

A good karma, Carwale, November 28



Karma Enduro rally, a charity event, organised with the help of Hindustan Motors was one the participants would cherish forever



The excitement was infectious. With only 195km to be covered through the day, starting early wasn't really necessary. But, it was just about 0800hrs and the parking bay with over 20 new white Ambassadors was already bustling with people. These weren't onlookers but the participants, who were in full strength decorating their newly bought Ambassadors, of the Karma Enduro rally - a charity event to support poor children. Some were equipped with ribbons, others with stickers with various messages and then some with their names or their companies'. Majority of them were also spotted wearing the Rainbow Trust tees, the charitable trust for poor kids.



But, smiles, a lot of small talk and the excitement was clearly the norm here. And why not, after all these participants; mostly foreigners, were going to traverse across the south of India. They would not only be driving a classic car, but would also see the diversity in scenery, food, speech and attire; it was going to be an experience they knew they'd never forget.



So, with the cars decorated, tanked up tummies and lots of smiling and waving later, the convoy departed. The plan was to head out from Goa to Karwar passing towns like Ponda, Molem and Kolem en route. And the idea - to have a lot of fun. Now, most participants were from the United Kingdom, so at least they'd be driving on the same side of the road, as they do in their country. But, in terms of traffic, road conditions and moving hazards on the road like cattle and mopeds, they had to be prepared. And prepared they were because all through the first day, the drive was peaceful with no incidents at all.



Charged up after a great day one, the convoys then headed to Murudeshwar the next day. The distance was longer, almost 260km but with lots of great sights on the way like the Jog waterfall wherein water falls from a height of 830ft, the second-highest in India, the participants got through

with as much energy. Roads though were pretty bad throughout and consequently, a lot of the drivers stopped pretty often. Two such decided to stop next to a school and within minutes were swarmed by excited kids. Not to let this opportunity pass, both spent a lot of time chatting up with the kids and getting pictures clicked. They also struck an interesting conversation with one who was bunking school for he did not see the point of studying when one could play in that time!



After a long night sipping chilled beer on the beach at Murudeshwar, the participants readied themselves for another long day. The rally on day three was to end at Kalasa, some 250km away. But before everyone could get going, a few issues need sorting out. The poor roads in the last two days had taken a toll on the Ambys. Some had issues relating to suspension, others complained of noise but everyone wanted to start out on cars without issues. Kudos to Hindustan Motors' back up team of technicians for before the flag off for the day, all cars were sorted to the tee. And even through the day if problems did crop up, these were sorted then and there.



The day though progressed with some interesting instances. For one lovely blonde lady possibly in her early 40s was clearly intrigued by an old local gentleman. So much so that she stopped her car, got out, grabbed her camera and took endless series of pictures of her holding the old man's hand. With three days almost over, it was also time for the partakers to exchange notes; and they did so sipping on some hot chai out of tiny plastic cups, typical of southern India. Here's what some eavesdropping revealed. "I am used to automatics, and with these poor roads, I need to shift so often. It's tiring," said a UK gentleman. Another Brit clearly influenced by the Punjabi culture wished his mate 'Rub Rakha', meaning God will take care, for the remaining journey. And then an Italian father and son duo couldn't stop taking about the experience of driving around with an aircon and liking it!



Day four, which would be our last, but the rally would continue for another 10 days (and cover a total of 2,000km) would see us reach Coorg. And to get there, the convoy makes an early start with the reasoning a lot of ground needs to be covered. Now, 230km might not seem like much (I didn't think so either), but, when you consider foreign nationals at the wheel, hilly roads and numerous breaks, well, it can take quite long. Speaking of breaks, our first stop was in a town called Kelagur. It is a place flooded with coffee and tea estates. And with clear blue skies and lush green hillside, it was but natural that everyone went shutter crazy clicking everything from trees to the road side stalls to the local people. The locals weren't any less amused at the sight of so many cars and foreigners. Soon there was a crowd – elderly and young, men and women - that was overzealous to catch a glimpse of the happenings and then wave the troop goodbye. As the day progressed so did the frequency of breaks. But, crucially the participants were enjoying the stoppages, checking out the local scene and gorging on the cheapest food they had ever eaten to their tummy's fill. Close to sundown, the convoy had reached its day's destination. The journey at the end of four days had been an enjoyable and everlasting one (in the words of the partakers) even if less eventful as most expected given the poor road and traffic conditions.



<http://www.carwale.com/research/features/a-good-karma-8387/>