



Colloquium Series: Living with Tribes, Working with the State – A Personal Narrative

Speaker:

Anant Gangola, Azim Premji Foundation

Date / Time:

February 23, 2012 - 3:15pm

Venue:

Room 307, Third Floor, Pixel B, APU

Abstract:

This is the story of a young university student, who wanted to make a difference, perhaps like all of you. It is a story of hope, because it will tell you that it is possible to make a difference – as long as you are willing to let go of your assumptions, your preset worldviews, and are truly willing to become a part of that which you wish to change.

- As a doctoral student, Anant lived three years at Neelgarh, a tribal village in the forests of Madhya Pradesh. Anant shares the intense experiences of those years, and how it made him fundamentally reconsider many mainstream notions of life and living.
- He describes how he brought this 'tribal' understanding to mainstream social work, when he became involved with the Total Literacy Campaign in Raisen District of MP – and how Raisen made history, when it registered the highest decadal literacy growth ever recorded in India.
- He speaks about his years in Uttarakhand with Azim Premji Foundation, and how it is possible to retain hope and energy, and make a difference, even when working on State-wide reform efforts.
- Anant also brings out stories of unsung and unheard of heroes, of extraordinary work by the common man.
- He talks about what it means to work with the Government, and how despite its many flaws, the state can be a doer of good work.
- Finally, Anant reflects on those aspects of social work that remain common, irrespective of whether it is with a small tribe or with the State – and also those that are necessarily different.

A Note on the Speaker:

Anant Gangola is State Head of Azim Premji Foundation at Uttarakhand. He is a post graduate in Sociology, and an M. Phil. from Institute of Social Sciences, Agra. It was during his research for his Ph.D. that he encountered the tribal village of Neelgarh. For his work there, he received the Prof. Ramesh M. Bhat Fellowship, and his contribution in the area of joint forest management was recognized by the Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal. He then went on to play a key role in implementation of the Total Literacy Campaign in Raisen district of Madhya Pradesh. His exemplary work there was recognized by the Government of MP, and was awarded the Chief Minister's Certificate of Excellence. In 2002, he received a UN Fellowship by the United Nation's Leadership Academy in Jordan. He also participated in the Earth Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. Anant is an author and poet. He has one published book, Antarman, to his credit.