

My Impressions of the 58th Chinna Shodha Yatra

A Journey of Learning, Endurance, Adjustment, Innovation and Self-Discovery

Participating in the 58th Chinna Shodha Yatra was one of the most memorable and meaningful learning experiences for me. It was not merely a three-day walk-through village; it became a journey of observation, interaction, endurance, adjustment, innovation and self-discovery.

The Yatra was conducted from 25–27 September 2026, covering approximately 40 km, starting from Madanapalle and passing through several villages before concluding at Diguvakorivari Palle. CSY 58 flier English the route offered opportunities to observe agricultural areas and interact with farmers, women, children and rural communities. CSY 58

For me, the most important realization was that knowledge is not confined to classrooms, laboratories or textbooks. Villages are also classrooms, and villagers can also be our teachers.

Learning Beyond the Classroom

Walking through villages and interacting directly with people helped me understand the importance of grassroots knowledge. Rural communities possess valuable knowledge developed through years of observation, experience, experimentation and adaptation.

The philosophy of Chinna Shodha Yatra itself encourages participants to learn from villages by walking through them and interacting directly with communities.

As an academician, this made me think deeply about how we educate our students. Theoretical knowledge is essential, but students also need opportunities to encounter real people, real problems and real-life situations.

A village problem can become a student project. A traditional practice can become a research question. A grassroots idea can inspire an innovation, and a community challenge can become an entrepreneurial opportunity.

IGNITE – Freedom to Think and Express

One of the important lessons I gained through the IGNITE programme during the Yatra was that everyone needs the freedom and opportunity to express their ideas.

Every individual thinks differently. When people are encouraged to speak, question, observe and share their thoughts without hesitation, we may discover ideas that would otherwise remain hidden.

I realized that innovation begins with thinking, but innovation can be identified only when people are given an opportunity to express what they think.

This is particularly relevant to education. As teachers, instead of expecting every student to think in the same way, we should create an environment where students feel free to question, imagine, experiment and express their ideas. Somewhere among those ideas may be a solution to a real problem.

Farmers – Innovators in Their Own Way

My interactions with farmers were particularly valuable. Farming requires continuous decision-making, experimentation and adaptation to changing conditions.

I understood that innovation does not always have to be technologically complex. Sometimes a simple solution created to address a genuine local problem can have considerable value.

The earlier Yatra impression similarly observes that grassroots innovations may appear technically simple, but their significance lies in identifying and solving a genuine rural problem.

Agriculture, Crop Losses and Farmers Thinking of Leaving Villages

One of the concerns shared during our interactions was the difficulty farmers face in obtaining adequate returns from agriculture.

Some farmers expressed reduced interest in cultivating crops such as tomato and ragi because of crop damage associated with monkeys and wild pigs, along with concerns about insufficient economic returns. Some even spoke about the possibility of moving towards cities in search of better livelihood opportunities.

This interaction made me understand that agriculture is not simply about growing a crop. Farmers have to deal with cultivation costs, labour, crop protection, market uncertainty and the risk of inadequate returns.

These are important problems that universities can take up through research, engineering solutions, agricultural innovation, entrepreneurship and community engagement.

Flower Plucking – A Problem Waiting for a Solution

Another practical problem that caught my attention was the difficulty involved in flower plucking.

Flower harvesting requires significant manual effort and careful handling. At the same time, farmers discussed concerns about high investment and comparatively low or uncertain returns.

This immediately raised a question in my mind:

Can our students develop a simple, affordable and farmer-friendly tool or mechanism to make flower plucking easier?

Such a problem could become an excellent interdisciplinary project involving engineering design, agriculture, innovation and entrepreneurship.

It also taught me that agricultural innovation should not focus only on increasing production. We should also think about reducing cultivation costs, reducing labour requirements, adding value and improving farmers' returns.

Rural Women and the Issues They Shared

Another meaningful part of the Yatra was our interaction with rural women. Their discussions made me realize that rural innovation must address not only agriculture and infrastructure but also women's health, dignity and everyday challenges.

One issue discussed was the disposal of used menstrual pads. This highlighted the need to think about practical, safe and environmentally responsible approaches to menstrual-waste management in rural areas.

Women also discussed their experiences concerning older practices and newer technologies related to childbirth and maternal care. These conversations helped me understand how practices have changed between generations and the importance of awareness and access to appropriate healthcare.

Listening directly to women reinforced an important lesson: before attempting to design a solution for a community, we must first listen to the people who experience the problem.

Water Problems – Yet Happiness in What They Have

One observation that touched me personally was the attitude of villagers towards life.

Even though water-related difficulties were discussed in some villages, I observed people who appeared happy and welcoming with what they had.

That attitude impressed me deeply.

In our everyday lives, we sometimes concentrate on what we do not have. The villagers reminded me of the importance of appreciating what is available, adapting to circumstances and finding happiness despite limitations.

It was one of the simplest but strongest lessons I carried back from the Yatra.

The Kindness and Hospitality of Villagers

Another beautiful experience was the hospitality of the villagers.

I felt that people in the villages were extremely kind and welcoming. Even though we were outsiders visiting their communities, they received us warmly and made us feel comfortable.

The experience reminded me that human relationships and hospitality do not depend upon material facilities. The willingness to welcome someone, speak openly with them and treat them with warmth can make a stranger feel like part of a family.

That sense of human connection was one of the most memorable aspects of the Yatra for me.

Learning the Stories of Grassroots Innovators

I particularly enjoyed hearing the stories of innovators during the journey.

Understanding how ordinary people identified problems, experimented with ideas, experienced failures and eventually developed useful solutions was inspiring.

