
Children and Youth Resource Centre (CYRC), Timbaktu Collective

Site visit Report by [Balaji](#)

Background

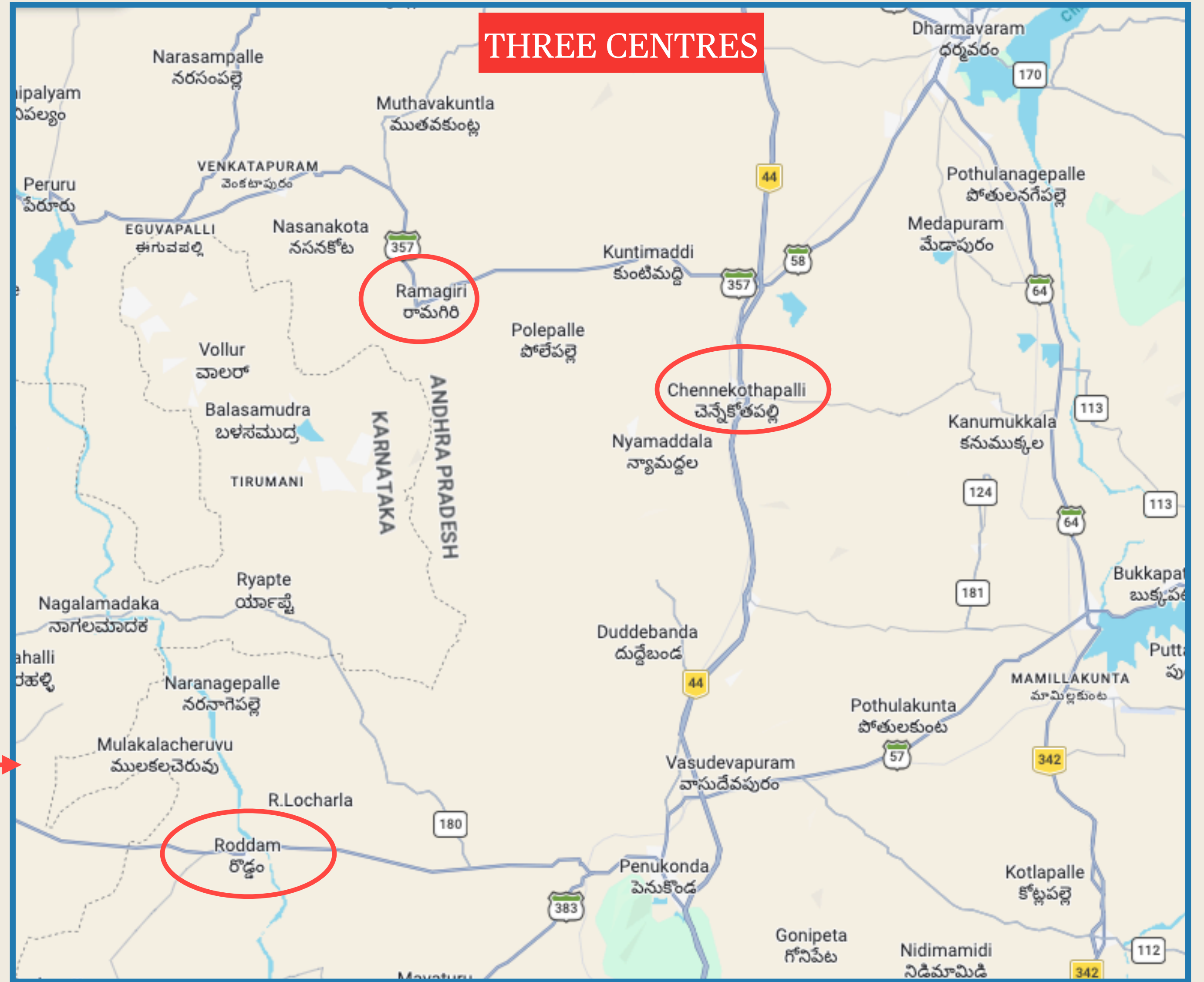
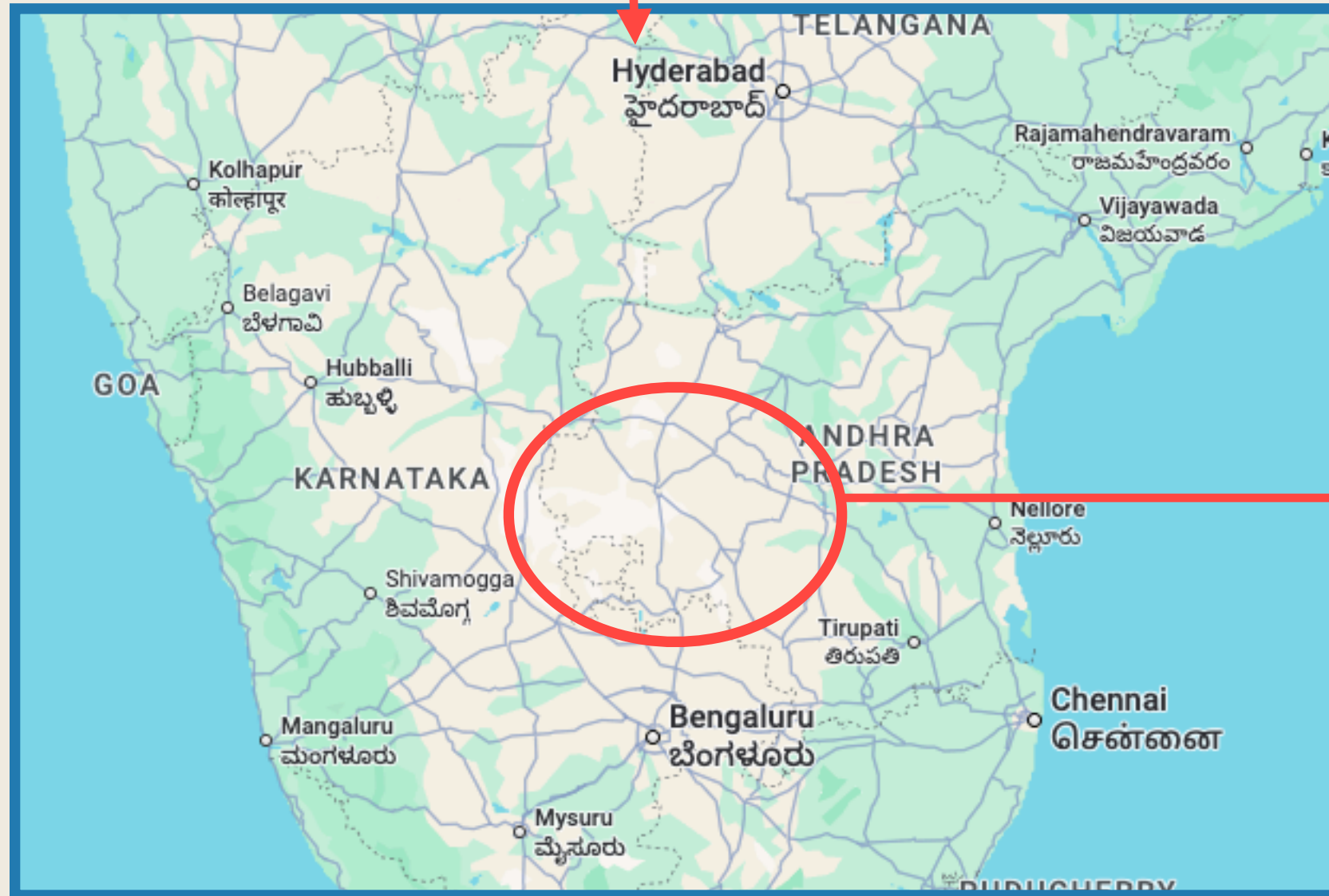
The Children and Youth Resource Centres (CYRC) were started by the Timbaktu Collective as a part of their engagement with children and young adults, aptly named as Chiguru, which means tender leaf in Telugu. The other initiatives under the Chiguru program are Prakruti Badi School, Children and youth clubs-also called as Mogga, and Chinnari Nestham magazine. Asha Bangalore has been supporting CYRC since 2009.

