

“Biodiversity Conservation & Nature Education for Eco Club Teachers”

Sponsored By

Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India

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Institute of Forest Genetics & Tree Breeding, Coimbatore

Environmental education, awareness and training plays a significant role in encouraging and enhancing people’s participation in activities aimed at conservation, protection and management of the environment, essential for achieving sustainable development. Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change has accorded highest priority for promotion of non-formal environmental education and creation of awareness in all sections of society through wide and varied programmes. National Green Corps (NGC) / Eco-Club – a National programme was launched in 2001 with objective to educate children about their immediate environment and impart knowledge on the ecosystems, and their interdependence by instilling spirit of scientific inquiry into environment problems and involving them in the efforts of environmental preservation. Since 2001, under this programme, nearly 1,20,000 Eco-clubs have been established in the country. Eco-Clubs are excellent platform to demonstrate and raise awareness on issues of contemporary significance.

In this background, IFGTB imparted **3 day training on the theme “Biodiversity Conservation & Nature Education” to the teachers of Eco-Club schools of Coimbatore district.** The main objective of the training was to develop biodiversity consciousness, and impart action oriented biodiversity education methods, hands on activities and exposure visits to the Eco club teachers. It is expected that the trained teachers would in turn become master trainers and motivate and educate students to protect and conserve local biodiversity. The training was **sponsored by Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF & CC), Government of India** under the Umbrella Scheme of **‘Forestry Training & Capacity Building- Training of other Stakeholders.**

The three day module was attended by 32 Eco-Club teachers of Panchayat union schools, Government high schools in and around Coimbatore district nominated by the office of Chief Education Officer, Coimbatore district. In the inaugural programme Shri. Rajesh Gopalan, IFS, Training Coordinator and Head, Extension Division, IFGTB welcomed the guests and participants and gave an over view of the training module and schedule. Dr. S. Murugesan, Group Coordinator Research in his opening remarks emphasized the importance of protection of ecosystem and role of students in imparting knowledge about the ecosystem and its relevance in their lives. Dr. Mohit Gera, IFS Director, IFGTB in his inaugural address highlighted and narrated as to how National Forest Commission included training of **“other stakeholders”** to be important component in capacity building since 2006. He also insisted upon Teachers of National Green Corps to play an important role in creating awareness on basic education on energy, water conservation and also to involve students in creative activities. Director also informed the teachers that IFGTB is willing to provide services wholeheartedly on Nature and Environment awareness activity. The inaugural session ended with vote of thanks proposed by Shri. M. Maria Dominic Savio, Scientist.

The technical sessions of the training had inputs on “*Over view of biodiversity conservation in India*” by Dr. C. Kunhikannan, Scientist F, IFGTB. This session was followed by activity class on “Wetlands Biodiversity” by Dr. Goldin Quadros, Principal Scientist, SACON, Coimbatore. Dr. Quadros demonstrated the activities that could be done in wetlands in extra-curriculum of the schools. Later in the afternoon session, Dr. A. Pavendhan, President Tamil Nadu Butterfly Society delivered a lecture on “Birds & Butterflies”. The participants were shown two films on biodiversity values and its importance which was moderated by Mr. Maria Dominic Savio wherein participants were allowed to come up with theme and ideas in similar ecosystem situations. New teaching methodologies in nature education were imparted through videos and films for the participants.

On the second day, an exclusive one day field trip to Baralikadu Ecotourism was organized as part of training to learn on the community initiatives in biodiversity conservation. The participants learnt on the significance of ecosystem services which help forest dwelling communities to earn additional livelihood through ecotourism initiatives. The revenue sharing model and functioning of EDC were explained by Community members and Forest Range Officer, Shri.Saravanan, Karamadai range, Coimbatore Forest Division. Additionally, Tiger estimation protocol (M-Stripes) were explained to the participants by Dr. Palanisamy, Biologist Mudumalai Tiger Reserve at Baralikadu. Some of the participants voluntarily expressed their willingness to be part of the forth coming tiger census in Coimbatore Forest Division.

On the third day, Dr. Mohit Gera, Director IFGTB delivered a talk on “Biodiversity & Climate Change” and he also showed a film on Climate Change to participants. The participants had interactive session at the end of the film. Dr. K. R. Sasidharan, Scientist F, IFGTB gave a hands on exercise for the participants on Herbarium techniques and demonstrated the methods in the Fischer’s Herbarium. Later the participants also visited Gass Forest Museum in IFGTB to learn importance of Natural History as education tool.

Smt. R. Sathy, Head Mistress, Madukarai Panchayat primary school, National Award winner for the best teacher, 2017 participated in the valedictory session on 11th October 2018. Dr. Mohit Gera, IFS, Director IFGTB felicitated Smt. R. Sathy, Head Mistress, Panchayat Union Primary School, Malumichampati, Coimbatore & National Award winner for best teacher 2017 for her achievement and contribution to excellence in academic and extra-curricular activities in the school. Smt. R. Sathy also shared her experiences with all the participants on the efforts taken by her and her team in bringing visible changes in making villages open defecation free. The participants shared their memorable experiences of the training in the concluding session. A training manual on “Biodiversity Conservation & Nature Education for Eco Club Teachers” was released by Dr. Mohit Gera, IFS, Director, IFGTB. Director emphasized the need to adapt creative pedagogy and teaching methodologies for the students to make nature education more attractive to the Eco Club students. Shri. Ayyannan, Chief Education Officer and Smt. Geetha, District Education Officer graced the inaugural and valedictory session of the training respectively. Besides the manual, the participants were also given booklets on threatened Mammals and plants of India. The valedictory function ended with the distribution of certificates and vote of thanks proposed by Shri. P. Chandrasekaran, Senior Technical Officer, IFGTB.

**DIRECTOR
IFGTB**



Dr. Mohit Gera, IFS, Director, IFGTB addressing the Eco club teachers



Shri. Ayyanan, Chief Educational Officer, Coimbatore District during his address to the teachers



Activity session by Dr. Goldin Quadros, Principal Scientist, SACON, Anaikaty



Field Demonstrations at Baralikadu



Shri. Saravanan Forest Range officer, Karamadai addressing the teachers at Baralikadu Eco tourism



Field trip to Baralikadu Eco tourism



Demonstration at Fischer Herbarium, IFGTB



Participants during their Gass Forest Museum visit



Release of Training Manual



Dr. Mohit Gera, IFS, Director, IFGTB felicitating Smt. R. Sathy, National Best Teacher Award winner, 2017