



48th Shodhyatra



Azing's Farm (Rinchenpong) to Uttarey, West Sikkim February 17-23, 2023

Walking to learn, share, and collaborate with creative communities for ensuring a sustainable future

Honey Bee Network has been searching, spreading, spawning and supporting grassroots innovations and outstanding traditional knowledge in India and outside for the last 35 years. As a part of building a closer connect with the grassroots, around 25 years ago, volunteers of the Network, SRISTI and GIAN started the walk across the country to learn from grassroots, share the knowledge and creativity documented already and honour the creative communities and individuals at their doorstep. SRISTI anchors and coordinates the activity with the support of various volunteers, collaborators and GIAN. In some of the earlier yatras, NIF also participated and supported the process.

In summer, we go to hot places and in winter, we walk in cold places. Idea of connecting with communities when it entails a bit of voluntary suffering is important for developing the samvedana towards knowledge-rich, economically poor people. In the beginning, we had only a couple of staff and volunteers walking about 250 Km in 10 days. Currently, we walk for a week about 100-125 km depending upon the severity of the terrain.

Reports of previous shodhyatras are available at honeybee.org/shodhyatra or <https://www.sristi.org/shodhyatra/>.

The Purpose:

We try to pursue several goals during a shodhyatra and not always, all the goals are achieved fully. Much depends upon the prior work, support from partner institution/individuals if any, voluntary support from local and external youth and the nature of the interactions during the walk.

1. To recognise the grassroots innovators, outstanding traditional knowledge holders and women groups or individuals who have solved local problems without outside help
2. To document local common property institutions which help in sustainable natural resource management
3. To identify local solutions as well as challenges in the field of agriculture, non-farm activities, livestock and human well-being; share prior databases of solutions developed by other communities
4. To organise competition for new ideas among children and recipe/food formulation among women
5. To seek blessings of centenarian dasas and dadis to ensure previous 100 year of knowledge is carried forward for next 100 years
6. To recognise creative teachers, artisans, conservators of agro and other biodiversity along with associated knowledge systems

We try to learn from four teachers during the SY, the teacher within, among the peers, in nature and among common creative people. Who learns from whom how much is not difficult to say but during night meetings we share what we have learned from these teachers. Community interactions help in discovering coping strategies of communities with various stresses including climatic fluctuations.

The Process:

We invite only such volunteers to attend shodhyatra who have a definite desire to contribute towards Honey Bee Network goals. They may contribute towards documentation and /or augmentation of technological, educational, cultural and institutional innovations at the grassroots level. No comfort is assured and no complaints are entertained. It is a collective voluntary effort where all shodhyatris take collective responsibility for each other's care and responsible and respectful dialogue with communities with due respect for local norms and traditions.

It is expected that all yatris bear their own and common expenses but no genuine learner is denied the opportunity of joining SY if he or she cannot afford the expenses.

All photographs are taken with due consent of and respect for local cultural norms. These are pooled and shared with HBN and SRISTI. These are printed suitably and given back to the community member along with a copy of the report. Yatris can participate in documenting local knowledge prior to the SY and also share the report after the yatra. Each yatri is expected to submit a detailed report of the Yatra to the National Coordinator, Shodhyatra.

1. Identity Card and other documents

It is compulsory for every participant to carry an ID proof such as Voter ID, Driving License, Passport, etc., during the registration you have to submit one Id proof at SRISTI office/or to the coordinator before starting the yatra. Apart from that during the whole journey, one has to carry an extra passport size photograph.

For registration for joining the Shodhyatra, a soft copy of the passport-size photo and a soft copy of the identity document are required with the Registration Form. If registration is by postal mail, a hard copy of the identity document and three copies of the passport-size photos are required.

2. Weather

Weather: January is the middle of winter here. At that time, the temperature here during the day will be as low as 0° to 8° and during the night it will be as low as -12° to -20°. As it is very cold here, one should carry suitable clothes. To keep away from the cold, take a woollen cap, sweater, gloves etc., chances of rain are very low though carrying a relatively light raincoat is advised.