Along with other Asha Chapters, we have supported other initiatives under Chiguru in the past. The project is located in the Chennekothapalli (C.K. Palli) village in the Sri Satya Sai District (erstwhile Ananthapur district) in Andhra Pradesh, about 170 Kms from Bengaluru city. Timbaktu has established three CYRC centres at C. K. Palli, Ramagiri, and Roddam in the same district. You can view the detailed map on the next page. More about the project in the Timbaktu Collective website here - <https://timbaktu.org/chiguru/>

I visited CYRC on June 25, 2026 on a day-trip from Bengaluru.

To understand CYRC, it is important to understand the bigger role of Timbaktu and their work in the villages in the district. Started by Mary and C.K. Ganguly aka Bablu in 1990, Timbaktu is engaged in areas of organic farming, livelihood support, inclusion of marginalised, women empowerment, regeneration of natural resources, and children rights among others. They promote self-managed co-operative organisation to execute projects in these areas. They celebrated their 35th anniversary in November 2025.

The CYRC is an initiative under the Chiguru Program which was started to work in the areas of child rights, alternative education, and engagement with youth. The centres were established in consultation with the co-operatives or women's groups of the respective villages. In addition to CYRC, the Chiguru program also includes a primary school, Prakruti Badi and Mogga - a village-level outreach initiative to bring children together.



The C.K. Palli Centre

I visited Timbaktu on a day trip on June 25, 2026. I took the bus towards Ananthapur from the KSRTC Majestic Bus stand in Bangalore. It takes about 3.5 hours to reach C.K.Palli and was taking to their project office in their vehicle. After a sumptuous breakfast, we proceeded to the C.K. Palli centre for a quick review of their work. I was received by Kalpana, Pothuliah, Damodar, Thippeswamy, Poornima, Ramesh, Sriramulu, Abdullah, and Yamini. We had discussions about their work, the activities, challenges, and the plans ahead.

