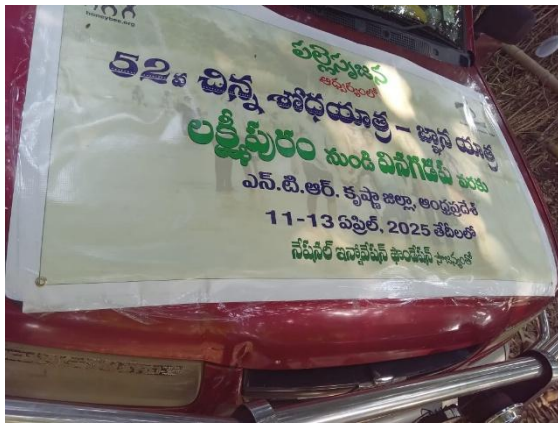


52nd Chinna Shodh Yatra (11th-13th April 2025)

The Beginning of a new Journey

The first day of the yatra, little did we know what was coming up for us. All the co-yatris started to gather opposite to a primary school from 8am onwards. We sat on the ground of the school in a round circle and introduced ourselves to each other. We started as a small circle and the radius kept increasing as the clock started to tick. It was the beginning of the summer season, but the sun started to shine brighter, and we started to feel the heat. However, Brigadier sir with his interesting introduction about the yatra and the grassroots innovations ensured we felt the heat was worth tolerating.



Eventually the walk began and to my surprise in the first 15 minutes of the walk I could realize that the next three days is going to be a journey for the pursuit of real knowledge. One of the volunteers of Palle Srujana Anji Reddy garu started explaining various medicinal values and uses of the plants on the roadside. The plants which we rarely notice while travelling on our bikes and cars have multiple medicinal values. While Anji Reddy garu was explaining about the plants, a couple of co-yatris coming from rural villages and having awareness about agriculture were contributing to the discussions and provided the knowledge they have. Some co-yatris were noting down the information diligently while a few were busy clicking the pictures of the plants and verifying the information provided on the internet. In the process co-yatris started to build conversations and interact with each other and started to enjoy each other's company.

We walked for long distances through villages talking to different people on the way and learning from them about various farming and allied practices. Brigadier sir ensured we had breaks in-between the walks when he would share inspiring stories of grassroots innovators. These conversations happened below trees on roadsides, on the fields, besides ponds etc. taking us close to the nature and making us experience the actual village life.



We interacted with farmers, shepherds, villagers and the elderly people in the village understanding their lifestyles and gaining knowledge from them. The day seemed very long as we continued to walk for hours but none of us were giving up. We knew it was all worth the effort.



The team felicitated people for their time and efforts in sharing knowledge to us



Exploring and Experiencing

The second day started as early as 6:00am and to my surprise most of us were all geared up to continue the pursuit of knowledge. We set up a mini exhibition of innovations and displayed posters explaining the grassroots innovations. The interactions with the farmers, listening to their concerns, and explaining about the innovations made me realise how much the outside world is cut-off from the rural problems.



The team then proceeded to a school nearby and interacted with school children. The school visit makes us feel nostalgic about our school days. We then resumed our walk and proceeded to the next villages walking by the farmlands. The conversations during the walk with Brigadier sir, other volunteers and co-yatris were very insightful giving us knowledge about various

farming practices and innovative methods in farming. I personally could gain a lot of insights from Brigadier sir about Palle Srujana and the grassroots innovations. The second day was much different compared to the first day as we had very good interactions with the co-yatris. We were making new friends in the process.



The Way Ahead

The third day made us realize that the time is ticking for the conclusion of the yatra and we could introspect about giving back to the community. The parting thoughts of the co-yatris were very emotional and it was evident that we could immerse into the rural lifestyle and the pains they go through. The first day during the introduction session people were searching for some paper or cloth on which they could sit to avoid mud on their clothes. But on the last day everyone was happy sitting in the mud. This signifies how well they could connect to the yatra and changed their perception.

No one would have ever imagined that one could go through the lifestyle that we had during the last 3 days where a group of 30 unknown people travelling together without any plan and without any comfort but making the most out of the yatra. It was indeed a great experience and a call for embracing a sustainable and minimalistic lifestyle.

I wish best for the Palle Srujana, Brigadier sir and the entire team for the memorable experience. The yatra will be cherished for a long time.

Best Wishes

Prasanna Kumar