

My Impressions of the Three-Day CSY – 57 Yatra

I came to know about the CSY Yatra through my mentor B. Varalakshmi Ma'am. At first, I was interested mainly because I thought it would be a chance to explore new villages and experience something different. At that time, I did not know that this decision would become such a meaningful experience for me.

Day 1 – Stepping Out of My Comfort Zone

On the first day, we were among the last people to arrive. By then, everyone had already shared their names and introduced themselves. We also introduced ourselves, took a group photograph, and started our Yatra.

The weather was pleasant, and we started walking through the villages. After walking for a few kilometres, a person on a scooter stopped and asked us what we were doing. For me, this was a small but important moment because it was my first time speaking to an unknown person and explaining who we were, why we had come, and what we were doing. I generally feel nervous about public speaking and starting conversations with strangers, so this was already pushing me outside my comfort zone.

Later, we visited a radio station that is run by women. It was my first time visiting a radio station, and it was a completely new experience for me. I also got an opportunity to listen to some stories and understand the kind of work happening there.

During lunch, I met Modha Shiva Garu and spoke with him for a few minutes while having lunch. He shared how he had observed the problems faced by weavers and tried to solve one of those problems by developing a machine that could reduce the physical effort involved in lifting the load. His story made me realise that innovation does not always begin in a laboratory. Sometimes, it begins by simply observing a problem around us and trying to find a practical solution.

The biggest challenge for me on the first day was actually sharing my impressions. Everyone was sharing their observations, but I did not know what I should say. Since this was my first Yatra, I felt that my experiences were too simple compared with what others were saying.

But I slowly realised that everyone has a different perspective. **There is no single correct way to observe a Yatra.**

I also met Anjireddy sir, on the first day. He showed us different plants and explained how some plants that we usually consider weeds can actually be useful and edible. It made me realise how little I sometimes know about the things around me. **Although many of us had met for the first time, by the end of the day they did not feel completely like strangers anymore.**

Day 2 – Experiencing Village Life

The second day gave me experiences that were very different from my normal routine.

We woke up early and had to get ready in a village environment. One experience that particularly stayed with me was using a washroom and taking a bath in a stranger's house. Since there were many of us, there were practical difficulties with washrooms and water and some nearby villagers helped us.

I kept thinking about it: In today's world, how many people would allow complete strangers to use their facilities and help them so naturally? This made me appreciate the hospitality and sense of community that I experienced in the village.

During the day, we continued walking and observing our surroundings. We visited fields, and for the first time I tried plucking weeds. I was not very good at it, but actually doing it gave me a small understanding of agricultural work rather than just seeing it from a distance.

I also saw a clear and clean well. These may seem like small observations, but they made me pay more attention to the relationship between people, nature and village life.

I also met Pandu Garu. He was trying to make useful things from waste plastic. Despite facing difficulties and not receiving the support he expected, he continued working with his own resources. Even when people were not contributing waste plastic to him, he continued trying to create something useful for society.

His determination made me think about how difficult it can be for people who try to solve problems that others may not immediately understand or support.

The second day made me realise that the Yatra was not simply about walking from one place to another. It was about meeting people, listening to their stories and understanding the problems they see in their surroundings.

Day 3 – A Different Perspective

For me, the third day was the most beautiful and meaningful part of the Yatra.

I saw a large lake and walked several kilometres. I also had the opportunity to walk and talk with Anjireddy Garu again. Our conversations were not only about the places we were visiting. They also made me think about life, our choices and what it means to lead a good life.

Throughout the Yatra, I met people from different backgrounds. I also met a Praveen Garu who had developed an idea related to cutting mulberry trees. Their stories showed me one common quality: persistence.

What affected me most was that many of these people were not doing these things only for themselves. They had observed a problem affecting other people or society and tried to find a solution. Even when they faced difficulties, lack of support or discouragement, they continued their efforts.

This changed my understanding of innovation.

Innovation is not only about advanced technology, laboratories or creating something completely new. It can also mean observing a real problem, understanding it deeply and consistently working towards a practical solution.

What I Learned

The three days taught me many things that I could not have learned in the same way inside a classroom.

The first thing I learned was **communication**. Initially, I was uncomfortable speaking to unknown people and sharing my thoughts. Slowly, I started interacting with villagers and other participants. I still have a lot to improve, but the Yatra gave me an opportunity to take the first step.

The second thing I learned was **observation**. The plants shown by Anjireddy sir, the work in the fields, the radio station, the stories of different innovators and the everyday life of villagers all taught me that there is a lot to learn if we simply pay attention.

The third thing I learned was **persistence**. The people we met faced many difficulties, but they continued working on their ideas. Their determination made a strong impression on me.

I also learned about **people and relationships**. On the first day, almost everyone was a stranger to me. But after spending three days together, I became familiar with many people and started feeling comfortable with them. People from different backgrounds can connect when they share experiences and are willing to communicate.

My Reflection

This was my first Yatra, so I do not know whether I participated perfectly or contributed as much as I could have. But I am glad that I have participated in this Yatra.

If I had stayed back, I would have missed a completely new experience.

I entered the CSY Yatra thinking that it would mainly be an opportunity to explore new villages and have a different experience. I came back with much more than that — new experiences, new connections, new questions and a different perspective.

For my next Yatra, I want to participate more confidently, communicate better, understand people more deeply and contribute in a more mature and meaningful way. I especially want to become more comfortable communicating with villagers and other participants.

For me, the CSY Yatra was not just a three-day journey through villages. It was a journey that helped me take a few steps outside my comfort zone and look at **people, innovation, society and life from a different perspective.**