

Crossing Borders

How my international experience has affected my view of the world.

Submitted by:

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“Until you visit other farmer’s field, you think that your father is the best farmer in the world” is the saying that underlines how important it is to visit other people, place, and culture. Men’s quest for new experience and to know the unknown has inspired to set foot on moon, and aim for Mars. Why is this quest? To improve life, and make the world a better place to live in. For me, crossing the border has been one of the best experiences of my life that has provided me the chance to learn five languages, and put my feet into three continents. The several ways, by which it has expanded my knowledge, personality, and experience, are now the cornerstone of my way of life.

Being born and raised under the foot-hills of Mt. Everest, the tallest mountain in the world, in the Kingdom of Nepal, I had a tough childhood. People, in that region, struggle hard to fulfill the basic amenities like food, shelter, and clothing, and majority have the daily income below one dollar. Although I lived my childhood surrounded with perhaps the most spectacular view of nature, I cursed my life for physical hardship, lack of comfort, and facility. In addition, I lived in such an exotic land where I could go for jungle safari, and see rare animals like tigers and rhinoceros, but I never had any appreciation for such noble childhood. Crossing the border, however, has changed my view. People abroad have such a fascination for Mt. Everest, and appreciation for Nepal’s beauty and culture. When they get to know that I am from Nepal, they can not help expressing how lucky I am. With new perspective to look back in my past, I am now proud of my own heritage.

Living under the dual influence of Hinduism and Buddhism, I had little idea and much apprehension for the faith of the outer world. But to my surprise,

coming abroad has revealed me how similar the religions of the world are. Despite the differences in the ways of worships, rites, and rituals, the common features among all the religions are faith in God, service to mankind, and religious tolerance. In natural catastrophes like Tsunami, and Katrina, people, from all kinds of religions, have come to the aid by donating generously in all possible ways. It is not uncommon sight in United States for people, in church, to pray for peace in Iraq. No matter people are segregated by different denominations, they are more similar than different in the ways of sharing love, compassion, kindness, and fraternity. I realize humanity is my religion.

Gone are the days when we live in the microcosm of the border of one country. The way we act, communicate, and do business has changed over time. With evolution, men's dependence on each other has gone higher too. World's oil consumption depends almost upon the resources of few countries of world. Men's persistent desire of odyssey into space has created the International Space Station where people from different nationalities dwell and carry out scientific experiments to help the mankind. A consumer makes a phone call to the customer care service of Dell computer, and it is answered by a person sitting in New Delhi, India. The ways lives are interwoven into one another is obvious around the world. To succeed in the current world, learning to interact with people of different cultures and places is indispensable. People, with time, have realized it and have accepted it wholeheartedly. It is manifest in the ways Valentine day from western world being celebrated in Asia, or the St. Patrick day from Ireland being celebrated in United States. "The whole world is my family." concept is on.

Crossing the border has given me the opportunity to see the world's big heart in several ways. It is exhilarating to see that whole world is fighting

against the cause of poverty, hunger, and epidemics like AIDS, cancer etc. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is providing millions of dollars to raise the awareness of causes of AIDS in rural India; Google-Earth is giving free education to poor children in Africa; and United Nations is feeding millions of refugees throughout the world - the way people are concerned for one another is evident. Similarly, research labs throughout the world are striving to make the breakthrough to find cures for AIDS, or easy treatment for cancer, or to find the solution for the alarming global warming. Coming to a world class university in United States has provided me a platform, as part of my engineering degree, to do research into alternative energy where I am trying to build an efficient hybrid electrical vehicle so that the dependence on gasoline for the use in vehicle is reduced. Thus my international outing, in disguise, has bestowed me the opportunity that I am imparting my contribution to solve world's challenges.

Due to my international experience, I have been able to learn five languages, put my feet into three continents, and make friends from Laos to Liberia. I have grown with my knowledge, perspective and direction in life. Now I am more aware of my position in the world. The whole world is the stage and I am an important actor. The way I am going to perform is going to impact the whole world significantly. Hence I had to act responsibly so that my activities are worth my position. Being fortunate enough to have the world-class education, awareness, and good health, now it is my responsibility to help others achieve the same. My dedication would be to find the solutions to the world problems. My resolve is to help fellow people to live the life of happiness, peace, and prosperity; and it is not the border, but the horizon which is my boundary.

In conclusion, I advocate everyone to have international experience. Until you see others are deprived of what you possess, it is hard to appreciate what you have. Crossing border provides a chance to see for oneself what the world at large is about, and the important role that one can play to make this world a better place to live in.