

EVERYDAY EARTH HEROES

NARENDRA BABU

How I came across Narendra Babu



Narendra Babu

Vishakhapatnam, my hometown, is a beautiful coastal city in Andhra Pradesh, located amidst sloping hills and a deep blue sea. On a recent visit there I was amazed to see the road divider in front of our apartment suddenly full of young trees and shrubs. Our watchman informed me that the drivers from the adjacent taxi stand had adopted the space. They planted trees there and regularly watered and removed the weeds.

Respected by all

The drivers spoke about the owner of their taxis, Narendra Babu, with a lot of

respect. He is a simple, passionate, and determined man in his early forties. On speaking to him I realized why the drivers revere him.

Narendra Babu is a B.Sc. graduate. After many failures and due to financial compulsion, he chose to start a Taxi Stand in 1998. By the end of the first year it became as he says "his bread and butter", and a source of comfortable living. He currently engages 16 drivers, all of whom are involved in volunteering some time for greening of the surroundings. Three years ago he began planting trees in urban spaces. "We run taxis which create pollution and this is my way of mitigating some of the harm", says Narendra. Along with the muster roll at the taxi stand, an open book is kept where drivers are supposed to sign if they have not consumed alcohol. Those who have not consumed any alcohol in that month are paid a bonus of Rs 200/-. This unique approach has made him popular with the drivers' family members who

discourage the drivers from leaving his employment. Narendra says, "Taxi Drivers are looked down upon in society- an image which is partly due to their own making. I want to change the way people treat drivers and I am giving the drivers an opportunity to change their image".



Trying to be the change

Narendra's father is a Veterinarian. His mother who used to nurture potted plants instilled a love for animals and plants in both him and his younger sister. His home is filled with roses and crotons, and one day he dreams of having a big plot of land, where he can plant trees and take care of cows.

Lessons from the past

Narendra carries some

unpleasant memories which he treats as a learning experience. The first and major one is of the money he borrowed from people when he tried his hand at the share market. Now that he is financially stable he pays back whenever someone is in dire straits.

He is also greatly affected by the memory of the Divi Seema cyclone that had appeared in 1979. At a tender age he saw people



My son Ishan was inspired and joined in the watering

suffer for want of basic amenities. He vows not to cause inconvenience to others, and explicitly instructs his drivers not to park on the road to avoid blocking others' path.

Narendra is often approached by people to help them with tree plantation drives. He has inspired the neighbors to adopt dividers for such plantations.

-Padmavati Dwivedi.

An Ode To Nature

अच्छा सिन्धुं मातृमामयासं विपाशमुर्वी सुभगामगन्म ।
वत्समिव मातरा संरिहाणे समानं योनिमनु संचरति ॥

-ऋग्वेदः ३:३३:३

Beas and Satluj rivers that originated from the Himalayas were known and revered as Vipasha and Shutudri in Vedic era. According to the legend, Vishvamitra was the family priest of Bharatas. Having gained much wealth in their service, was returning with it home, when his road brought him to the confluence of Vipasha and Shutudri. In order to make them fordable, he addressed to them (to which they replied and allowed him to cross). In the foamed white waters of flowing rivers, the sage sees affection of cows for her offspring. This was the vista of the culture born and nourished with nature. Can't we go back to our roots and let nature flourish again like it was in the Vedic Era?

-Mana Apoorva.