteering full-time at the *NGO*, was ***crossing of the threshold*** for Vasudha

The founder of the NGO inspired her and initiated her onto the journey of moving from helplessness to hopefulness through proactive action. In his vision, she found the purpose and meaning that she was searching for. She built her understanding of the alternative world by engaging with multiple responsibilities in the organization. She also added to herself by pursuing courses that enabled her to add to the organization. An ardent learner, she was open to receiving from varied sources and experiences.

Vasudha joined Bhoomi College in 2016. The process work experience at the college enabled her to question some of her beliefs, understand herself and those around her better, and realize how impactful little experiences can be in shaping a person. These programmes helped her to build relationships with peers and facilitators; share her vulnerabilities and confront her deeply held fears with ease. She also became aware of her patterns of setting high benchmarks for herself, idealizing relationships and getting caught with 'doing'. The *earnest seeker-learner* identity was overshadowed by the *not good enough* identity which didn't allow her to own her

substantive self and anchor within. These programmes helped her to recognize some of these patterns, their impact on her action choices and her own well-being.

“Looking at a human being as complex and beautiful and how breaking free or strengthening some of the patterns can help in transformation!”

“I feel the naturalist in me was probably nurtured at Bhoomi through the exposure and practical experiences I got. It instilled the faith that I could create such an eco-system centered around the child's holistic development in our schools too.”

Getting in touch with her own gifts and distinctiveness allowed the flowering of the *Shakti identity* which enabled her to discover the **eternal source of power** within. This released her from her own notions of limitedness and enabled her to **offer back to the world** with renewed energy and vigour.

Post Bhoomi, she is carrying her learning from the Holistic Education programme forward and investing in creating wholesome, learning communities. She was able to recognize the changes that were needed in the schools that she works for. She conceptualises similar programmes in the NGO she works for. Currently her team of facilitators' works with teachers and headmasters/headmistresses of 15 low-income private schools. This is to create an eco-system centered on the child's holistic development. Process work is a critical component of this programme's design.

The Authors' Perspective: For Vasudha, one of the prime drivers is the need to create wholesome and nurturing learning environments which would allow children to thrive and bloom. Her need for fairness also drives her to engage with people and processes in creating equal opportunities for learning.

Ayush (Batch 2017-18)... *The Dreamer and the Strategist*

Ayush was born into a business family in a small town in UP. He had a carefree childhood enjoying idyllic times with his siblings, cousins and a doting grandmother whose stories he enjoyed. He was sent to a boarding school in his middle school years for better educational prospects. His experiences at the boarding school were in stark contrast to the nurturing environment at home. The oppressive environment, the competition, the aggressive bullying in the boarding school brought out the *fighter* and *rebel* in him who refused to give in. At the same time he began questioning such a harsh/hostile 'factory style' education system which does very little to spark the learner in the child. In a sense, during this period the sensitive and warm person went into hiding and what became visible was a tough and capable Ayush.

He was pursuing a programme in economics at a college in Delhi. During this time a chance visit to a slum in Delhi made him question a lot of givens of the dominant economic paradigm. It made him relook at social inequalities. He strongly felt that he needed to step out of the restrictive system to find real solutions to the problems that exist.

The new found sense of purpose and the need to seriously look at alternatives enabled him to ***cross the threshold*** and he decided to opt out of college. The strategist in him chose not to disclose this decision to his family. What fired him the most at this point in time was low cost eco- friendly housing for the under-privileged.

"The day dreamer and visionary in me revealed itself for the first time. I remember dreaming and envisioning about prefabricated low cost houses."

With this he began his journey of ***learning and search***. He found opportunities in institutions like Dharmalaya Institute and Geeli Mitti Farm where he got exposure to hands on eco-friendly construction. Gradually his vision of integrating eco entrepreneurship with low cost, eco-friendly

housing started taking shape. It was a period of intense exploration and of un-schooling himself. Bhoomi College acted as a signpost to him in this phase of his journey.

The inner outer ecology programme invalidated a lot of myths/beliefs that he had held for long and pushed him to get in touch with his vulnerable, emotive side. This experience of grappling with the fragility with which he held himself, 'the shattering of images' threw him into the ***belly of the whale***. What also emerged from the belly of the whale was reclaiming of the *lost child* who had felt adrift. It also led to him owning his gentle and receptive side. This then enabled him to balance his energies and not be compulsive to prove himself. This period, of ***integration of masculine and feminine*** was not an easy phase for him and it took him some time to be at peace with the new discoveries and realisations.

