

Book on “Palle Srujana”

Impressions of a Palle Srujana volunteer as inputs to the Book

An effort is being made by YOJAK – a national level organization to document the journey of Palle Srujana – Voluntary group since its inception in 2005. Volunteer Akhila has gracefully accepted this responsibility.

She sent a questioner to many volunteers of Palle Srujana. Her Qs duly answered by one volunteer-**Naga Mohan Manda** are as follows:

Hello, fellow volunteer!

I am Akhila Nookala, your co-volunteer at Palle Srujana, and now a Grassroots Innovation Fellow at the YOJAK Center of Research and Strategic Planning. As part of my fellowship, I am engaging with various stakeholders of Palle Srujana, including volunteers, to document its approach, philosophy, and activities over 18 years. Please note that the documentation is not centered around feedback on the activities, but rather emphasizes the approach and core philosophy. I kindly request you to provide me with a write-up (preferably) or an audio recording with answers to the questions mentioned below within a week's time.

Your input and experiences are invaluable to me. Please assist me in this endeavor of documenting Palle Srujana's journey.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Warm regards,

Akhila Nookala

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Questions

1. When did you first associate with Palle Srujana?
2. How long did you actively volunteer with Palle Srujana?
3. What activities/ tasks have you worked on as a volunteer? What are some learnings? Please mention if you have tried any new interventions.
4. How was the experience? Did the learnings help you with anything outside Palle Srujana? Did it have any impact on you as an individual?
5. What is your take on volunteerism at Palle Srujana? Anything you want to share about it! Don't forget to share about why do you keep going back to Palle Srujana (if you do)
6. Anything else you'd like to share?

Impressions of Volunteer Naga Mohan Manda

1. When did you first associate with Palle Srujana?

It was 2021. I have been already a social volunteer running my own NGO. Thus, I came across Chinna Shodhya Yatra 37 (CSY37) poster in a WhatsApp group. Basically, I was brought and born up in village back ground in Guntur Dist., Andhra Pradesh. Many of us do feel missing rural with child hood memories. Hence, I decided to join this CSY to go to villages again.

2. How long did you actively volunteer with Palle Srujana?

From 2021 to Now it is almost four years with Palle Srujana.

3. What activities/tasks have you worked on as a volunteer? What are some learnings? Please mention if you have tried any new interventions.

First of all, everyone participating in Chinna Shodha Yatra is a volunteer. Participation itself is volunteering. Above that:

Few activities as a volunteer:

- Assisting to put in and take out Yatra and Palle Srujana materials into and out of the car during yatras
- Walked through around 100 to 150 villages as a Palle Srujana volunteer.
- Assisting to serve food, to serve tea, to collect tea cups
- Sponsoring eco friendly breakfast/lunch plates
- Explaining villagers about Palle Srujana motto and about Innovations from villages/farmers
- Assisting Subash to arrange banners while taking session to the farmers.
- Interacting to villagers and farmers. We explain them about Palle Srujana innovators and innovations. How they are useful to them in reducing the input cost in Agriculture. Motivate them to go for Organic farming. Interact with youth and children and guide them for best practices wherever possible.
- Explain co-volunteers about few Innovators like Modha Siva, Naga Swamy from Kacharam, and others about how I felt dire need to support them. How helping them, supporting them create large impact to mankind, agriculture and over all to the country.
- During G20-C20 meetings, I attended the event. Post event I view the feedback videos and helped to identify/note important quotation, sayings timings in the video to make shorts and videos. And writing text for video clips.
- Visiting an Innovator to understand, watch his innovation and to promote his innovation.
- Identifying Investors for Innovators (Successfully pitched worth Rs.3,00,000/-)

Learnings:

- I heard the word “SAMVEDANA” first time here only from Brigadier Ganesham garu. Though I was having it within me, I don’t know that it is called SAMVEDANA. Knowing it helped me a lot improving the clarity within me with myself.

- The most fun/learning part of Palle Srujana is Chinna Shodha Yatras. Each time we find four Gurus in this. 1) Co-yatries/volunteers 2) Villagers 3) nature 4) self. The 3-days of yatra you either live for yourself or live for somebody else. What great learning than this can happen!
- Walking to utter strangers, with an attention to learn, with a feel of love, with an interest of interaction not interrogation – Chinna Shodha Yatra teaches to interact with villagers who are total strangers
- Learnt to behave best with co-volunteers as well with villagers in a humble way.
- Learnt to make self a zero, start with unlearn and relearn from each and every one come across not only in Chinna Shodha Yatra but also each member of Palle Srujana.
- Interacted with 500 to 1000 strangers sharing and gaining knowledge.
- Learn to know that there is technology and innovation without formal education and background. Intellectual is not anyone's own property.
- Why do you need to walk to a totally strange person, strange place and start conversation? Even if it happens how many times do you get such chance? This is what we learnt at Palle Srujana. Amazing improvement in communication skills.
- Learn to be as humble as knowledgeable oneself. The innovators having so much knowledge are yet so humble and down to earth.
- Many more learnings, one must feel and face, not everything be scribbled.

