

LIVED IT

Meeting new people every day and sharing the experiences that each one had is an experience in itself. It is a way of expression where you gain knowledge about the places you have never been and the people you haven't met.

One such fulfilling experience was when I travelled in a sleeper class for the first time. I was used to the quiet and calm of a three tier or a two tier where everybody would be busy in their own modes of time pass. People of my age group sulked in corner with earphones stuffed in the ears blaring with music so loud that it did not matter what was around anymore. Men busy with the newspaper or cell phones, finishing the errands before reaching their destination. Women who would occasionally look inside their handbags, arrange it and rearrange it only to find some sort of an inexplicable satisfaction.

But the sleeper class journey was nowhere even close to it. Getting tickets at the last minute can take its toll. The train screeched into a halt in front of me. Staring at the rush of passengers to fit in those compartments left me immobile. Considering my petite figure, I was afraid of being trampled over by the force.

I somehow manage to locate my berth just to find that it was already occupied by a woman and her little child who shifted towards the window to make space for me. I craved for that one spot in horrifying journey which I didn't get. The train started departing the station and soon the entire space around was filled with various people. Kids who dragged sacks of something which looked rocky against the sack skin; an old man, breathing heavily, looking restlessly for just one tiny spot to rest; two women with face almost covered with their sari and their husbands nudging them to move further.

Dad's reminders of how I am supposed to keep a watch on my belongings kept rotating inside my head. I couldn't take my cell phone out because of the fear of it getting stolen. I immediately got up and climbed to the top berth for some peace. To my utter disappointment there were more number of people watching my every move because they had nothing else to do.

I assured myself that it is a small journey and I should probably sleep and it will be over when I wake up. It was hard to find sleep. One of the husbands from the lower berth took off his shirt to fill the air with an immense foul smell that would take hours to leave through the window and his body.

I kept twisting and turning to find a comfortable spot.

I think I had fallen asleep when two painfully loud 'hermaphrodite' beings entered my compartment. I never saw sense in the idea of earning money by threatening people that you would expose, nor in the idea of paying if they are exposing. I waited open eyed for everything to pass away...dreaming about the comfort that is on my way. Soon, this concentration was broken by the heavy downpour.

The raindrops forced themselves through the window (with no shield) making the seat and the passenger all wet. Everybody moved and that's when I took the window seat. I felt the relief of cold drops and the fresh wind. The occasional exposure of the dark city due to lightening was breathtaking. Seeing other coaches when train took a turn and the millisecond fright when a faster train went past us gave me goose bumps.

I sat there for the remaining half of my journey. Never in an air conditioned compartment did I feel the beauty of a 'TRAIN JOURNEY'.