A poor loan seeking farmer waits outside my house for seven hours under the sun only to be sent back home empty handed by my father at the end. Some of my classmates are told to leave the classroom from the midst of a class for not paying tuition fees which is less than a dollar per month. Feudal lords and politicians loot the people in broad day light. In revenge, extremists destroy public property in nights. Such were my earlier impressions of life. As a child, the extent of inequality that existed and the universal acceptance of it in the feudalistic society (of the Telangana region in Southern India)was a phenomenon that engaged and boggled my mind to the most part. While I have more questions than answers today, the psychological and emotional amazement that is involved in attempting to discover answers to the questions raised by such nature of the society was what constituted majority of my childhood.

Television, cinema and books accompanied me in my search. There was a scene in a TV serial named *Malgudi Days* in which the lead kid prays god to convert a few pebbles into pennies so that he could buy a hoop. That was just like watching myself on the small screen. Every time there was an exam at school, I prayed God to cause an earth quake or a storm so that the exam is postponed, or better, cancelled. Rare work of visual or written art such as Malgudi Days made me discover and understand the joy in the nothings amongst everything, the micro elements of life. Poor farmer in neck deep debts finds solace in having fresh palm wine and singing folk songs. A feudal lord who commands the whole village with a finger tip is terrified by his wife. It was a discovery that every society has a way of working, and that in spite of the problems it imposes, it provides the people with ways of life called 'Culture' which keeps life lively and joyful. That was a learning.

The economic reforms and globalization that hit India in the mid 90s depicted its results by the early 2000s. Everything got changed. I grew up from someone for whom a mere glimpse of an airplane flying in the sky was so irresistible that running out from the midst of a class and facing teacher's cane later meant nothing, to someone who got opportunities to study in one of the biggest cities of India and work abroad (as a Software Engineer). That enabled me to travel a lot and provided me with exposure to parts of world. I visited several places, lived several cultures, met people and formed experiences. While the people, places and cultures appeared to be totally different at different parts of the world, it is again the television, cinema, and books, this time from a little more diverse and widespread sources is what made me realize that it is all the same deep down in spite of its disguised appearance of being different. The boy in *Malgudi Days* (TV serial in Indian backdrop, from 90s) who prayed god to convert the pebbles into money so that he could buy a hoop and the boy in *Children of Heaven* (1998, feature film in Iranian backdrop) who daily ran kilometers to cover up the missing shoes shared same innocence, and struggle. The foreigner in the New York JFK airport in *The Terminal* (2004, American feature film) and the mobster in the Medical School in *Munnabhai MBBS* (2003, Indian feature film) represented the same stranger who changed the place they were struck in, turning out to be heroes. The young architect of New York City who blows up a multi story building in *The Fountain Head* (1943, American Novel) and the failed classical dancer who gets addicted to alcohol in *Sagara Sangamam* (1983, South Indian feature film) demonstrated same level of pure passion that they possessed for an art form. While they provided answers to some of the questions that remained unanswered all my life, they also left a lot of questions unanswered and raised a lot more.

Through debating, writing, or blogging, I expressed stories that mattered to me and raised questions that needed answers, all along my life. By the time I reached my mid twenties, I realized that my passion lies somewhere in between documentary and fictional feature film making. From the silent era *Battleship Potemkin* to the recent IMAX master piece *Interstellar* and beyond, with its ever increasing artistic and technological possibilities and its extensive reach to the masses, cinema has always been a medium that created highest impact in the minds and hearts of its viewers, me, for instance. A true lover of cinema, I seek to express this love for life combining it with my thirst to express questions and find answers, to tell stories untold, to explore history unexplored. I believe that I have a voice of my own but yet I feel that I lack the understanding of the complexities of translating thought to reality. I have tried, failed in as many measures as I have succeeded. Yet, if success is not to be lost in translation, I seek the help of a well mentored and well structured program such as the one offered by FilmConnection.