

CSY 51 - Surprises and Impressions

On the first day of the yatra, as we all gathered near the temple, we were asked to introduce ourselves and share our expectations for the trip. When it was my turn, I mentioned that my expectation was simply to explore the rural areas and to understand the unique concept of the Chinna Sodhi Yatra. Smilingly, Brigadier Sir said, “You have a lot of surprises coming up ... !!” And as he rightly said journey unfolded with a lot of surprises and insightful & thought-provoking lessons.

Surprise 1 :

On Day 2 , something amazing unfolded! I witnessed the moon set early in the morning, and as we spent the entire day under the sky, I got to see the sunrise, sun climbing high above, sunset and finally the moon rise. It struck me—this was the first time I had ever witnessed the sun and moon journey across the sky in a single day. It felt like an amazing special show put up by the nature!



Surprise 2 :

As we walked along the forest road, we noticed something unusual—a group of women sweeping and gathering dried leaves in the middle of the forest. Curious, we went up to them and asked, “Why are you sweeping these dusty leaves here?” Their answer surprised us. They said they were collecting the leaves to fill an entire lorry! Why? Because a film production company needed them for an action sequence in a movie. Who would have thought that a simple walk along the forest road would lead to such an interesting discovery about how movies are made?

Surprise 3 :

Over the 3 days, I had the opportunity to walk along with few of the active volunteers of Palle Srujana. I was truly amazed by the impactful work they’re doing apart from volunteering actively without complaining about time constraints, and yet remaining soo humble and down-to-earth.

1. Anji Reddy Sir:

On a lighter note – when I get sick, my first thought would always be, “Where’s the nearest pharmacy?” But if it were Anji Reddy Sir, he would probably start scanning the area nearby for magic plant that would cure illness. Pun apart, conversations with him made me reflect—maybe that’s how we should learn to co-exist with nature.

Driven by a desire to make a difference and by his belief in organic way of learning, Anji Reddy Sir runs an open school with a truly unique concept.

His approach is a reminder that sometimes, the simplest, most natural solutions are right in front of us—if only we take the time to look.

2. Naga Mohan Sir:

When we think of donation to orphan girls, we usually think of clothes, money, sanitary napkins



and so on. But to my surprise, as I was walking with Sir, he told me that he's the founder of the ExtraMile Foundation, which provides undergarments to orphan girls. I was completely blown away by this. As a woman, it never occurred to me that undergarments, such an essential thing

could also be donated. He's been doing this amazing work since 2017, and the support he's offered has grown from helping 100 girls in 2017 to 800 girls in 2024.

During our conversation, I realized that he's an amazing storyteller—witty and funny, almost like a mini Trivikram (Telugu film director & writer).

One of my favourite stories from his narration - [Duck or Eagle - You Decide](#) (Click on the link). It's really an interesting read.

3. Sai Kumar Sir:

As a passionate civil service aspirant and a gifted teacher, he manages to balance his demanding exam preparations while working alongside NGOs that support education, innovation, and tech training programs, even contributing to juvenile homes.

During our walk, we discussed the incredible work he's been doing in collaboration with the NGOs, and I couldn't help but wonder how someone could be so passionate and full of energy in their service to others.

Surprise 4 :

When we sat down for some time after a long walk, in an insightful talk by Anji Reddy Sir, he spoke about how the hen in poultry farms these days are kept for four long months under heavy bright



light with limited/no movement which is an unhealthy way for them to grow.

That got me thinking—don't we experience something similar at times in corporate jobs too? Employees at times work 12-14 hours a day, staring at screens with minimal movement to meet the deadlines, leading to various health issues. Surprisingly, unfortunately, I empathise (SAMVEDANA) with the hens sitting all day under the harsh light, their eyes burning

and body aching, as we humans also feel the same pain in our eyes and bodies as we sit and spend hours together in front of our computer screens.

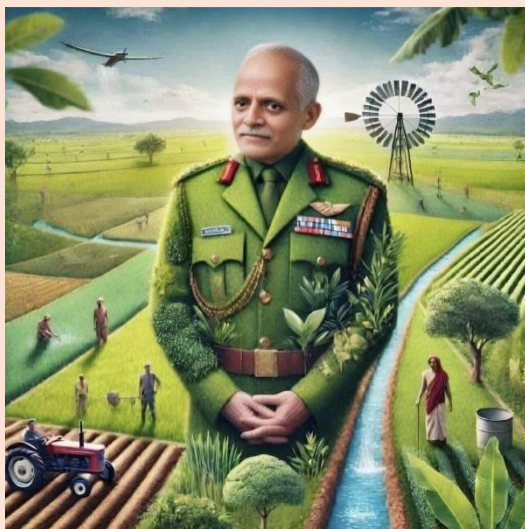
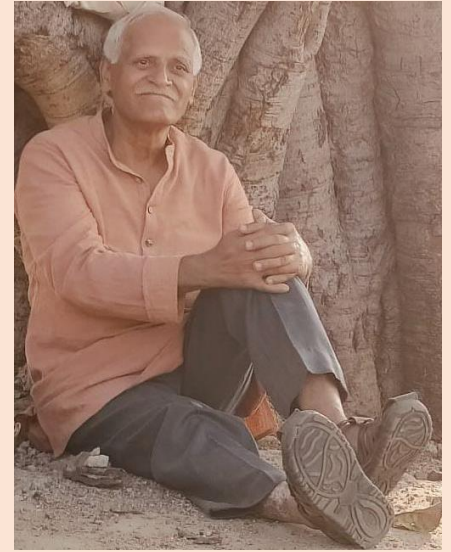
It's just two different beings—sharing a similar struggle in different worlds!

Surprise 5 :

Last but not the least, THE LEADER – Brigadier Ganesham Sir. I was amazed at how Ganesham Sir, a 76-year-old (young) man managed to wake up earlier than most of the yatris, despite walking the same distance as everyone else. What's even more surprising is that he never sat down even for a minute in between the walks—instead, he stood the entire time, passionately sharing stories of innovations and discussing various topics.

Thinking about what keeps him going despite the pain in his legs, I believe it's the impact he has witnessed through Palle Srujana's support and his deep passion for sharing knowledge that drives him to walk and stand for so long.

One-on-one conversations with Sir are the highlight of CSY—memorable, meaningful, and truly worth cherishing.



Sir, Thank you for choosing the unconventional path—"the road not taken"—and showing us that a volunteer-driven group (not an organisation), with no set objectives or targets, can still create such a profound impact.

I have had a lot more surprises and lot more learnings at CSY, but can't be put in words, it simply has to be experienced!!