

National Environment Educators Meet

A Report
[ENVIS Centre Sikkim]
Forest Environment & Wildlife Management
Department

Date: February 19, 2010

Venue: CSE, 4th Floor, Core 6 A, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003



National Environment Educators Meet, 2010 held on 19th February 2010 at India Habitat Centre was organized by the Environment Educators unit of the New Delhi based public interest group, Centre for Science & Environment (CSE), for the third time. In the meet were present Directors of State - Nodal Officers of the National Green Corps (NGC), and group of educators working in the field both at centre and the states. The states that participated in the meet were Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Bihar, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Uttaranchal, Sikkim, UAE (International partner CSE); journalist from the Hindustan times, Principal of Gurgaon School.

The meet began with an opening session by Ms Sumita Das Gupta Coordinator-CSE, New Delhi; this was followed by a short introduction among the participants in the meet. Ms Sumita Das Gupta gave a short presentation on the Green Schools Programme its mode of work, progress and approach to a wider participation of schools throughout India. It was pointed out that Green Schools Programme which is being conducted in school is a holistic approach involving students, teachers and parents towards a sustainable environment school initiative. The main motive of this Green School Programme manual is the need to compare, conduct self audit among students to help them understand management of natural resources and consumption. This would eventually lead to the reduction the ecological footprint and consumption level of the people.

The main issues discussed were- Should Environment studies be a part of school syllabus/curriculum; since NCERT has made an environment curriculum but is not adopted in a full fledged manner and in most cases environment studies has been

sidelined. It was then highlighted that this manual would help students virtually understand management of natural resources and conserve them.

The international partner of GTGSP for UAE Ms Gyatri conferred that the aim of the environmental programme should be made sustainable and deliverable so as to reduce our ecological footprint and this would reduce consumption at a large pace. She pointed out that this GTGSP should bring about holistic initiative starting from the students, teachers and parents. For this programme to emerge successfully she stressed that there is a need for concrete and clear targets.

The interaction session highlighted the issues of different states:-

Dr. B.C.Sabata, Senior scientific Officer Department of Environment, New Delhi pointed out the difference in participation among the Private and the Public schools, the Private schools were found to be very competitive in comparison to the Government schools, which were rather lacking in their approach. Throwing light to the Government schools and its reflection in Green School programme participation, it was highlighted that there is a need to inspire Government schools either through advertisement by featuring Government Schools that have done good work in this field or obtained awards which would inspire other schools as well.

However, it was noted that Punjab Government Schools has been doing extremely well in GTGSP and so has Sikkim Government Schools in their performance for this year's programme. Whereas, other states like Maharashtra, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh stated problems of communication and management that is not coordinated in a planned manner. In context to that Ms Poonam Mishra (Programme Coordinator) ADRO acknowledge that there is lack of communication between officers of the different Government Department and Schools regarding environmental activities in the state. She also put forth the view about the environmental activities being confined only to aware the public theoretically like holding of rally, procession, poster banner instead of moving towards a more practical approach.

Bihar Nodal Officer stressed out that environment activity should not be focused on higher classes but to involve students from the primary level itself. Seeing the pros and cons of the implementation of GTGSP in different states in India Chennai Nodal Officer pointed out that for the implementation and progress of GTGSP there is a need of a holistic approach in reaching out to the schools at large. Different states have had their own problem regarding the successful implementation of the programme in their state and it was thus stated that each region had to be dealt with differently taking into consideration the administration set up, communication links between the Department officers and the Schools. Suggestion and initiatives to involve Department officers and School students/teachers in the GTGSP can be motivated by providing training to them.

It was then concluded that the Gobar Times Green School Programme (GTGSP) to reach out for a wider participation of schools and for consecutive year needs an interdepartmental cooperation among National Council of Education Research & Training (NCERT), Human Resources Development Department (HRDD) and Forest Environment & Wildlife Management Department (FEWMD). It was also pointed out that GTGSP is functioning through National Green Corps (NGC) - Eco-clubs network established by the forest Department in the state till date.

Sikkim a budding state in developmental activities has done a commendable job in GTGSP by measure of its activities and its participation in Green School Awards-2010. It is also proposed that a State level Green School Award function is to be conducted in Sikkim coinciding with environment calendar by the Forest Department towards the end of April or first week of May. Ms Sunita Narain will be visiting Sikkim to facilitate schools at the State Level Awards Ceremony.