



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Exploration of the storytelling tradition in India **Name:** Liesl Zitman

Other Team Members:

Program: New York City Program

Trip Dates: 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001 **Location Visited:** India

Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 01

Project Summary: "...the best storytellers are skilled jugglers that never take a direct route. They jump from one segment, to an anecdote, to a flash-back and then to another theme to reveal some character insight, sometimes with purposeful misdirection. The storyteller's job is to keep his audience continuously intrigued, growing in emotional involvement and on a good day, be transformed by gaining new insight on our human condition..." Salman Rushdie on NPR discussing his book "The Enchantress of Florence."

India has always been a land of storytellers. Over the centuries the people have honed the fine art of telling the short story - be it in their epics, mythologies, or folk tales. Told by traditional katha vachaks, village storytellers, they have all grown up on these stories that have taught values, morals and culture. Story telling is one of the oldest art forms. In the villages, in the community spaces, the chaupals, where adults gather in the evening after a hard day's work to exchange news and anecdotes and a good storyteller has always been and still is a valuable attribute to the community. Stories are also told through dance and gesture through classical Indian dance such as Kathak.

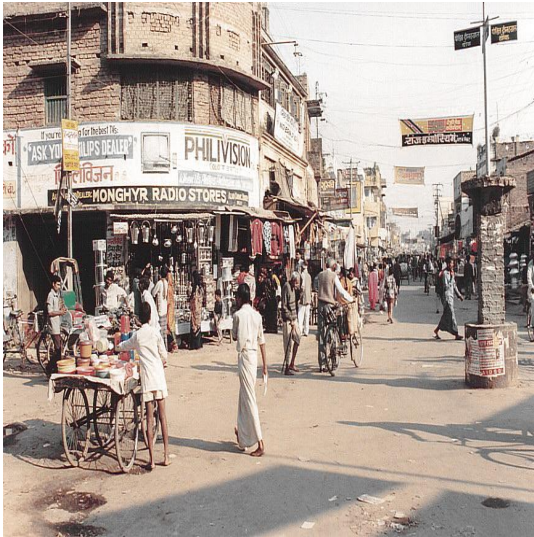
Career Impact: Liesl Zitman, Personal and Professional Growth. I selected Indian as one of the more important places with a long history of story telling, something that is still very much alive in every village, school and home. The object of this was threefold: to understand more fully how telling and listening to stories can cement communities and families, the ability to create an emotional response where tellers and listeners switch roles both in asking questions or listening with rapt attention and the telling of age old truths as a way of living and thinking. The story teller has to be versatile in the aspects of exposition and be able to interestingly narrate humorous anecdotes. The hope is to create a more receptive classroom environment by integrating moral, environmental and social awareness into the curriculum. Personally I gained a better understanding and appreciation of the Indian culture, traditions and literature. Additionally the Fellowship allowed me to observe India's education system.

Classroom/Community Impact: I have started sharing my fellowship experience with my colleagues by the use of photographs and participation in group discussions. The discussions center on the impact of integrating the use of storytelling into the curriculum. This would benefit the students in many ways: If children hear exciting stories from books beyond their reading level, they will aspire to learn to read better so that they can read such fascinating volumes. Storytellers as purveyors of literature are role models of readers. The hope is that by the use of story telling, the students will develop a broader interest in education and society. Improve their skills as they interpret aspects of other cultures and their own. Translating oral stories to written stories should also add an interesting dimension to our learning.

Open Response: Professional development for teachers to incorporate the art of storytelling into their curriculum.
Develop oral storytelling unit to teach children the importance of morals, values and ethics.
Develop a unit - "Exploring India" to gain an appreciation and understanding of other cultures.
Implementing a pen pal correspondence unit with students in an Indian school and PS335.

Quote: India - Land of storytelling

Photos:



Street Scene



Team visiting India



Wealthy school



NGO operated school



school children



children eager to learn



Greetings - Indian style



Visit to a private home