

Impressions- 31 ChinnaShodhaYatra

Wed, 19
Jun,

I first heard about PalleSrujana through my father. Both of us are very interested in mild adventures like trekking. So, one day he gave me a magazine of PalleSrujana and told me to go through it. As I was going through, I found many innovations about which we city people cannot even think of, like the electric pole climber, a bike tube which cannot be punctured, and so on. I then went through the website and found the dates to the 31st ChinnaShodhaYatra. It was a 54 km walk for 3 days, from Velugodu to Thammadapalle, both in Kurnool district. I personally had a fear as to how I'm going to stay with complete strangers for 3 full days. But, as soon as I reached our meeting point, I was welcomed very warmly by Ganesham sir. We all had our introductions and after a bit of getting to know everyone, we immediately started off. Our very first fun task given by sir was to see if our generation are really enthusiastic in climbing the Telugu Ganga (Velugodu) Balancing reservoir as soon as sir gave us the permission. During this task, I got a chance to learn the real meaning of teamwork and helping one another. Without the person in front and another in the back, it became almost impossible to climb as the rocks and there were very slippery. That's when people started helping each other. It was during this climb that we all got to know each other well. After being on the top for about 10 minutes we all started our down march and then our walk. I got to learn a few things on day 1 like the importance of Kanuga (PongamiaPinnata) tree, how granite rocks are cut and smoothened, how turmeric trees are grown, and so on. We also got a wonderful chance to meet the local innovator Mr. S.

VenkataKrishnudugaru, who found naturally made organic insecticides (Tulasi and Perfect) and hear about his struggles that he faced during the time of his innovation and how he eventually overcame them. In the evening, we had a chance of stopping at Madhavaram, where we were able to interact with the village kids. It was a fun evening with the kids. We finally reached the ZilaParishad High School in Narayanapuram, which was our final stop for day 1. Sleeping outdoors with no fan or AC but just the wind continuously blowing was an entirely new experience for me. The next day, we had an interactive session with the school kids, and I personally had a chance to demonstrate the electric pole climber to the villagers during our interactive session. Day 2 was mostly walking from Narayanapuram to Ernapadu, and occasional interaction with the villagers. This day gave me a chance to overcome one of my fears, which was interacting with others (co-yatris). Akhila, Vamsi, Sindhu and Samyuktha were a few of the co-yatris who helped me overcome this fear. Once this fear was overcome, it was just a matter of time for knowing the other yatris, because by the end of the day I not only got to know everyone, but also made memories with each and every one of them. At the end of day 2, Ganesham sir gave us another fun task called "The Silent Walk". For 20 minutes, no one was allowed to talk to anyone and were asked to walk the rest of the way silently. This activity made me realize how noisy our minds are. It really was a tiring task calming my mind and focusing on one single thought at a time. To my surprise, almost everyone felt the same. Day 2 ended in a ground in Ernapadu. At the start of day 3, some of us got a chance to visit the Sivanandi temple, one of the nine Nandi temples. Day 3 gave me a chance to interact with a villager Muniamma. Speaking to her made me realize that people living in cities are in fact very much dependent on the villages. Whatever products we use in cities, the raw materials come from the villages. Even if all the facilities from the cities were not present, the people in villages can live happily, but not the other way around. In fact, without villages, there are no

cities. Day 3 successfully ended at a temple outside Thammadapalle where everyone shared their feelings about how they felt at the end of the walk. This walk has changed me in many ways. I'm eagerly looking forward to my next yatra.

Sincerely,
LikhilDondapaty