For long, he had held the identity of the *eldest son* as limiting and binding that put a lot of pressure on him to conform to societal norms. Working with this enabled him to release himself from the pressure of being the role model and own the power of influence that this identity holds, to shape responses of others. This led him to working with his younger siblings and cousins; sharing his concerns and dreams and including them in his journey. The strategist in him made it possible to balance the multiple realities of his life and expand his sphere of influence.

Post Bhoomi he has been able to sift through the non-essentials to focus his energies on what needs to be worked on. He is currently back to working in his family's business while keeping a clear goal to be an ecological social entrepreneur. He is using this time and opportunity to deepen his understanding, consolidate his learning and strengthen his ideas before putting them into action. He deeply values self-level work and the insights that he receives from engaging with it. He intends to explore further the process work journey for himself.

The Authors' Perspective: For Ayush, one of the prime drivers is to bring dignity and justice to marginalized communities to change the power equations. This gives him the impetus to create business models that are economically viable as well as ecologically and socially fair.

Shakti (Batch 2018-19)... *The Good Girl and the Free Spirited Child*

Shakti grew up in a middle class Tamil Brahmin family with the values of being productive, focused and giving her best. She spent her early years in Mumbai where she had a community beyond the family which gave her a strong sense of belonging. She cherishes those years and the memories are very fondly held.

Moving to Chennai in her early teenage years, exposed her to a totally different environment which she found restrictive making her feel lonely and alienated. She missed the larger community that she could draw support from. She struggled with issues of body image and found refuge in academics to prove her worth. This led her onto the path of becoming a strong *performer/doer*.

Joining a chartered accountancy course after schooling seemed like a natural progression. Here, she encountered a world of structures, formalities, and people politics. She experienced a deep sense of unrest, alienation from her natural self, found it difficult to cope and often felt frustrated.

She intuitively knew that the mainstream world was not her calling. The last straw was her not clearing the final exam in her chartered accountancy course. This proved to be the ***crossing of the threshold*** as she discontinued her CA course and started looking for alternatives.

She was keen on pursuing something that would enhance body-mind connection and bring physical well-being. She found this in yoga and trained to be a yoga instructor. This is where she met like-minded people who became her co travellers. With yoga she started discovering the subtle links of body, mind and inner well-being. She also sensed that inner well-being is very intimately connected with community and planetary well-being and was curious to discover those aspects. This search took her to Bhoomi College. At Bhoomi she deepened her understanding of the larger ecological context and the relationship with other elements of nature.

The Inner and Outer Ecology and Deep Ecology programmes made her challenge some of her assumptions and notions. These programmes also enabled her to tune in with some of her long held struggles. She was able to recognize the pushes and pulls held within. The *free spirit* in her would beckon to her to spread her wings and soar high while her *good girl* identity kept her stuck and limited. Gracing and accepting different aspects of herself helped her make peace with the person that she is. She was also able to see how her strong need for approval compelled her to take decisions which left her feeling unwholesome.

At Bhoomi, living with a group of people who were diverse in their backgrounds, ideologies, mindset, age etc. changed her perception and relatedness with them. She began to accept and acknowledge beauty in diversity. In doing this she was able to expand her world, ***find co-travellers*** and feel a deep sense of belonging. She was able to acknowledge and own her intuitive and gentle side as much as her intellectual self. Experiences of conflicts also helped her to change her definition of confrontation. This helped her to be integral and engage with people with more openness. She got in touch with some significant realisations for herself after the Inner Outer Ecology and Deep Ecology programmes.

“The constant worries and anxieties about the uncertain future and the repeated analysis and judgments of the past have come down greatly. I have also started appreciating the inherent fulfillment in accepting the being that I am instead of constantly chiding myself and being overly self-critical to become the “perfect” vision I had envisioned for myself. My outlook on inaction and productivity has also changed a lot.”

All this has helped her to embrace the alternative path with renewed strength of her convictions. Honouring herself and her search has enabled her to anchor in her belief and get in touch with the ***eternal source of power within***. This has freed her from being trapped in the world of expectations of significant others while gracing them their reality.

She values process work tremendously as she sees it as a never ending journey of experiences and learning. She intends to further explore facilitation in process work to enable others in their journey of search.

The Authors’ Perspective: For Shakti, one of the prime drivers is her convictions and belief to be a change agent against all odds that she encounters. We see her drawing energy from this to take initiative and find avenues that would give her inner fulfillment. Investing in others is another prime driver which enables her to hold beckoning spaces to bring synergies of people together.

Conclusion

Heroes are celebrated and often what is made visible is the final destination. The process itself is invisible; the excitement of the adventure, the struggles and joys of discoveries; the alignment with the calling and the constant *tapasya* one needs to commit to, for allowing the transformation to happen. No hero's journey is easy, the stepping into the unknown, away from the seemingly secure world and facing one's deep dissonances may deter many. It is easier to make peace and adjust to status quo. Yet many do take this first step; continue to persist with the journey to find their truths!

