

# **SHODHYATRA GUIDELINES**

In order to reach out to the creative people at the grassroots and connect with them, a learning walk is organised by SRISTI (Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Institutions, a voluntary organisation located in Ahmedabad, India). Twice a year, Shodhyatras take place in rural areas in different geographical locations of the country, with support from the Honey Bee Network. The aim of this Shodhyatra is to felicitate local grassroots innovators, traditional knowledge holders, students with innovative ideas and people with a significant contribution to society in conserving bio-diversity, etc. at their door steps, in front of their community so that inspiration may be drawn by others. The marching group of Shodhyatris consists of scientists, innovators, villagers, students and professors who walk about 100 kilometres over a period of six to seven days, to convey the message of the Network. Biodiversity and idea competitions are organised among children, while food formulation contests are organised among women in some of the villages (particularly with a focus on food formulations in which at least one less known or forgotten plant produce has been used).

The Shodhyatra is a journey in search of knowledge, creativity and innovations at the grassroots. It is an attempt to reach out to the remotest part of the country with a firm belief that hardship and the challenges of natural surroundings are the prime motivators of creativity and innovation. The Shodhyatra aims at unearthing such traditional knowledge and grassroots innovations that have not only simplified the lives of men, women and farm labourers but have also significantly contributed towards the conservation of bio-diversity. It is a journey of mutual sharing of knowledge.

The following activities are undertaken during the Shodhyatra:

1. Felicitation of local innovators and traditional knowledge holders.
2. Organising traditional food formulation
3. Competitions, biodiversity competitions to promote local biodiversity conservation and generate awareness about the same.
4. Knowing and understanding local issues and problems of villagers by conducting village meetings.
5. Sharing open source information available with SRISTI which may be of use to the local people.
6. Identification of centenarians, enterprising women and children, artisans, rural researchers and people contributing to the preservation of natural resources.
7. Preparing registers of local knowledge and local plant diversities.
8. Generating awareness about preservation of local species and local biodiversity.
9. Promoting low cost and sustainable agricultural technologies.

## **GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS**

## **1. Identity Card**

It is compulsory for every participant to carry the ID card during the whole journey and an identity proof such as Voter ID, Driving License, Passport, etc. They should also carry an extra passport size photograph with them.

For registration, for joining the Shodhyatra, a soft copy of the passport size photo and a soft copy of the identity document are required to be sent with the Registration Form. If registration is by postal mail, a hard copy of the identity document and 3 copies of the passport size photos are required.

## **2. Temperature**

The minimum temperature during the day is expected to be as high as 41-42 degree C.

## **3. Lodging**

Basic lodging facilities will be arranged in village primary schools or community halls and all participants are expected to bring their own mats or bedding. The place may not have electric supply and possibly not have enough windows and doors as well. The yatris should be mentally prepared to clean the place themselves and share the available space. In case of non-availability of sufficient rooms, yatris may also have to sleep in the corridors; ladies and gents may have to share the available room/hall. At some places, toilets may also not be available.

## **4. Basic necessities**

Every shodhyatri should carry articles for their daily use viz. towel, toothbrush, soap, and utensils like plate, cup, glass, spoon etc. should also be brought along. No disposable glass or plates will be provided. The shodhyatris should also take with them a water bottle, camera, notebook, pen, a rope to hang their wet clothes, torch, matchbox, candles etc. Any personal medicines and dry food items may also be brought. The shodhyatris are especially requested to carry minimum possible luggage and carry their belongings in durable bags. Participants should take care of their belongings. Kindly carry Glucose or ORS too. Please also note that damage or loss of baggage will not be our responsibility. Please carry your own bedding, mat etc.

## **5. Food**

Breakfast, tea, lunch and dinner will be prepared by local villagers and will be basic and vegetarian. However, if food is not available due to any unforeseen situation, shodhyatris must be mentally prepared to cook food for themselves.

## **6. Expenses during the journey**

The shodhyatris have to bear all other expenses (travel, accommodation, food) incurred before and after the yatra. Any pick up or drop requested to be arranged by SRISTI (or any other requirement requested) will be charged as per actual and shared equally by the

yatris availing the service. All payments made during the yatra should be made in cash. SRISTI will not arrange any to and fro tickets from the yatri's home to the destination.

