

Willow Hoins

Field Observation 1

08/20/2023

I have been reflecting on some concepts I was introduced to by a book I found here in Bengaluru on the first day-- "The Third Pillar: How Markets and the State Leave the Community Behind" by Raghuran G Rajan. It addresses the economic relationship between three forces-- markets, the state, and communities-- and the myopic vantage point that too many economists have in leaving out that final factor. Rajan also dives into how such technologically, economically, and environmentally progressive areas can exhibit such suffering at the same time. I was talking with Vamsi and Sid about the environmental movements in India right now. It was brought about after visiting "India's First Zero Waste Juice Bar," and all the coffee shops with entirely paper cups, lids, and straws-- not to mention the restaurants that serve via banana leaf. We were talking that in part, there are some historic roles coming into play. In the flower market, Sid pointed out Jute and spoke about the history of using either metals-- like brass, copper, iron, or gold and silver if you were wealthy-- or plants for all the roles that we force plastic into fulfilling in today's world. But that only accounts for a portion of the cultural movement towards the level of sustainability that we are seeing. We explored the idea of corporations investing in green solutions and pressuring governments to enact laws and initiatives guaranteeing a new revenue source for them. However, I found that the feeling of what we were seeing seemed to be more than that. It is all very much community driven, which is why I've so enjoyed applying Rajan's perspective. We are very much in a zone focussed on inclusive growth, economic empowerment, and human capital-- which to me resonates so soundly with the ideals and enterprises of social entrepreneurship, but more importantly, it captures the bottom-up sentiment I feel when walking through here.