Every new era has its own heroes! The eco heroes of the current times are declaring the end of the *era of quantity* and stating out loud and clear that they want to focus on things that matter. They have turned their backs on narrow definitions. They are in touch with their '**ecological self**'; the knowledge that "relations are not only relations we have with humans and the human community, but with the larger community of living beings." [10]. Presently, they may be small in number but they seem to be a steadily growing community - and their determination and strength of convictions make them the harbingers of the new era. Their intent is to '*found a new way of life*'.

What we have been witness to, in our work with Bhoomi fellows is that there is a deep urge to work in the outer world to bring about change, however complex the issues may be. When this is synchronized with a deep working with one's inner landscape and meaning making processes, a totally new world opens up. Our heroes, we find, have been able to anchor in their strengths, let go of non-essentials and commit to their path... in Pulin's words "*with no certainties but no doubts either.*"

We end with a quote by Campbell which captures the essence of the journey of our heroes.

“Furthermore, we need not risk the adventure alone for the heroes of all time have gone before us. The labyrinth is thoroughly known. All we have to do is follow the thread of the hero-path. And where we thought to slay another we shall slay ourselves. Where we thought to find an abomination we shall find a god. Where we thought to travel outward we shall come to the centre of our own existence. Where we thought to be all alone, we shall be with all the world.”

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 - Identity, Roles and Systems for Well-being
 - Holistic Leadership and Organisation as Eco-system
 - Co-creating Eco-wise Community
 - Spiritual Sutras for Holistic Facilitation
 - Tuning in with Nature Within and Around (For children)
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Annexures

Annexure 1 –Questionnaire

1. What were the major influences shaping your mindset in growing up years?
- 2a. What were some of the triggers that made you follow the alternative path?
- 2b. When did this happen?
- 3a. How did you explore further?
- 3b. What made you choose Bhoomi?
4. What were the significant experiences here at Bhoomi?
5. Were there any challenges? Tell us about the biggest ones.
6. What was your experience of Sankalan as a whole?
7. What has remained with you from those experiences?
8. How do you view the Personal/Inner work aspects of the programme?
9. What of the Bhoomi-Sankalan experience continues in your current work?
10. Where do you go from here?

Annexure 2 –Comments from Friends and Colleagues

For Manvendra - Statement from a friend and colleague

“Manvendra post the fellowship at Bhoomi found a sense of purpose and belonging that he so deeply yearned for. A sense of purpose with regard to his work and how he wanted to contribute to the world and a sense of belonging to a community of ‘weirdos’ and oddballs who put their love for preserving the natural world before anything else.

I have seen Manvendra not only contribute positively to movements in agriculture and afforestation but also been witness to his leadership and mentoring capabilities over the past 5 years. He works to nurture young eco-leaders as much as he works to nurture native forests. His ability to be non-judgmental and a deep listener were honed further at Bhoomi and he has been leveraging it to build deep bonds within the sustainability sector.

He has also imbibed the simple life and learning from nature that is so often spoken of at Bhoomi by living austerely and close to nature.”

For Vasudha - Statement from a friend and a Bhoomi batch mate

“The very first introductory moment with Vasudha is very vivid and clear in my head. She came across as someone who was confident, had clarity and was in Bhoomi for a purpose. But as we grew closer to each other during our course in Bhoomi, I saw even deeper shades of Vasudha. She was also at crossroads in life – professionally and personally. She was seeking a direction and was kind of lost in the initial days of Bhoomi.

As the course progressed, I felt she was getting to know herself better. Or rather she was accepting herself for who she was and she was finding her strengths. As we dived deeper into the course, I felt she was diving deeper into herself. Exploring herself as a human being, introspecting, reflecting! She had started to see life from angles she had not seen before. The circumstances had not changed but her perspectives of the circumstances had widened. I felt the course provided her with a wider lens to look at life and she was becoming adept at using those lenses.

Now after two years of Bhoomi, though we have not met each other, our telephone conversations give me this feeling that she has found her calling. She is comfortable in her own skin now that she has found a flow for expressing her emotions and feelings.”

For Shakti - Statement from a friend and colleague

“I experienced Shakti as a person who was disciplined and focused and would take responsibility for deliverables. But I could also see that her creative energies were not finding an expression in the financial sector and in that sense I could see restlessness within her. I really admired her creative abilities and would often tell that she needs to find something where she could deploy that.

Now I see that she is taking herself more seriously and working on ideas to play to her strengths. I see her more anchored in herself and not getting caught with doing alone. I am looking forward to her plans and aspirations that she has for herself which I feel is in alignment with her strengths and creative energies.”