## **7. Points to note**

- Participants should be physically fit and mentally prepared to walk (18-20) km daily (100km approx. in total) visiting villages in mainly flat terrain. If any person facing health related issue we suggest not join the yatra this time. In case, if a meeting or two extends longer in the villages, or if there is a need to move onto a night halt, the yatra may continue late into the night. An early morning start to the yatra may also be possible, which will be informed the evening before.
- As the luggage of the shodhyatris will be carried on a tractor trolley or a similar vehicle, it is recommended for each to carry one bag only during the days' walks. No porter facility will be available and so each shodhyatri will have to load (in the morning before the yatra) and unload (at the night halt place in the evening) his luggage every day. No person will be allowed to travel on the accompanying vehicle except in an emergency or upon requirement. If there are any doubts about your physical fitness, we advise you not to join the Shodhyatra.
- It is expected of the shodhyatris not to walk with their friends or people known to them. This yatra gives an opportunity for all to interact and mingle with unknown people from different walks of life so one should make proper use of this opportunity. It will be a pleasure to walk with new friends, to talk to them and to learn with them and share ideas. Please do not come with friends in a picnic mood.
- All shodhyatris are expected not to pollute the environment by throwing away empty wrappers of wafers, chocolates, etc. and disposable cups, plates, water bottles or leftover food on the path, in villages, forests or elsewhere and are advised against such consumption during the yatra to avoid setting any precedent on consumption behavior in the remote places we visit. Similarly, the lunch place and overnight stay place should be left clean.
- To avoid any problems, like missing the route, mischief by unknown people, the shodhyatris should try to walk together as a single group especially during evenings. All shodhyatris should note down mobile/telephone number of the Shodhyatra coordinators and local volunteers for use in case of an emergency.
- It is mandatory for the shodhyatris to take prior permission from local people or farmers before plucking any flowers, branches, roots, fruits, barks etc. from anywhere. Some places may be sacred and any such activity at such sacred groves is strictly prohibited. Also, rare species of the plants are precious to sustain local biodiversity, so things must not be plucked or removed for either study or collection or out of curiosity.
- During the yatra, all participants are expected to carry some literature for dissemination (to be given by SRISTI) in their bags for distribution to the villagers.
- All shodhyatris are expected to follow the instructions and guidelines of the organizers or any other specifics given by local volunteers. Anyone found guilty of not maintaining the decorum and violating the rules will be sent back immediately.

- The whole yatra is a voluntary effort on a large scale. All shodhyatris are expected to consider this and avoid treating the yatra as an organised tour / trek. While SRISTI and its coordinators will take the larger responsibility of local coordination, all shodhyatris are expected to actively participate and contribute to the idea of the yatra. Shodhyatris will be allocated different responsibilities and will have to actively ensure that they are delivering on their responsibilities.

**8. Consumption of tobacco, cigarette, alcohol/local toddy and any such item is strictly prohibited.**

**9. Tackling an emergency**

The entire route has been planned and arrangements made. However, in case of any natural calamity or any other emergency, last minute changes may be required in the route or any planned activity. All shodhyatris are expected to follow the advice of the Shodhyatra coordinators in such a situation.

Much of the route falls under local movements, so all the shodhyatris are expected to walk as a group and refrain from making any ideological, political statements, or discuss sensitive issues of caste and religion, etc. within the group or outside. Our aim is to understand the life and culture of the people, explore the local biodiversity, discover and appreciate local creativity and mostly this should be the topic of discussion. SRISTI takes utmost care in assuring safety of the Shodhyatris in the Shodhyatra. However, in no event shall the SRISTI be responsible or liable for any delays and unforeseen incidents in the Shodhyatra arising out of or caused by, directly or indirectly, forces beyond its control, including, accidents, acts of war or terrorism, civil or military disturbances, natural catastrophes or acts of God, and interruptions.

**10. Meetings**

All Shodhyatra participants must remain present during the village meetings. The yatra coordinators will inform all the yatris about the next day's program the previous evening.

**11. Registration Process**

The persons who have previously been an active participant in any of the fields related to grassroot innovation, traditional knowledge, scouting etc. are encouraged more to experience the journey of Shodhyatra. And those candidates who have experienced SRISTI Shodhyatra previously and are willing to join it again are informed that they will be accommodated only if there will be any space left at the end.

All the shodhyatris are informed that it is compulsory to go through SRISTI activities (<http://www.sristi.org/activities>) before coming to the Shodhyatra.

All the persons who do not register and pay the fees in advance for the Shodhyatra will not be allowed to join.

Please note that once a person registers and pays the fees, there will not be any refund of the fees even if he/she cancels their registration.

SRISTI welcomes people who want to join the Shodhyatra with their family. In order to make arrangements for food, lodging and boarding, hiring and fuel charges of vehicle(s) for carrying luggage, generator etc., Shodhyatra participants have to deposit their contribution in advance. The amount mentioned below is for the entire Shodhyatra duration of seven days. In case, during the Shodhyatra, if any other necessary payment has to be made for anything which was arranged on the spot, the cost incurred will be shared equally by all and paid at the same time, and will be in addition to the payments given below.

For small farmers (Who direct actively involved in farm operation and primary source of income is only farming), tribes, artisans, mechanics and innovator/knowledge holder	Rs. 5000/-
Students on professional courses, teachers, professionals, servicemen, retired personnel etc.	Rs. 7000/-
N.R.I., foreigners and well-wishers.	Rs. 12000/-

No refund claim will be entertained if any person desires to leave/quit the ShodhYatra mid-way.

The money should be paid by Cheque, DD or MO (money order) in the name of “SRISTI” (SRISTI account AXIS BANK – 032010100012131, MEMNAGAR AHM GJ Branch, AHMEDABAD, IFS Code – UTIB0001873) payable at Ahmedabad. Please send a copy of the deposit slip, and filled registration form; either by post / courier to the SRISTI address or scan and email a copy to our email id – [shodhyatra@sristi.org](mailto:shodhyatra@sristi.org). Kindly check the names, date, signature, amount, etc. of the cheque before sending it to SRISTI. It is necessary to do a follow-up to ensure the registration has been received and the fee deposited. The permission to join the Shodhyatra will be granted only after the receipt of signed registration forms with consent and the registration fees. SRISTI reserves the rights to allow or disallow any person to participate in the yatra.

**Contact:**

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