



ENVIS Newsletter



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Environmental Awareness



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Environmental Awareness initiatives in Tamil Nadu

The best way to attempt to bring about a change in the society is through children. They have no vested interests. They are impressionable. They are our future. They are the single most important influence in any family. With the realization, the State Government and the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India have launched the National Green Corps (NGC) programme in all the districts in Tamil Nadu.

NGC programme in Tamil Nadu

National Green Corps, a Government of India project, is being implemented in 7500 government and government aided schools.

Department of Environment, Government of Tamil Nadu is the Nodal Agency for implementing the National Green Corps (NGC) in Tamil Nadu. A total of 3.00 lakhs students are involved in this programme with 40-50 students participating in each NGC schools. One teacher co-ordinator is designated per school to supervise the NGC activities. Each educational district has an Environmental Awareness coordinator to oversee the NGC activities in the concerned educational district.

This programme imparts Environment Awareness to the School students through tree planting activities, Eco-competitions and Eco-camps.

1. Every year Rs.2,500/- is provided as grant for each NGC school to carryout NGC activities
2. Every year Rs.25,000/- is provided for Monitoring and Strengthening the programme in 30 districts

NGC activities

Preparation and supply of NGC Manual

The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India have given guidelines on the NGC functioning. In order to ensure effective functioning of the NGC/ Eco-clubs, the framing of detailed guidelines for the activities to be undertaken systematically was felt necessary. Hence guidelines have been framed for minimum 120 hours of activity per year under four major headings:

- i) Orientation
- ii) Campus activities
- iii) Community activities
- iv) Eco-camp activity

Enviro camp

Seeing is believing – The student members of the National Green Corps are taken to environmental hotspots to sensitize them about the negative and positive



impacts on the environment and also to encourage them to take active participation in matters related to environment. Over 3000 students @100 students per district from 30 districts have participated in the Enviro camps.

Eco-competitions

Competitions are held among the NGC students in the State at district level through environmental awareness coordinators. The competitions such as drawing and painting, elocution, quiz competition and Enviro expo are conducted.

Monitoring and Strengthening

During 2009-2010 a one day training programme was carried out by Department of Environment in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Forest Department. Forest Extension centres in each district were utilized for the purpose. Forest Extension Centers are fully equipped with multimedia equipments to provide proper training for school students. Around 100 NGC students and 10 teacher co-ordinators in each district were trained on the following topics related to environment:

- Definitions of Air, water, Atmosphere, hydrosphere, Ozone layer, Air/water pollution, global warming, green house gasses, sea level rise
- Waste management, Bio-degradable and non-biodegradable.
- Types of ecosystems, intra and inter specific relationships, ecology, food chain, food web, ecological pyramids, mangroves, coral reefs, biosphere, zoos, sanctuaries, national parks, medicinal plants etc.
- Aims objectives of NGC clubs, work periods in an academic year, activities carried out within/outside school campus, celebration and observation of green days, participation in environmental competition, eco-friendly models of scientific interest etc.
- Field visit – firsthand experience of forest plants, trees, medicinal plants and nursery activities.
- Department of Environment, ENVIS staff and Forest Department staff were used as resource persons for the above training programme. The students and teachers were provided with logistics, refreshments and travel expenses.





NGC Training program

The training programme was conducted at Forestry Extension Centre in all the 30 district. The student started coming from 8.45 AM accompanied by their teacher co-ordinators. Two Educational District co-ordinators participated in the Training Programme. The training programme started with an invocation song by the students. The programmes were organised by NGC state co-ordinator Mr. A.B. Thiruvengadam (ACF Retd.), Assistant Conservator of Forests Mr. K. Rammohan and Range Officer Mr. C. Muthusamy. In certain districts, Mr. K.S.S.V.P. Reddy, I.F.S. Additional Director, Department of Environment, and Mr. V. Irulandi, I.F.S. Chief Conservator of Forests, Forestry Extension took part in the training programme. Forest Extension Officers and other forest officials took part and explained in detail the various aspects of the forests and the uses of the trees, the need for afforestation and extension activities carried out by the Forest Department.

The technical session on the topic “Environment -An Overview” was dealt by ENVIS staff Mr. J.D. Marcus Knight, Senior Programme Officer, Mr. K. Muthukumar, Programme Officer, and Mr. D. Senthil, Senior Research Fellow. The subject was dealt using visuals and videos to help the students understand the importance of conserving the environment, impact of pollution and the advantage of renewable energy.



Programme in Tamil Nadu

A quiz programme was also conducted and prizes were distributed. During the field visit in the afternoon the students had an opportunity to learn about the green house, the mist chamber, vermi composting, VAM, economic importance of various trees and raising medicinal plants. A total of 30 NGC training programmes were conducted in all the 30 districts of Tamil Nadu involving 3,103 NGC students and 318 teacher co-ordinators from 305 schools. From the NGC students learned about all the aspects of environment and enjoyed the nature. The feedback from the students and teacher coordinators was encouraging and more such programmes were requested in future. A few feedbacks are shown below:

It is very informative & useful. It made us to think about future world and we will spread this like a storm. Excellent programme.

