



“Back to Earth” – children take lessons in waste management

The programme enabled children to think creatively and helped develop competence in waste management through innovative, educational and outreach components

New Delhi, January 20: The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and the State Bank of Hyderabad (SBH) organized “Back to Earth”, an initiative on waste management, held at the Shyama Prasad Vidyalaya today. The education and outreach programme helped generate understanding and support for waste management issues across Delhi.

With rising urbanization and change in lifestyle and food habits, the amount of municipal solid waste has been increasing rapidly and its composition changing. More than 25 per cent of the municipal solid waste is not collected at all; 70 per cent of Indian cities lack adequate capacity to transport it, and there are no sanitary landfills to dispose the waste. The existing landfills are neither well equipped nor well managed and are not lined properly to protect against contamination of soil and groundwater.

Speaking on the occasion, **Ms Suman Doval**, Principal, Shyama Prasad Vidyalaya, New Delhi, congratulated State Bank of Hyderabad and TERI for the initiative of generating awareness amongst school children on the increasing issue of waste management. This interactive program will definitely benefit the school children and urge them to take up good practices such as recycling, reusing and reducing waste.”

Mr Kedarnath Prasad, Chief Manager, State Bank of Hyderabad (SBH), said: “If we understand the grave dangers of the increasing waste and take small measures to reduce and recycle them, we will be able to eradicate lot of issues arising out of waste and enable a sustainable environment for our future generation.”

Said **Mr Sourabh Manuja**, Associate Fellow, Green Growth and Resource Efficiency, TERI: “We need to have an understanding of what kind of waste can be recycled and

which are non-recyclable. Reducing our consumption of non-recyclables is also a practice we need to develop and follow.”

Said **Mr Jai Kishan Malik**, Research Associate, Earth Science and Climate Change, TERI: “Our growing needs and habits have translated into considerable amount of waste, which is a growing concern for all. If we do not imbibe measures to control it, we will lead to not only polluting the environment but also our health.”

Said **Ms Sangeeta Paul**, Business Development Officer, TERI: “We are all dependent on Earth for our basic needs, and have been using the resources (mostly non-renewable) for years and years now. It is very evident with the growing population and the wastage of resources that our future generations may be deprived and may face scarcity to meet their needs.”

The TERI-SBH initiative engaged children to think creatively and helped them to develop competence in waste management through various innovative, educational and outreach components like books, educational kits, learning material, brainstorming sessions and practical experience. As participants, children learned more about the impact of waste on the environment and in each other’s lives, and gained awareness about common concerns and experiences. These activities contributed to a deeper understanding of the relationship between people and the environment, and instilled a sense of how to work collaboratively to influence prevailing waste issues and practices.

“Back to Earth” enabled strengthening knowledge on waste management and the importance of the 4Rs (Refuse, Reuse, Reduce and Recycle) among children and made them aware on the need to take the necessary actions to conserve the environment. This programme was not limited to children, but also extended to larger audiences to generate an overall awareness and movement. “Back-to-Earth” offered resources to increase awareness on solid waste issues, encouraged and increased waste-reducing behaviours and, inspired participation in environmental outreach activities. “Back to Earth” helped:

- Build consciousness on the importance of Waste Management;
- Educate, train, stimulate and encourage young children to initiate small steps towards Waste Management and Recycling;
- Motivate children to perform environmentally-responsible actions in their homes, schools and localities;
- Create a network of young citizens working towards a common goal – of preserving and conserving the planet; and,
- Sensitize and create an informed group of citizens to ensure environmental sustainability.

The programme is being launched in three phases in selected six schools for children aged between 8 to 14 years. Phase one will comprise orientation workshops, distribution of educational kits and installation of water purifiers in schools. Phase two of the programme includes active engagement – by involving teachers and school authorities; implementing various activities in schools and among communities through student’s leadership and competitions/activities. In the concluding phase, schools will be evaluated and the best performers will be identified and acknowledged.

“Back to Earth” uses participatory and interactive methodologies to communicate to the target audience. The programme is being evaluated and recommendations will be made to the authorities to improve our social framework. Based on the outcome of this pilot project, SBH and TERI hope to take this programme to different areas and initiate wider outreach activities and address other burning environmental issues in the future.

About TERI

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) is an independent, not-for-profit research organization deeply committed to every aspect of energy, environment, and sustainable development. From providing environment-friendly solutions to rural energy problems, to helping shape the development of the Indian oil and gas sector; from tackling global climate change issues across many continents to enhancing forest conservation efforts among local communities; from advancing solutions to growing urban transportation and air pollution problems to promoting energy efficiency in Indian industries, the emphasis has always been on finding innovative solutions to make the world a better place to live in. All activities at TERI move from formulating local and national-level strategies to suggesting global solutions tackling critical energy and environment related issues.

Headed by Dr R K Pachauri, also the chairperson of the Nobel Peace Prize winning climate change body, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), TERI has emerged as an institution of excellence for its path-breaking research, and is a global brand widely respected by political leaders, policymakers, corporate entities as well as the civil society at large.

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