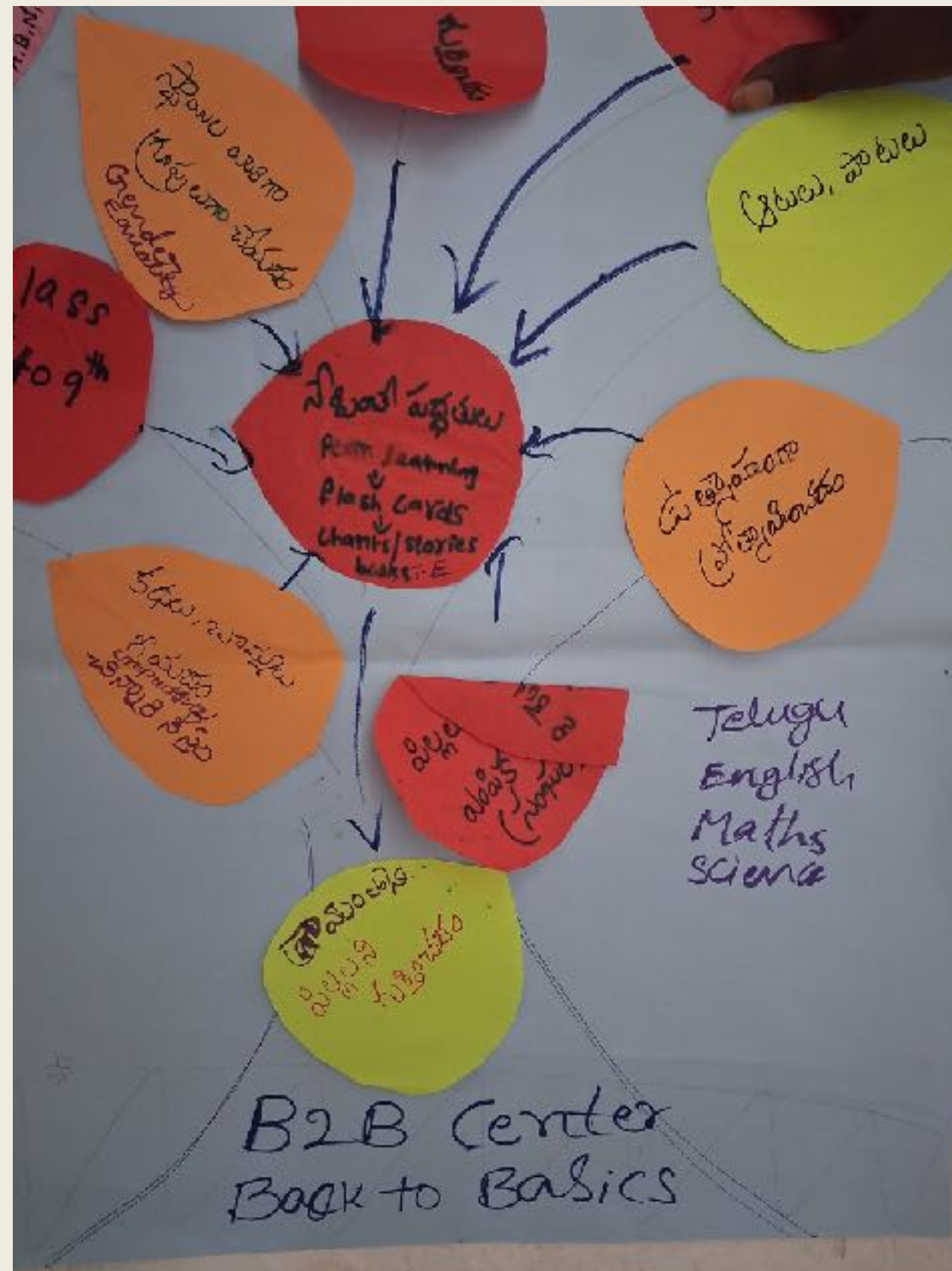
The major activities of the centre includes 1. Chinnari Nestam Magazine, 2. Mogga project or the student/youth clubs, 3. Organising events, 4. Academic Support for the students and 5. Back to Basics (B2B) program.

Importantly, the centre serves as an after school centre for students and equipped with a library, a science centre for projects, regular arts and crafts activity, sports facilities (organised in a group close-by). Each of the activity is customised to the requirements of specific students and small groups (also called Sanghas under Mogga project).

