

### **A Glimpse of Activities of NGC in Tamil Nadu**

Government of India started the NGC Programme in the Tenth Five Year Plan. The objectives of this National programme are to educate children about their immediate environment to impart knowledge about the intricacies of the eco-systems, through field visits to instill in them the spirit of scientific inquiry into environmental problem and involve them in the efforts of environmental conservation.

The NGC programme was successfully launched in 29 districts of TamilNadu during 2002-2003, in 2900 schools @ 100 schools per district. Another 1450 more schools from each of 29 districts @ 50 schools per district were added during the year 2003-04. Then the new Krishnagiri district was added subsequently and during 2005-06, there were 4500 NGC eco-clubs in all the 30 districts @ 150 per district. The programme is extended to 100 additional schools per district from the current year 2006-07 and at present there are 7500 schools eco-clubs in Tamil Nadu @ 250 schools per district. The schools were selected in consultation with Chief Educational Officers of the concerned districts.

About 40-50 students are enrolled in each school under NGC programme and about 2.50 lakhs students participating in the programme, making it a massive student environment movement in the recent times.

Financial assistance @ Rs.1000/- per school was released for the activities of NGC eco-clubs as continuous financial support upto the year 2004-05 and then @ 2500/- per school as grant. The amount released so far, is as follows:-

<b><u>Year</u></b>	<b><u>No. of Schools</u></b>	<b><u>Amount released (Rs.)</u></b>
2002-2003	2885	14,42,500.00
2003-2004	4350	43,50,000.00
2004-2005	4350	43,50,000.00
2005-2006	4500	1,12,50,000.00
2006-2007	7500	1,87,50,000.00

The grants for the year 2006-2007 has also been disbursed to all the schools, through District Educational Officer, in Tamil Nadu

During 2003 exclusive training was conducted to 29 Master trainers and 2900 teacher co-ordinators. Subsequent years, one-day orientation training programmes were conducted district wise to train the new teacher co-ordinators with the financial support of Ministry of Environment and Forests under the head “Financial assistance for strengthening the implementation and Monitoring at district level”.

Calendars for the year 2007 received from the Resource Agency (CPR Research Foundation, Chennai) were distributed to the selected schools in each district through the Environment Awareness co-ordinators of the concerned district.

The State Level steering committee, headed by the Secretary to Government, Environment and Forests Department, has met seven times so far and reviewed the progress of the scheme and also make several suggestions on the implementation of NGC programme. The committee has suggested for State level awards for the best NGC schools from the year 2006-07, based on the performance in carrying out various environment activities. Three prizes will be given in each of three categories viz.,

- 1) Government and local body schools
- 2) Government aided schools
- 3) Self financing schools.

Among the Nine schools selected at the rate of three schools in three categories as above, one best school will be selected for their best efforts in carrying out NGC activities. The above ten prizes will be judged by the committee headed by the Directorate of Environment, with M/s. CPR Environmental Education Centre and the Director of School Education as members.

The following activities are carried out as regular activities by the NGC eco-clubs.

- 1) School Campus Cleaning
- 2) Tree Planting
- 3) Environmental Awareness Rallies
- 4) Celebration of atleast six green days.

- 5) Vermi Composting
- 6) Enviro -Expo
- 7) Enviro Competitions
- 8) Anti plastic campaign
- 9) Cultural programmes on Environmental Awareness
- 10) Nature Camp
- 11) Herbal Gardening
- 12) Nursery farming

Several “Mass awareness programmes” were conducted so far during the year 2006-07.

Some of them are detailed below:-

## **WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY CELEBRATION**

World Environment Day 2006 will be celebrated on 5<sup>th</sup> June, all over the world with the avowed objective of awareness about conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The theme for the current year celebration is “Desert and Desertification” and the slogan is “Don’t desert dry lands”. Desertification is a major global environment problem, which has direct impact on the livelihood of the inhabitants by way of declining food output, adverse environmental and socio-economic conditions, “Desertification” can be termed as a process by which the productive potential of the soils and vegetation they support gets reduced at a fixed level of inputs. The main factors responsible for Desertification are wind erosion, runoff induced erosion, increase in soil salinity and alkalinity and water logging. The major concern related with Desertification is the loss of natural ability of renewable resources to renew themselves and thereby impairing the socio-economic conditions and livelihood security of the people in the area. Desertification also leads to scarcity of drinking water and reduction in irrigation potential.

The Department is taking various arrangements to celebrate the day in a grand manner and to spread the theme and the create awareness on the above matters, not only among the students but also to public. Celebrations will be held on various days in June 2006.