3. Lodging

Basic lodging facilities will be arranged in village primary schools or community halls and all the participants are expected to bring their own mats or bedding/sleeping bag. The lodging places may not have power supply and possibly will not have enough windows and doors as well. The yatris should be mentally prepared to clean the place themselves and share the available space. In case of non-availability of sufficient rooms, yatris may also have to sleep in the open ground/corridors; ladies and gents may have to share the available room/hall. At some places, toilets may also

not be available. Every place where Yatris stay will have to be left cleaner than it was before we reach there.

4. Basic necessities

Every shodhyatri should bring along articles for their daily use *viz.*, towel, toothbrush, soap, and utensils like plate, cup, glasses, spoons etc. No disposable glass or plates will be provided. The shodhyatris should also carry with them a water bottle, notebook, pen, a rope to hang their wet clothes, torch, matchbox, candles, etc. Any personal medicines and dry food items may also be brought. The shodhyatris are particularly requested to carry minimum possible luggage and carry their belongings in durable bags. Participants should take care of their belongings. Please also note that damage or loss of baggage will not be our responsibility.

5. Food

Breakfast, tea, lunch and dinner will be prepared by the local villagers and will be basic and vegetarian. However, if food is not available due to any unforeseen situation, shodhyatris must be mentally prepared to cook food for themselves.

6. Expenses during the journey

The shodhyatris have to bear all other expenses (travel, accommodation, food) incurred before and after the yatra. SRISTI will comply with the requests for pick up or drop (or any other requirement) and the same will be charged on actual basis and shared equally by the yatris availing the service. All payments made during the yatra should be made in cash. SRISTI will not arrange any to and fro tickets from the yatri's home to the destination.

7. Points to note

- Participants should be physically fit and mentally prepared to walk (18-20) km daily (100km approx. in total) visiting villages in mainly undulating /mountainous terrain. Those who face health issues may please avoid joining the Yatra this time. In the event of meetings which take longer than expected or if there is a need to move to a distant place of night halt, the yatra may continue late into the night. An early morning start to the yatra may also be possible, which will be informed the evening before.
- As the luggage of the shodhyatris will be carried on a tractor trolley or a car or a similar vehicle, it is recommended for each to carry one bag only during the days' walks. No porter facility will be available and hence each shodhyatri will have to load (in the morning before the yatra) and unload (at the night halt place in the evening) his/her luggage every day. No person will be allowed to travel on the accompanying vehicle except in an emergency or upon requirement. If there are any doubts about your physical fitness, we advise you not to join the Shodhyatra.
- It is expected of the shodhyatris not to walk with their friends or people known to them. This yatra gives an opportunity for all to interact and mingle with unknown people from different walks of life. Therefore, one should make proper use of this opportunity. It will be a pleasure to walk with new friends, to talk to them and to learn with/from them and share ideas. Please do not come with friends in a picnic mood.
- All shodhyatris are expected not to pollute the environment by throwing away empty wrappers of wafers, chocolates, disposable cups, plates, water bottles, leftover food, etc., on the path, in villages, forests or elsewhere and are advised against such consumption during the yatra to avoid setting any adverse precedent on consumption behaviour in the remote places we visit. Similarly, the places where we have our lunch and places where we stay overnight should be left clean.