Interventions:

- Major intervention is able to make myself participate in 10 Chinna Shodha Yatras almost without any missing. This definitely helps strengthen the Palle Srujana community and brotherhood. And strengthen the overall function definitely, I believe.
- With motivation and guidance from Brigadier, I pitched few people in my circle for investment to support Palle Srujana innovators.
- Not only about bagging-in good amount of zero interest funds
- But also building trust in them about Palle Srujana, and Innovators and especially about the usefulness of the Innovations to a wider reach.
- Other than spelling, before joining Palle Srujana, I don't know anything about agriculture. But during the journey with Palle Srujana, I learnt about organic farming, about reducing input costs in farming and so many things. This helped me convey the same at many other occasions and dais.
- I brought many people in my circle to Palle Srujana, introduced to the Brigadier. Thus, I tried to introduce them to Palle Srujana, so that they too will benefit as I benefited here and vice versa..

4. How was the experience? Did the learnings help you with anything outside Palle Srujana? Did it have any impact on you as an individual?

Experiences:

- The experience is simply Amazing! Awesome! Exciting! Knowledgeful! Humanly! And Soulful.
- The night walks from village to village

- The baths in lakes and streams on the way, and bathing under bore pumps
- The trekking through forests and hills during Chinna Shodha Yatra
- Talking to the shepards grazing goats and cows, the green fields
- I even used to talk to the animals and tress also you don't believe.
- The lunches and dinner on road side, under trees
- Spending almost 10-15 hours a day under sky, under no roof.
- Walking 12 to 25 km per day
- And more and more experiences. No, not experiences, treasures of moments.

Outside Palle Srujana:

- Outside Palle Srujana, now I am able to interact with people from all walks of life, on road, in commute, on walking, wherever I go without any hesitation, but without losing politeness and humble.
- This even helped me to improve relations with my family members and within family members.
- From the circle of people I got to know in Palle Srujana, I could bag few donations to my own social service activities.
- Once incidence, when I visited, Nalgonda on a work, our co-Palle Srujana volunteer Dr. Balnarasiah garu gave me royal treatment, as if I am the founder of Palle Srujana.
- When I visited IIT, Basara, with some other NGO on some work, the VC and dean looked at me in a brighter way when I said, I am a "Palle Srujana volunteer." And, etc.
- The SAMVEDANA term I learned at Palle Srujana helped me to be more empathetic and more careful with life around me. Once you know what is SOMEVEDANA you automatically become a person adding something to the life around you.

Impact on me as an Individual:

- Yes. It improved my listening skills
- Improved patience, down to earth, delegation and closing deals.
- My social face value increased. Thus, it helped my own NGO activities to do more and reach more.
- See, simply tell me, why does a person suddenly land in an unknown village, with unknown people in unknown conditions, and stay in that village for 3 days just in the Veranda of a Panchayat office. In that situation you need to complete a given task. This happened to me in Gyan Shodh. We stayed there wherever available, ate whatever provided, but worked to full satisfaction. It definitely improves a person's skill, behavior, perception towards life, society and goal. Clarity of thinking improves.
- And then where you go, whatever you do entire life, now you are a changed, modified person.
- Also helps me to analyze and understand people and perceptions than before.

5. What is your take on volunteerism at Palle Srujana? Anything you want to share about it! Don't forget to share about why do you keep going back to Palle Srujana (if you do)

Take on volunteerism at Palle Srujana:

One must volunteer at least once in Palle Srujana. This volunteering is entirely different and incomparable with any other social volunteering or activity. It is so, because it is not just an activity. It is not any charity. It is total life changer. Life changer to yourself and also to whom so ever you come across going forward. It is like you got enlightened and the light passes along with knowledge. I saw, including myself, persons and people ranging from school children to Giant CEOs of companies who after participating in Palle Srujana activity turned 360 degrees with new knowledge, wisdom and perception on life and self.

Anything you want to share about it?

There is one person, name hidden, who participated in a Chinna Shodha Yatra along with me. He is a big CEO to a company which trains CEOs. That day when he is sharing impressions about his participation in Palle Srujana as a volunteer, I still remember the glow in his face and realization he felt. Above that, later he called me personally, took my appointment. He took inputs from me on how to start a social activity, how to handle and how to start an NGO, etc. Later he started his own NGO on large scale and moved on. This best honor to myself and honor to my capacity. This also comes under the category mentioned above as benefit outside Palle Srujana.

why do you keep going back to Palle Srujana:

To recharge my soul and spirit with positive vibration

To enjoy nature

To enjoy good unconditional company

To learn more and more, each time

To strive towards excellence as said by Brigadier

To listen to the experiences, background and knowledge of people

The physical world around us we are living is not enough to bring BEST ALROUNDER within us. An allrounder towards family, profession, people, society and much more. Once you are a part of Palle Srujana, you excel yourself to be YOUR BEST allrounder.

Finally

That 3-days of Chinna Shodha Yatra – I live exclusively for myself or live for someone, forgetting all the other worries and the world.

6. Anything else you'd like to share?

There are many NGOs and CSOs working in the society. Few works for a cause, few for charity and others for a social issue. Palle Srujana is altogether different from these. It includes and works for all these and beyond. It is something different. It is no charity, because it promotes technology and innovation. It is not just highlighting a social issue, because it is upbringing the grassroot innovations and making use of it to a wider reach which in other way agriculture and food of the country. The perspective and depth of thinking mechanism and working philosophy of Palle Srujana is altogether different from any other social organization. Volunteers here

come forward self-moved. They have no obligation, no dead line, no objectives, no expectation, all work at free will and wish, as and when, however and whatever possible, no limit but still unlimited. This gives them abundant freedom of work and freedom of expression without any need of compromising any standards of Palle Srujana guidelines and Palle Srujana philosophies. A volunteer is fully equipped with all support and guidance and without any hard-core rules and restrictions except inculcating SAMVEDANA.

Thank you.

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