P. Menaka Rengaraj, SBOA 16/12/10.

Session was highly interactive and informative - It made us to realise the importance of Combating climatic change and how to overcome this crucial situation.

V. Jayanthi, MVM 16/2/10



State Level Science fair

The State level Science fair was conducted on 12th November 2009 by the Crescent Matriculation Higher Secondary School for Girls in order to discover the young scientist in various school campuses. The 'Omeiat Science Fair' was held in 3 levels (classes IV - V, VI-VIII and IX-XII) in 3 categories – environmental science, physical science and biological science. During the fair around 300 teams put up their exhibits.

More than 2000 students from all over Chennai participated and visited the stalls. The ENVIS Centre of the Department of Environment set up a stall on climate change and its impacts and displayed around 20 posters. ENVIS staff also gave lecture on the topic of "Impacts of Climate Change".



Chennai Science Festival 2010 - "Science in Everyday Life"

The Chennai Science Festival – 2010 "Science in Everyday Life" was organized from 3rd- 7th February 2010 on three broad themes namely, Food and Health, Energy and Climate Change and Biodiversity. The mega science exhibition consisted of a total of 120 stalls exhibiting various items on the above mentioned themes. Several Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations, Schools, Colleges and various Universities from Tamil Nadu participated and exhibited posters and working models related to their scope of work. Approximately 35,000 people, including 20,000 students and about 15,000 of the general public from Chennai and urban areas visited the Science Exhibition. Competitions like quiz, elocution, essay writing, drawing competitions were conducted for the school students from Chennai City. A panel discussion with experts was also conducted on the last day.

ENVIS Centre, Department of Environment exhibited a model showing how temperature rise affects the coral reef ecosystem. Posters related to "Climate change" were exhibited and explained in detail to school students, college students and the public.



Go green- Walkathon

Tech Mahindra is a global systems integrator and business transformation consulting firm focused on the communications industry. Further to keeping a check over the environmental impacts arising out of its business, Tech Mahindra is conscious of its GHG emissions and works towards mitigating the same. Tech Mahindra encourages its employees to use public transport, company buses and car pool with an aim of reducing carbon emissions. The company is adopting various green initiatives including Green PC's in its new and existing projects to practicable extent. On March 27th 2010, the company organized a Walkathon Rally – Bhoomi Marina Beach to create awareness about global warming and propagate the message to Go Green. The Walkathon started from the labour statue at 8.00 A.M and ended at the light house at 9.00 A.M. Mr. T.S. Srinivasamurthy, I.F.S., Director, Department of Environment addressed the gathering and highlighted the importance of reducing one's carbon foot print in the mitigation of Climate Change and its impacts. He later flagged off the rally. ENVIS Centre of the Department of Environment took part in this rally and spread awareness through placards and distribution of pamphlets. Around 400 people participated in the rally.



Earth hour

Earth Hour started in 2007 in Sydney, Australia when 2.2 million homes and businesses turned their lights off for one hour to make their stand against climate change. Only a year later and Earth Hour had become a global sustainability movement with more than 50 million people across 35 countries participating. Earth Hour 2010 took place on Saturday 27 March at 8.30pm- 9:30pm and was a global call to every individual, every business and every community throughout the world. It was a call to stand up, to take responsibility, to get involved and lead the way towards a sustainable future. People across the world from all walks of life turned off their lights and joined together in celebration and contemplation of the one thing we all have in common – our planet.

Earth Hour was organized by WWF with almost 5 million supporters and a global network in over 100 countries. In Chennai WWF TNSO collaborated with the ENVIS Centre, Department of Environment in reaching out to the Government and Government aided schools to switch off all non-essential light for one hour on the 27th March 2010 from 8.30 -9.30 PM IST.



SWITCH OFF FOR THE PLANET



Environment- An overview



A booklet titled “Environment- An overview” in tamil was prepared by the ENVIS Centre, Dept. of Environment covering various aspects of the Environment.

This booklet was distributed to more than 3,000 NGC school students and 300 teacher co-ordinators during the training programmes conducted by the Dept of Environment.



Bird census in Pallikaranai Marsh

The Tamil Nadu Forest Department, along with Care Earth conducted a systematic bird census in Pallikaranai marsh on 24th January 2010 as a part of the ‘synchronised bird

population estimate’ carried out across the State in all bird sanctuaries and wetlands. Staff from the ENVIS Centre, Department of Environment and students from the Madras Christian College also participated in the census. A total of 8,187 birds belonging to 47 species were counted.



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Disclaimer: The information in this newsletter has been compiled from various sources and does not necessarily depict views of the ENVIS Centre, Department of Environment, Government of Tamil Nadu.