

## Travel Report By Dr Lenin Raghuvanshi

I traveled to Gummersbach to participate in an International Academy for Leadership Programme organized by Friedrich Naumann Stiftung from 15<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2007. The title of the programme was about 'Equity and Justice in a Globalised World: A Liberal View.

For me, association with the Naumann foundation through the 'Prevention of Torture Project' led me to discuss about liberalism at different places and forums at my level. This has not being a great experience since left leaning people are omnipresent in the NGO sector, particularly in the field of human rights. My visit to the academy is a step further to understand the liberal interpretation of political, social and economic concepts. I am not a great speaker of English or German and I am certainly thankful to the South Asia office of the foundation to select me despite the short comings.

Dr Klaff, before my departure had informed me about the difficulties/uneasiness I might have to face due to the historically established perceptions surrounding my name 'Lenin'. However, throughout my stay in the academy in a truly liberal spirit no one made fun of my name, which I appreciated greatly.

The academy provided a great atmosphere for participatory learning with lots of discipline which I enjoyed a lot. I always thought that liberalism has limitation to provide answers to various societal problems in Indian context. But this seminar encouraged me to read a little bit about liberalism. I found that Aristorial liberalism talks about inculcating individual empowerment against injustice whereas Liberal egalitarian propagates empowerment of individuals through out side process like right of property to individuals. Both are important for the society. We NGOs always does work of fault finding (in a way disapproving state role) of the state which also means expecting greater freedom for individuals. Demanding land for the poor also means supporting poor for the private property. I have a feeling that the liberal think tank should be more aggressive in finding space in the same ground with the left and argue out that you are not holier than me. (Please correct me if I have misinterpreted) Another important tool I learned is the World café session, a technique of participatory involvement of all participants to find common minimum agreement.

I continue my relationship with some participants. The moderator was very good. I would have liked to see Dr Stefan Melnik to take a longer session.

I am determined to use the market concept in my work with the weavers of Varanasi for addressing their livelihood programme. I would like the foundation to visit my work in this regard.

During the non working hours I managed to go to Remschied along with my friend Ms. Helma, Chairperson of Indo-German Society (DIG) of Remschied. I went there and talked to the members of DIG, Remscheid and WDR. I also visited the Rontengen High School of Remscheid and interacted with the students about the education and the learning process of the students of the school run by my organization PVCHR. I talked with press about collaboration between of DIG and PVCHR. More on that, please see:

<http://www.rga-online.de/lokales/remscheid.php?userid=&publikation=2&template=phparttext&ausgabe=40437&redaktion=2&artikel=108441528>

My travel arrangement was hassle free, thanks to Nupur and Mohan. The stay and food was of very good standard. Staffs in the academy were very friendly and cooperative.