



# Chinna Shodya Yatra 7 Through My Eyes



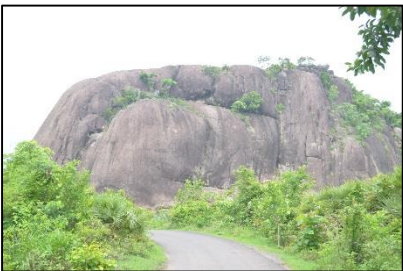


This is my third yatra after CSY4 and 5. Just 5 days before the yatra, I had a very severe cold and infection and was really not sure whether I'd go. But things turned my way and I joined the Brigade. It always feels great going to the yatra for many reasons than one— for drawing inspiration from the innovators' stories, for understanding the pains and suffering of the village dwellers and thus appreciate the comforts I enjoy and complain less about things, for the opportunity to spend a long time with my Guru Brig. Ganesham, for making new friends and learn from them and also as a break from routine – away from the mundane routine, so called civilization, internet and mobile phone and close to nature. Whatever be the reason for the incoming yatris, they will go home as the next version of their self.



### Unlearning

It is the first chapter of the yatra and the most important too. The Guide emphasizes the importance of unlearning through a simple story – “if your glass is already full, how can you further fill it?” This helps us empty our glasses so we can collect few drops of knowledge. We have to shed our baggage and be humble in order to be able to learn; if we think we already know more than the other person, how can we ever learn? The story of three stone cutters also helped us look at the bigger picture of the yatra and what effect it can have on our life, the decisions we take for ourselves, for our families and for the society at large. The unlearning has always had a deep impact on my personality and I have changed for better due to this session - it is one of the most favorite parts of the yatra for me. Guru Ganesham ji in his own words, “We have lot of assumptions. We should not assume something and base our impressions or actions on them but instead seek information, understand the situation and only then choose our plans/actions.” This single line has profoundly struck me and I've always followed this since the previous yatra- in office, with family and friends too.



Guide says there are **four gurus** in the yatra- Nature, Farmers/locals, Fellow Yatris and Oneself. Yatris are expected to learn from each of them. Can I share what I could learn?



### Nature

I've observed that nature is infinitely patient and tolerant. It silently does its functions without complaining. It's vast, accommodative and supportive. Apart from learning, we get to see many beautiful locations, flora and fauna and if you are lucky, you can taste the local produce too – I was lucky this time. I savored the cashew nuts, jack fruit, scent of fresh lemon while others enjoyed pineapple. Thanks to scout Raju for patiently cutting and offering the fruits to us.





### Locals

The farmers manifest ultimate resilience. Despite the challenges from natural calamities, government policies, landlords they never quit farming. They are amazing hosts too, wherever we go, they welcome us, listen to our stories and give some information in return, if they can. They never ask why we visit their lands. They even give way to us. In the very first hour of our yatra, we've encountered a farmer Sri. Krishna, who was carrying heavy weight of grass in his yoke. On enquiry he told that it is for his cattle. Some of us took it on our shoulders but we couldn't walk beyond 10 feet. How can he carry such a burden for a long distance? not one day but probably, everyday?



In the second leg of day 1, we entered Addakulaguda, a small village with the population of about 100 people. We were fortunate to meet a centurion and his nonagenarian wife, Sannayi and Boodamma. They are moderately fit and strong and with great confidence he says, "I've crossed the century and will make another quarter too." We were all amazed at his confidence because we are not sure whether we'll make even a half century.



On day 2 and 3, soon after President's closes the meeting, one of the attendees Proposed vote of thanks. I've witnessed many meetings but in no meeting did anyone said thank you but in this yatra, @ Pedarama and at Manapuram, a lady and the village president stood up after sir spoke and said, "Thank you for coming all the way from your places to share the knowledge." They offered blankets for us to sleep comfortably.



In the two schools we've visited @ Velagodu and Donabayi, the kids were very enthusiastic, energetic and sharp. They manifest the philosophy behind the idiom, Ignorance is bliss.



### Fellow Yatris

Everyone who comes for the yatra is special. They have the spirit to contribute, vision for a better society and they strive to make the world a better place. In this yatra, there were people from different fields – social entrepreneurs, civil service aspirants, students, lawyer, innovator, entrepreneur gurus, practicing engineers, Software guys – both working and retired, an artist, an architect and our own President from the Army – all under one roof, oops, all under one tree. It happens only in CSY – where else does anyone get the opportunity to interact , share ideas, debate and learn and unlearn from individuals of this diverse professions? Not for an hour, but for three full days?



What we discuss/learn in the yatra: Contribution to society, science, combat, Govt. policies, farming, crop science, finance, green revolution, health and nutrition, soli and fertilizers, spirituality, mind control, music, entrepreneurship, business and ethics, empowering people, endurance etc. etc. and above all, how to walk.



### Self

In this yatra, I haven't really taken time out to contemplate and introspect. But as sir says in the concluding session, "with this meeting, the external sodha yatra ends and the internal sodha yatra begins," I'll continue my yatra inside.

### Snippets and Impressions

- During breaks President Ganesham would narrate stories of Innovators. Stories of this yatra:

Construction materials - Pampapathy, Anantapur Dt.

Zero Tillage Machine – Guravaiah, Guntur Dt.

ASU Family – Mallesham, Nalgonda Dt.

Cotton Harvester – Mullapudi Satyanarayana, Khammam Dt.

Mosquito repellent – Chandra Sekhar

- When yatra started we all pointed Yamini to be the youngest yatri @ 17. But as yatra continued, everyone has realized that Brig. Ganesham is, indeed, the youngest.

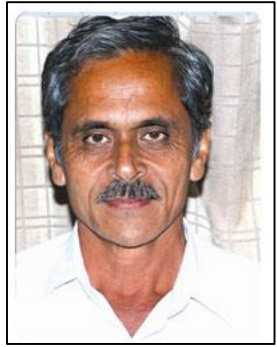
- He'd be the first to wake, he'd walk fast and lead us all the time, he doesn't even sit until we reach the destination and sparingly takes water.

- When I talk about people of age above 50, I generally refer to them as *that old man* but I dare not use the word while referring to Brig. Ganesham.

- I asked him how he'd do all this, he said "I resolve not to sit. And in the Army, we are trained to endure without water. We have a bottle in our pack but we save it for the last mile"

- Some of the Yatris had aching feet. When asked about pain, he gently smiles and says, "When you have pain, don't think about it, engage yourself in talking or something, that'll take the focus away from pain."

- In one of our meetings I asked him, "Sir, after retirement, even the most sincere employees relax. What keeps you moving?" His reply is so amazing that I'll keep in mind and practice after my retirement. "Raj, Indian Government pays me pension, what take it for free?"





Sodha Yatra leaves us with many deep questions.

Why should farmer be effected by fall in dollar rate ?

How can he be isolated from it ?

When will all the farmers in India be happy ?

What can each one of us do for them ?

Did green revolution really help India ?

**Sincere Thanks:**

Brig. Ganesham, Scout Raju, Voluntee Rajendra Prasad, Chauffeur  
Chinna

Nameste

Rajeswar

[volunteer@pallesrujana.org](mailto:volunteer@pallesrujana.org)

M: 789 309 1114

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Santosh, Rahul, Saket & Kranthi

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[www.pallesrujana.org](http://www.pallesrujana.org) for the schedule and updates.