- The shodhyatris should try to walk together [maintaining social distance] as a single group especially during evenings to avoid any problem, like missing the route, mischief by unknown people, etc. All shodhyatris should note down mobile/telephone number of the Shodhyatra coordinators and local volunteers for use in case of an emergency.
- It is mandatory for the shodhyatris to take prior permission from local people or farmers before plucking any flowers, branches, roots, fruits, barks, etc., from anywhere. Some places may be sacred and any such activity at such sacred groves is strictly prohibited. Also, rare species of the plants are precious to sustain local biodiversity, so things must not be plucked or removed for either study or collection or out of curiosity.
- During the yatra, all participants are expected to carry some literature for dissemination (to be given by SRISTI) in their bags for distribution to the villagers.
- All shodhyatris are expected to follow the instructions and guidelines of the organizers or any other specifics given by the local volunteers. Anyone found guilty of not maintaining the decorum and violating the rules will be sent back immediately.
- The whole yatra is a voluntary effort on a large scale. All shodhyatris are expected to consider this and avoid treating the yatra as an organised tour / trek. While SRISTI and its coordinators will take the larger responsibility of local coordination, all the shodhyatris are expected to actively participate and contribute to the idea of the yatra. Shodhyatris will be allocated different responsibilities and will have to actively ensure that they are delivering on their responsibilities.

8. Consumption of tobacco, cigarette, alcohol/local toddy and any such item is strictly prohibited.

9. Tackling an emergency

The entire route has been planned and arrangements have been made. However, in case of any natural calamity or any other emergency, last minute changes may be required in the route or any planned activity. All the shodhyatris are expected to follow the advice of the Shodhyatra coordinators in such a situation.

The shodhyatris are expected to walk as a group and refrain from making any divisive ideological, political statements, or discuss sensitive issues of caste and religion, etc., within the group or outside. Our aim is to understand the life and culture of the people, explore the local biodiversity, discover and appreciate local creativity. This is expected to be the focus of our conversation. SRISTI and HBN volunteers take utmost care in assuring the safety of the Shodhyatris. However, SRISTI shall not be responsible or liable for any delays and unforeseen incidents in the Shodhyatra arising out of or caused by, directly or indirectly, forces beyond its control, including, accidents, civil or military disturbances, natural catastrophes or acts of God, and interruptions.

10. Meetings

All the shodhyatris must remain present during the village meetings. The yatra coordinators will inform all the yatris about the next day's program in the previous evening.

11. Registration Process

SRISTI welcomes people who want to join the Shodhyatra with their family. In order to make arrangements for food, lodging and boarding, hiring and fuel charges of vehicle(s) for carrying luggage, generator etc., Shodhyatris have to deposit their contribution in advance. The amount mentioned below is for the entire Shodhyatra duration of seven days. In case, during the Shodhyatra, any other necessary payment

has to be made for anything arranged on the spot, the cost incurred will be shared equally by all and paid at the same time, and will be in addition to the payments given below.

For small farmers who are actively involved in farm operation and their primary source of income is only farming, tribes, artisans, and mechanics and innovators/knowledge holders.	Rs. 5000/-
Students studying professional courses, teachers, professionals, servicemen, retired personnel etc.	Rs. 7000/-
N.R.I., foreigners and well-wishers.	Rs. 12,000/-

No claim for refund will be entertained if any person desires to leave/quit the Shodhyatra mid-way.

The money should be paid by Cheque, DD or MO (money order) in the name of “SRISTI” payable at Ahmadabad. The bank account details are mentioned below.

SRISTI Bank Name: AXIS BANK Branch: Memnagar Ahmedabad A/c No.: 032010100012131 IFS Code: UTIB0001873
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Please send a copy of the deposit slip, and filled registration form either by post / courier to the SRISTI address or scan and email a copy to our email id – shodhyatra@sristi.org. Kindly check the names, date, signature, amount, etc. of the cheque before sending it to SRISTI.

It is necessary to do a follow-up to ensure the registration has been received and the fee deposited. The permission to join the Shodhyatra will be granted only after the receipt of signed registration forms with the consent and the registration fees are received. SRISTI reserves the rights to allow or disallow any person to participate in the yatra.

Organizing Institute:

SRISTI, AES Boys Hostel Campus, Near University Library and SBI Bank,
Navrangpura, Ahmedabad-380009
Phone.079 27912792, 27913293, (Mo) 9925320793
Web.www.sristi.org, Email:shodhyatra@sristi.org