

Impressions of CSY 40 by Omkar

I have been a volunteer and involved in some or the other way with Pallesrujana since 2014. Since 2020, I started working on two of my new startups and slowly started getting disconnected with Pallesrujana. Sometimes, I get a twinge of guilt about having zero involvement. I decided that I must attend Shodha Yatra to stay connected. Every Yatra is a unique experience and as Brig says we fill our minds with new information and perspectives based on our ability to unlearn. I am constantly surprised by the amount of takeaways that the new Yatris have. I prefer talking to less number of people in a given time and connect deeply through conversations. This time I spoke to more people compared to usual. This is the first time I ever walked so long in the sun. I have walked in extreme cold weathers but not hot sun. With one shoe sole gone I could still manage to walk all the way. I had a painful and unique experience the first day. On the first day I swallowed naileru(a herb that apparently should be processed for consumption) and could not bare the pain for a long time. Venkat and Mahesh helped me and the pain subsided drastically by evening. It was a new and unique experience.



Photo of Nelleru

My focus this time was on the local delicacies :D

I spoke to the men and women about the food they eat and the process of preparation. I saw an excitement in them when they shared the process and it seemed like they were drooling over it just like me.



Photo taken after sharing their amazing recipes

Second day we woke up at the school and bathed under the hand pump there. It was cold in the morning but the ground water was warm and it's always fun to bathe that way. We ate the delicious breakfast in a nearby hotel that served dosa (small, thick and yummy unlike the big thin dosa we get in hyd, they are nice too:P), idly and bonda (made with dosa batter unlike the bonda in city that's made with maida) with mouth watering chutney and sambar. By the time I finished eating some children came early to school (there are these punctual sets of people everywhere). We played kabaddi since we had ample time for school to start. The children were much faster and sharper than me and they enjoyed tricking me and making me run behind them constantly. It was fun but that is where my shoe tore and I had to walk without a proper sole until the end of Yatra.



Photo of kabaddi with children

Akhila usually conducts the ignite workshops at schools during yatra and matching her energy is very difficult. I decided to conduct the ignite workshop and collect children's ideas. It was amazing to interact with children in person after a long time.



Photo: Discussing ideas with children

The villages that I visited before had a shortage of water but here I saw that they have water in abundance yet only paddy is grown. Vegetables and other essentials are brought from outside. When I asked a couple of people why they do not grow vegetables even for their own consumption, they responded that the monkeys destroy everything. Can this be resolved? Can people in the villages grow their own vegetables or can the vegetables be locally grown for a cluster so that people have access to fresh vegetables and fruits locally? Can the youth grow and supply in the local area and have an assured market?

Playing in water is always fun and in Yatra it enriches the overall experience. On the third day we bathed in the Penna river in the morning and for the first time ever I had a fish therapy in the water for free of cost :D.



Photo of us bathing in Penna river

It was fun to walk through the fields and play in water.



We plucked the paddy grass and ate its tender and sweet tip. I am going to do that every time I come across a paddy field now haha.



Photo: Relishing the tender tip of paddy grass

Overall it was a mix of painful and joyful experiences and fun to be around the young boys and girls in this Yatra :)