It is proposed to organise a student’s rally from the Children Park, Guindy to the Birla Planetarium, Kotturpuram on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2006. Over 300 eco-club/NGC students of Chennai city will participate in the rally. Marking the occasion, the special issue of monthly magazine “Arivukkan” will be released. The awareness C.D brought out by TNPCB on air pollution will be handed over to AIR Chennai: at the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board Auditorium in Tamil Nadu Science city at Kotturpuram. Hon’ble Minister for Environment Thiru T.P.M. Mohideen Khan and other officials will be participating in the celebration.

On 6<sup>th</sup> June 2006, the World Environment Day celebration will be held at Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli District. The following programmes will be conducted .

1. Distribution of State Level Environmental awards
2. Launching of website for NGC and for Environmental education and awareness activities
3. Release of State of Environment Report of Tamil Nadu

4. Handing over Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board share of Tirunelveli Under Ground Sewerage System to Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board
5. Cultural programmes by the NGC/ECO club students
6. Awareness rally by the Eco Club/NGC students
7. Workshop on “Deserts and Desertification”

The Hon’ble Speaker of Tamilnadu Legislative Assembly, Hon’ble Minister for Environment, Hon’ble Minister for Social Welfare have graciously given consent to participate in the programmes on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at Palayamkottai.

All the District Educational awareness coordinators and Chief Educational Officers were requested to ensure the celebration of World Environment Day by conducting rallies, competitions, workshops, seminars, cultural programmes etc in all 5700 schools in the state, where the NGC and Eco Clubs are functioning not only on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2006 but on any day during June 2006.

Arrangements have been made to conduct the following special programmes during June 2006 for World Environment Day.

1. Seminar at Pullambadi, Lalgudi T.K. Trichy District through M/s. Parkkavan Trust, Pullambadi
2. Workshop at Theni, Theni District through M/s. Literate Welfare Association, Kadamalaikundu, Theni
3. Rally and competitions at Pollachi, Coimbatore District through Dr. K. Govindarajulu, NGC co-ordinator, Pollachi
4. Rally at Thiruvothiyur through M/s. Thiruvothiyur Ariviyal Mandram, Thiruvothiyur, Chennai
5. Cycle rally at Dindigul, Dindigul District through CSMA Higher Sec. School. M.M Govilur, Dindigul

## **WORLD OZONE DAY CELEBRATION-2006**

Education on environment is one of the tools for moulding public opinion on aspects of environment and development. Environment awareness was also sought to be spread through seminars, workshops and celebrations of different days like World Ozone Day, Earth Day, Water Day, World Environment Day etc. Sensitivity to environmental problems and a sense of personal environmental responsibility can be created by these types of celebrations. This will also promote greater motivation for environmental protection and commitment towards sustainable development.

'Ozone Day' is celebrated on September 16<sup>th</sup> every year to create awareness about the environment among the school children and general public. As a part of the celebrations, the Department of Environment has organized programmes at Don Bosco Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Katpadi, Vellore on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2006. About 1400 students/teachers from various schools have participated in the programme. Member of Parliament, Vellore constituency has participated in the programme, besides Dr. Uday Shanker, I.E.S., (EE), Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India and District Collector, Vellore.

Further, Ozone Day celebrations were conducted as follows with the financial support of the Department of Environment

- 1) Cycle Rally, Quiz programme, Human Chain programme at Palani through M/s IDEAL TRUST, Dindigul.
- 2) Workshop at Theni through M/s Literate Welfare Association
- 3) Seminar at Thottiapatti, Madurai District through M/s Sugam Service Institution, Madurai District.

## **Enviro Expo**

Department of conducting Enviro Expo to showcase the talent of students during the month of November every year so far 5 Expos have been conducted, two at Chennai, one each at Erode, Thanjavur, Madurai. In the Enviro Expo-2006 at Madurai 58 schools, one each from 58 educational districts have exhibited their modules. The five winners in the Enviro-competitions 2006, exhibited their new modules in “94<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress-Mega Expo” and got appreciations.

## **National Land Resources Conservation week**

Enviro-Competitions for last tow years in debate, drawing, painting and quiz competitions for the school children, in order to spread awareness on Scientific Management of Natural Resources as part of Celebration of National Land Resources Conservation Week 2006 were conducted as follows:

Debate	-	7 <sup>th</sup> to 9 <sup>th</sup> std students
Drawing	-	6 <sup>th</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup> std students
Painting	-	3 <sup>rd</sup> to 5 <sup>th</sup> std students
Quiz	-	8, 9, 11 <sup>th</sup> std students

The competitions were held on the topic “**Our Land - Our Future**”.

The competitions were held educational district wise, in all 64 educational districts of Tamil Nadu. The selected students participated in Revenue district wise competitions in 30 districts of Tamil Nadu. The final state level competition was held at Madurai on 18.11.2006, along with the Enviro Expo 2006. The prize distribution function was held at O.C.P.M. Girls Hr. Sec. School, Madurai on 19.11.2006.

