35th-Chinna Soda Yatra-My experiences & learnings:

I realised how people are desperately looking forward and passionate about this yatra when I saw the Whatsapp messages where they were struggling to find out the modes of transportation to reach the start point. Someone posted a message at 2.00 am, stating I just got down the train-shows how important this yatra is for them.

Day-1 was around a 12 km walk through the villages and fields. I didn’t realise that I can walk so much. Had a good lunch at mango orchards. It was good to see a gathering of 40 plus strangers joining for a yatra. Got to know about people during those three days after interacting with them from various backgrounds. Finally we reached the night stay place to call it a day.

Though I was hearing from quite some time but I didn’t believe that there is abundant knowledge in villages until I saw red ants medicine for migraine in Alligudem village. It was unbelievable for me that this method to treat migraine is being used since ages and it’s a normal method for them. Day- 2 was a walk about 23 kms and was very productive. Villagers genuinely showed interest for the agri tools developed by our innovators. We also found a traditional medicine for Asthama given by a local women there.

Overall it was a good yatra however I felt we walked more, spent time more with our co-yatris than with the villagers. We should have had more interactions with the local people there. We should select villages which are not very far from each other.

I liked the idea of felicitating the locals there with shawls. It was a joy filled with shock for them and also for the villagers who were watching the felicitation.

Barter system is still prevailing in villages. A craftsmen who prepares grain storing box will get two bags of grains in return for his work.

I liked a story narrated by Brigadier where a person whoever speaks louder will be made a king. I realised it is very much true and still relevant. When you speak people will hear otherwise you are ignored. A learning for me because I don’t speak much.

Take a bow to Brigadier for his energy. He was walking continuously and talking continuously. Unbelievable energy and passion for the yatra.

The group sitting under the trees and road side was a nice experience to feel. The frugal way of living taught in these three days will always be remembered in future whenever I don’t have access to the usual things.

I did not see any frustrated faces or anger in yatri’s despite the arrangements which many were not used to in their daily life.

Thanks to Raju for the yatra arrangements and special thanks to Srikanth who solely handled the logistics, especially the campfire in the mornings.

Finally, my message to Mr.Gajanan & team from AKP is,-

**‘’PALLE SRUJANA CANNOT BE REPLICATED’’**

If you don’t believe then participate in one shoda yatra.

*Looking forward to 36th Shoda Yatra.*

*Sincerely, Sridhar Maddela*