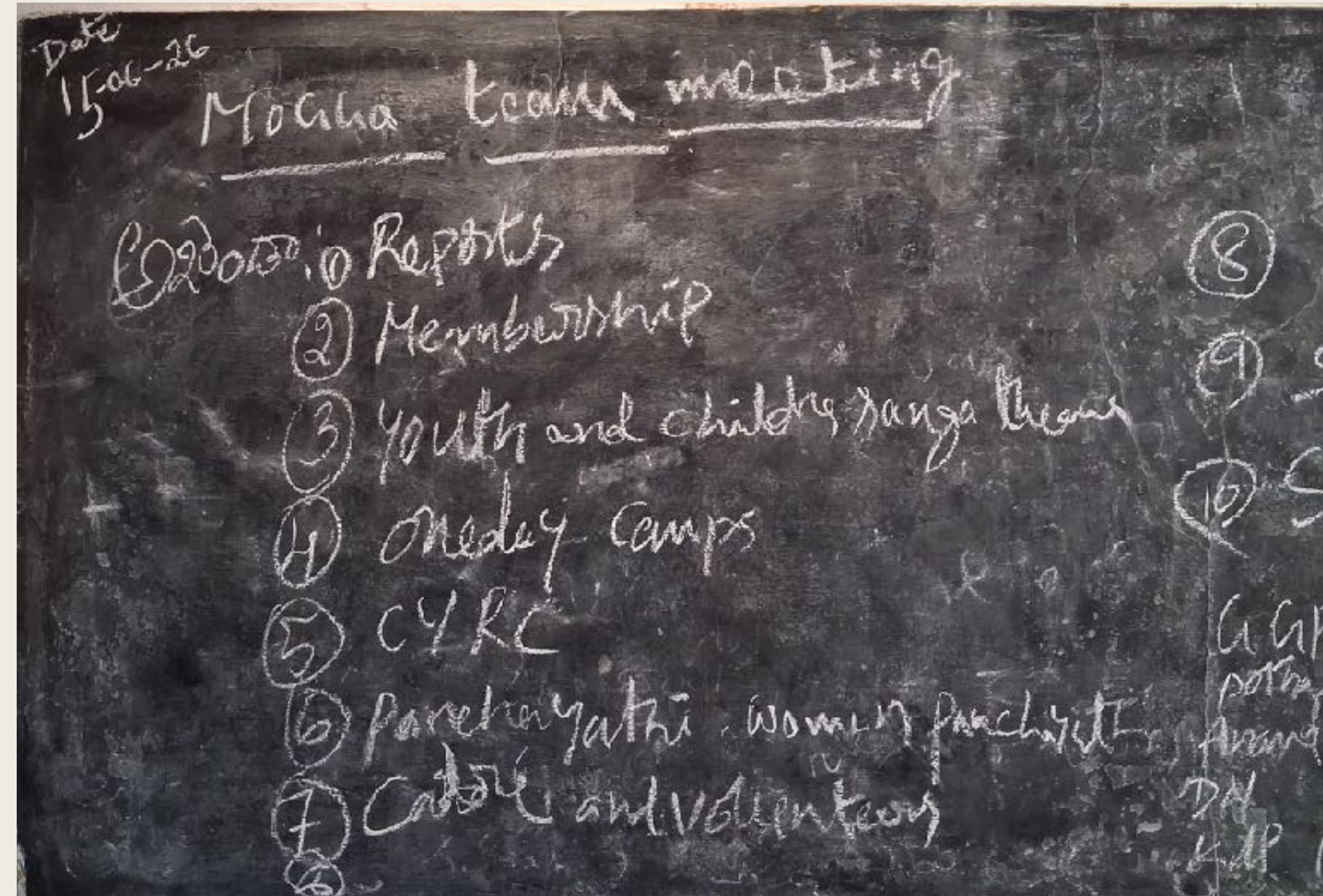
The centre previously housed the Prakruti Badi or the nature school. A recent challenge for the centre was in terms of access as the new railway bridge resulted in closure of railway gate and increasing the distance to the village.



Glimpses from C.K. Palli Centre



An overview of the Back to Basics program. It is focused on helping students who are having difficulties in learning at primary school level.



The Mogga project is basically a student club. Each club is called Sangha and have regular meeting at village level. There are over 142 Sanghas at children level and 40 Sanghas at youth level. The regular engagement is through 20 volunteers (who are paid honorarium) and cadres from CYRC. They form the backbone of CYRC operations and programs are designed and develop through them. The above picture shows the agenda of one such meeting of the volunteers.



Art and craft forms an integral part of CYRC. Ms. Alivelamma who has been part of CYRC has now retired due to health issues. But the centres continue her good work.

Glimpses from C.K. Palli Centre



Campaign against consanguineous marriages. Presence of Sangas help in spreading awareness better.



Gardening within the CYRC campus. Children are also given saplings to plant in their neighbourhood and taught to maintain the plants.