The earlier Yatra impression similarly documents the story of a grassroots innovator who developed a mulberry-shoot harvester and later employed other people

These stories reinforced my belief that innovation does not depend only on degrees, sophisticated laboratories or large investments. It often begins when someone observes a problem carefully and decides to do something about it.

Learning About Plants – A Highlight of the Yatra

Another highlight for me was the explanation given by Anji Reddy Sir regarding different plants and their importance.

Walking through nature while understanding the significance and uses of plants transformed an ordinary walk into a learning experience. Instead of simply seeing vegetation around us, we began to observe it with curiosity and understand its value.

For me, this was another example of education beyond walls—learning directly from the environment rather than only reading about it in books.

Food and Support During the Journey

I also sincerely appreciated the food arrangements and support provided by Munni Raju Sir during the Yatra. The food facility was excellent and contributed significantly to our comfort during such a physically demanding journey.

When people are walking long distances and adjusting to unfamiliar conditions, seemingly simple things such as food, coordination and care become extremely important. I personally enjoyed and appreciated the hospitality and arrangements throughout the journey.

A Walk That Changed Me

Apart from everything I learned from the villages, walking itself became one of my greatest personal lessons. Before this Yatra, I had never walked so many kilometres continuously. Initially, I wondered whether I would be able to complete such a long journey.

As the kilometres increased, there was tiredness and physical discomfort, but there was also satisfaction in continuing. The experience made me understand that sometimes we discover our own strength only when we accept a challenge. Every meaningful achievement may involve some difficulty and pain. Instead of stopping because something becomes difficult, we sometimes have to move through that difficult phase to experience the result.

The Silent Moon Walk – A Memory I Will Carry

One of the most beautiful and memorable moments of the entire Yatra for me was the silent moon walk.

Walking quietly under the moonlight, away from our usual noise and routine, gave me time to think and reflect.

During that walk, I understood something personally meaningful:

For every challenge, there may be some pain. But patience and perseverance are often necessary to reach a good result.

The moon walk was therefore not simply another part of the distance we covered. For me, it became a moment of silence, reflection and self-understanding.

Learning to Adjust in Any Situation

The Yatra also taught me one of life's most practical lessons—adjustment and adaptability.

Everything during such a journey cannot happen according to our personal preferences or everyday routine. We have to walk together, manage with available facilities, interact with different people and adapt ourselves to changing circumstances.

I learned that:

Instead of always expecting situations to adjust according to us, sometimes we have to learn to adjust ourselves according to the situation.

This lesson applies not only to a Yatra but also to our personal, professional and academic lives.

Problems I Want to Take Back to the University

The Yatra made me realize that we do not always need to search far away for research problems. Meaningful problems are already present in our communities.

Problem/Observation from the Yatra	Possible Academic/Innovation Opportunity
Menstrual pad disposal	Safe and environmentally responsible menstrual-waste management
Women's concerns related to maternal care	Awareness and appropriate rural healthcare-support initiatives

Difficulty in flower plucking	Affordable flower-plucking tools/mechanisms
High investment and low returns in flower cultivation	Cost reduction, value addition and market-linkage studies
Crop damage from monkeys and wild pigs	Farmer-friendly crop-protection approaches
Poor/uncertain agricultural returns	Value addition, entrepreneurship and improved market linkages
Water-related difficulties	Water conservation and rural water-management projects
Grassroots innovations	Documentation, validation and student-led improvement
Local plant knowledge	Biodiversity documentation and environmental awareness
Rural livelihood challenges	Social and rural entrepreneurship opportunities

What I Bring Back to My Students

As a teacher, perhaps the greatest impact of the Yatra is the question it has left with me:

How can I bring these experiences back to my students?

I want students to understand that projects should not begin only by searching online for a project title.

They should go into communities, observe people, listen to their problems, ask questions and understand why the problem exists.

The earlier Yatra impression describes how a teacher encouraged students to participate and reflects on the difference between merely teaching students and inspiring them to take action. Let Me Tell You a Story about C...

I strongly connected with that thought.

As educators, our responsibility should be to create an environment where students have:

Freedom to Think → Freedom to Express → Opportunity to Observe → Ability to Identify Problems → Support to Innovate → Opportunity to Create Impact

My Final Reflection

When I began the 58th Chinna Shodha Yatra, I thought I was going to walk through villages and learn about rural life.

By the end, I realized that the Yatra had also taught me about myself.

I learned from farmers, rural women, innovators, plants and villages.

I understood problems related to agriculture, women's needs, water, livelihoods and sustainability.

I learned that people can have limited resources and still possess happiness, generosity and kindness.

I learned that everyone should have the freedom to think and express their ideas because that is where innovation can begin.

I learned to walk farther than I thought I could.

I learned to adjust when situations were different from my comfort zone.

And during the silent moon walk, I learned the importance of patience, endurance and reflection.

The previous Yatra impression concludes that some experiences cannot be completely captured in words; they have to be walked, heard and felt. Let Me Tell You a Story about C... After completing this Yatra, I understand that message much more clearly.

For me, the 58th Chinna Shodha Yatra was not merely a journey of approximately 40 kilometres. It was a journey from classroom learning to community learning, from comfort to adjustment, from observation to innovation, from physical difficulty to endurance, and from seeing problems to seeing possibilities.

“The Yatra taught me to observe before judging, listen before suggesting, think freely before innovating, adjust before complaining, and continue walking even when the journey becomes difficult. Every village has knowledge, every person has something to express, and every problem can become an opportunity to create meaningful change.”

— Dr. M. Durga

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