

Public participation and awareness programme under Yamuna Action Plan

Phase I – school segment

[Sponsor: Municipal Corporation of Delhi]

Executive summary

The programme was implemented by the National River Conservation Directorate and executed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. It was initiated in December 2001 and completed in March 2003.

The objective of the project was to sensitize children on issues of degradation and contamination of the River Yamuna and to motivate students through direct participation in activities that would foster a feeling of concern and respect for the environment.

Following activities were initiated under the project.

- Eco clubs were initiated in 1000 primary schools run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi with a focus on water pollution and conservation
- Forty exposure trips to the banks of River Yamuna were conducted for students and teachers
- Water quality was monitored in 200 schools in the NCT (National Capital Territory)

TERI's project team and Education Officers from 12 MCD zones identified 80 –90 schools from each zone, from Narela to Najafgarh, Shahdara to Vasant Vihar, to participate in the project.

Initiation workshops were held for teachers and headmasters/headmistresses to introduce the concept of an eco club. Since this was a new concept, they were told about the steps that needed to be taken to set up one in their schools. Throughout the project, TERI team regularly visited about 400 schools to monitor the activities and motivate the teachers and students. Dissemination material was distributed and competitions were held for all the 1000 schools.

Activities/competitions were conducted on topics related to River Yamuna or conservation of water

- Inter-zonal essay competition



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- Song competition (inter-zonal)
- Painting competition (inter-zonal)
- Saplings distributed during *Vanmahotsava*
- Demonstration and guidance for composting
- Street play performances by children in schools and neighbourhood based on the ill effects of contaminated water
- Forty exposure trips with a total of about 2600 children participating were organized to the banks of River Yamuna–Wazirabad Barrage, Kudsia Ghat, Sur Ghat

Awareness/outreach material was developed and distributed in the schools. It consisted of the following.

- Two questionnaire surveys to assess children's level of awareness about the River Yamuna and water conservation and to ascertain the impact of the project activities and ways of sustaining them.
- Two coloured newsletters for children, news and information, contributions by children, teachers, word games, etc.
- Three information leaflets: (1) about the river, (2) about the problems, and (3) some possible solutions
- Four activity sheets to serve as a guideline for the teacher in -charge
- An album of songs on CD and audio tape based on the River Yamuna and water conservation sung by schoolchildren disseminated to a number of schools
- Video documentation of the project
- A model of the river depicting the entire stretch.

Water samples were collected from schools in the NCT to analyse the physiochemical and biological parameters. The objective was to assess the quality of water, determine the extent of pollution, and generate public awareness. Water monitoring kits were also distributed in the schools in the NCT.

These activities helped children and teachers become more environmentally conscious. Some important factors that indicate sustainability of the project are given below.

- Eco club boards have been set up in more than 400 schools. Children are using these to reach out to the rest of the school.
- Children have become more responsible and have developed feelings of concern for the environment in general.
- Children have made posters and banners with messages and used them for campaigning.

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- There has been an increase in the use of jute and cloth bags. Children have made paper bags in the classes and decorated them with strips of coloured and floral paper.
- Street plays based on themes connected to the river and water conservation were performed at select locations.
- Children enthusiastically wrote poems, articles, slogans, and play scripts on the ill-effects of contaminated water.
- Various competitions have helped children increase their knowledge and awareness of the issue.
- Composting has helped students manage organic waste efficiently and understand the concept of recycling.
- During the tree plantation drive, each member of the eco clubs adopted a sapling and gave it a name in order to develop a sense of ownership.

Once a week, during the school assembly, members of the eco club pick up an issue related to the River Yamuna and talk to the entire school about it. The cassettes are played to spread the message to more and more people.