I was invited to plant a tree outside the campus. I was initially hesitant as I will not be able to take care of the tree. However, one of the students (planting along with me) assured me that he will take care of the plant. This ensures that I continue visiting the CYRC to check on the plants.



Photo at CK Palli Centre. Standing from L to R: Damodaram, Abdullah, Kalpana, Balaji, Vibha, Poornima, Pothuliah, Kamini, Thippeswamy, Ramesh.



Roddam Centre

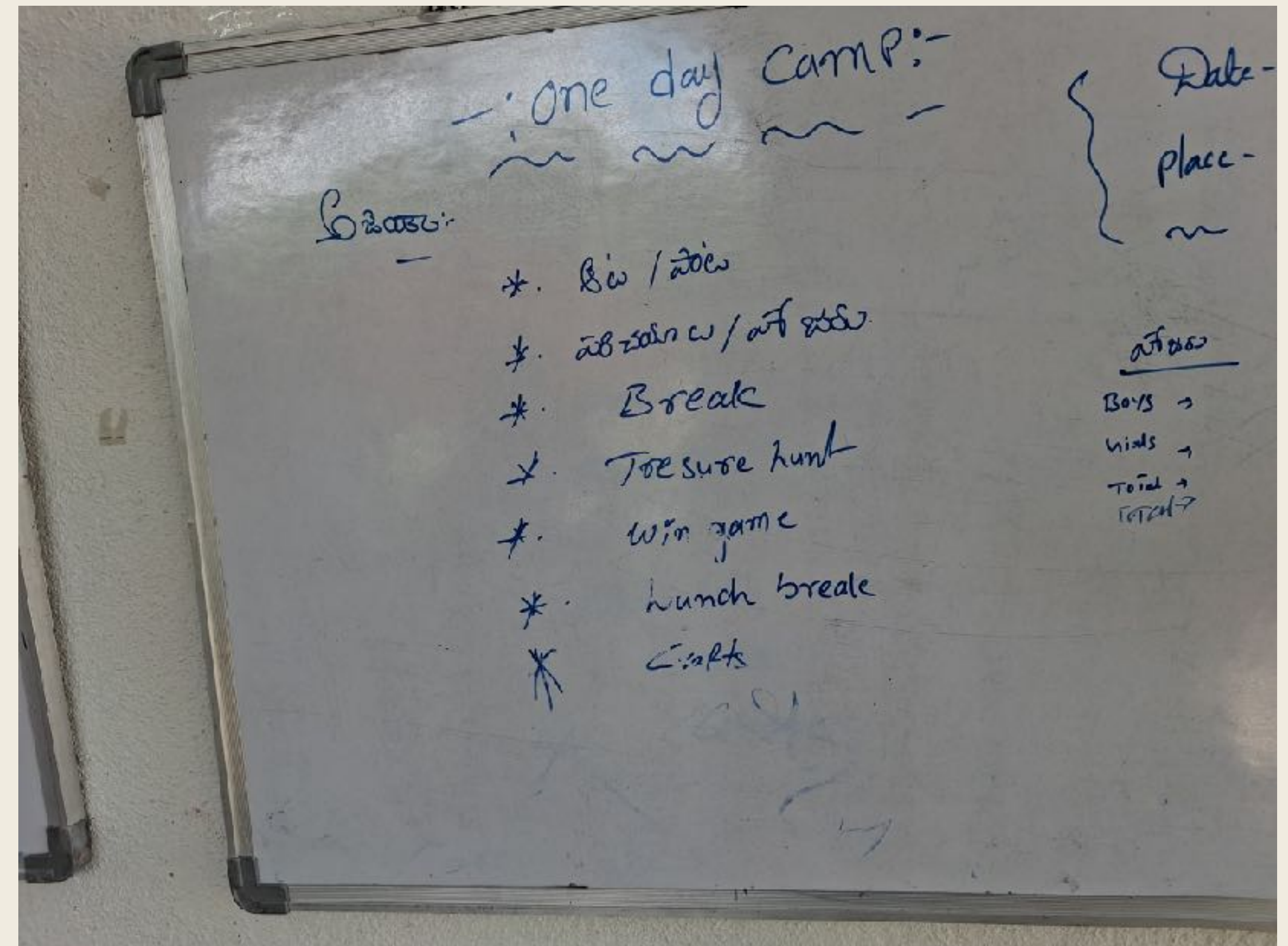
I was then taken to the Roddam Centre, where we also had our lunch. The centre was located in the same campus where the women self-help group is also housed. It was on the suggestion of the SHG that the centre came into force. Children usually visit the centre during evening, holidays, and whenever their parents attend the meeting in the campus. Roddam is located about 40 Kilometres from CK Palli and functions mostly on its own with weekly visits from the staff members at CK Palli.