The Honorable Minister for Environment and Forest, Thiru T.P.M. Mohideen Khan and Honourable Minister for Adi Diravidar Welfare Tmt. A. Tamizharasi besides District collector of Madurai, Mayor of Madurai Corporation, Director of Environment, District Panchayat President of Madurai, District educational officer, Madurai had participated in the valedictory function and gave away prizes, Trophies, Certificates, to the winners. The event evoked very good response and was successfully conducted. There was good media coverage also and hence the purpose was very well served.

## **94<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress Pride of India Science-Expo**

The Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA), which is the premier organization formed with the objective of advancing, promoting and furthering the cause of Science in India, has conducted a five day scientific meet between January 3<sup>rd</sup> to January 7<sup>th</sup> 2007 at Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu. The focal theme of the meet and the mega exhibition “**Pride of India Science Expo**” is **Planet Earth – Science and Technology.**”

Hon’ble Prime Minister of India inaugurated the meet on 03.01.2007 and the Hon’ble President of India visited the scientific meet and inaugurated the children’s science expo on 05.01.2007.

The Department of Environment established a pavilion and made arrangement for the participation of NGC students. The 10 students and five teachers from the following 5 schools, who have been adjudged for prizes during the recently held Enviro-Expo at Madurai during Nov’2006, exhibited their working modules, at the pavilion erected in 36 Sq.mts on behalf of the department during the event.

### **The five schools erected working modules on the following themes.**

#### **Schools:**

- 1) Sethupathi Higer Secondary School, Madurai
- 2) Scott Christian Higher Secondary School, Nagercoil, Kanyakumari Dt.
- 3) Govt. Higher Secondary School, Alapakkam, Tiruvallur Dt.
- 4) Holy Cross Matric Higher Secondary School, Salem
- 5) Sri R.K.M. Sardha Vidyalaya Model Hr. Sec. School, T.Nagar, Chennai-18.



**The above schools erected working modules on the following themes.**

- 1) Solar energy - Icemaker
- 2) Control air pollution through oxidized air motor
- 3) Geothermal power station
- 4) Renewable source of energy through wind mills
- 5) Pollution free earth through Integrated pest Management

It is very interesting to note that the Hon'ble President of India, in his special address mentioned that the country in need of alternate source of energy such as through wind mills, geothermal power, solar energy etc., Thousands of students, public, scientists, eminent individuals visited the pavilion erected by the Department of Environment and greeted the students, teachers and officials for their distinct approach.

Notable Scientists like Dr.M.S. Swaminathan, Dr.H. Tombi Singh, Ex. Vice Chancellor of Manipur University, Dr.Manoj S. Pandiyan of NASA, officials from Ministry of Environment and Forests visited the pavilion and recorded their views in the minutes book.

The Director of Environment Thiru K.S. Neelakantan.I.F.S., has participated in the expo and delivered a lecture on "Energy and Environment Security Challenges" in the GENESIS SYMPOSIUM held on 04.01.2007.

The expo is very useful exposure to the NGC members as well as a chance to showcase the NGC activities to the enlightened audience and for publicizing the role of NGC. All section of public were inspired by the working modules and it is felt that such an exposure should be frequently undertaken to develop the young minds.

## **Enviro-Camps**

Environmental issues have now become more and more complex. To mitigate the problems and to give environmental awareness and sensitization among the students on negative and positive impact of change in the environment and also to encourage them to take active participation and interest in matters related to such problems “mass awareness programmes” are conducted by this Department, for the students through State government funding. Government of Tamil nadu, has sanctioned Rs.22.50 lakhs, to conduct such “mass awareness programmes” among students for the year 2006-07, besides regular financial assistance for the continuous support of existing eco-clubs.

Department of Environment has conducted the Enviro competitions during October 2006 among the eco-club/NGC students, educational district wise in 64 educational districts. The winners in “Educational District wise Competitions” have attended the Revenue District wise competitions held during October 2006 in 30 districts. The winners in the Revenue Districts wise competitions have participated in the Sate level finals held at Madurai on 19.11.2006, along with Enviro Expo-2006. Over 600 students all over Tamil Nadu have participated in the final competitions.

In continuation of the programme, arrangements have been made to conduct 30 eco-camps of 3 day duration to 3000 students, who have participated in the enviro competitions @ 100 students per revenue district. Most of the eco-camps have been completed during the half yearly vacation during December 2006 and Pongal holidays during January-2007. Rest will be completed shortly. The District Collectors, authorities from Forest, Education, Pollution Control Board Departments besides Environment Department participated in the eco-camps with students and share their experiences with them. Thus the environmental awareness programme has been given a fillup and the students are evincing keen interest by active participation.

It is being taken up as a continuing programme during 2007-08 also.