Roddam Centre (Cont.)

There are dedicated cadres in the centres. Ramanna joined Timbaktu as a youth member and has been with CYRC for more than two decades. He drives the theatre program in the CYRC across all centres. His wife works for one of the credit co-operatives under Timbaktu and has two daughters.

Narasimhamurthy joined the B2B program in 2012. He had earlier worked as a teacher for eight years. He hails from a village close to Penukonda. The other staff members include Gangappa, Nandini, and Bharati. They all hail from the villages around Penukonda.

Most of the activities are scheduled around weekends, festivals, and school holidays. Events like Independence Day, birthday of B.R. Ambedkar, and other local festivals helps in bonding among the children as well as the parents. Mobile CYRC, in the past, was useful in reaching out to villages beyond Roddam. It also helped the CYRC to maintain relationship with the local government schools. There are no plans to start them again.



One-day camps are very popular among students and attracts many students. Agenda from a recent event is shown above.



Photo at Roddham Centre. Standing from L to R: Gangappa, Yamini, Abdullah, Balaji, Poornima, Nandini, Vibha, Mounika, Ramanna, Narasimha Murthy.

Observations

Asha Bangalore has been supporting CYRC since 2009. Over the years, our support for the project has seen ups and downs. However, being associated with the project is a journey in itself and I strongly recommend continuing the journey. During my last site visit, I wrote on why an institution like CYRC needs regular support. Institutions like CYRC doesn't produce instant success stories. Over time, it is these institutions that shape the society around them. Many of the students who have been part of the CYRC in the past are now active members of the credit co-operatives, farming co-operatives, and other institutions of Timbaktu. I have observed similar changes through Thulir, a project that I have been involved for almost two decades now. The presence of an institution is only the first step towards social change.

Presently, our support is limited to the maintenance of the three centres, and salaries of three of their staff members. I met all the three members and are instrumental in supporting the objectives of the program. The support from Asha is only a small compared to the requirements of their education program (Chiguru) and yet significant.

I had long conversations through the drive to Roddam and back with the staff of CYRC* - Vibha, Poornima, Yamini, and Abdullah. It gave me a good understanding of their work, routines, challenges and others. While most of the work looks routine and standardised, there is enough room for innovative programs. It must be noted that they are keen on working on some of the ideas. Later this year, they also plan to visit Thulir and few other institutions to share ideas and learn about their experiences. In my opinion, CYRC has a healthy mix of experienced and youthful staff.

The flexibility in program helps them to address the issues that requires most attention - from school tuition to career guidance. It was urged that the team can improve their documentation of routine work in addition to the Chennari Nestam magazine. There are challenges in attracting students regularly. The numbers sway from single digits to large gathering depending upon the nature of the activity. I am encouraged by the team willing to explore new ideas to attract students, encourage sports and other cultural activities in the centre.

*Disclosure: Three out of the four mentioned are alumnus of Azim Premji University, to which I also belong to. None of them are my classmates and do not influence my opinions.



Thank You
