

Bird Awareness Education Project
in 10 tribal schools of Krishna District,
Andhra Pradesh, India

K. Rajya Lakshmi
Bharathi Educational Society
11-33-209, Tufan Nagar
Kavali – 524 201
Nellore Dt., A.P.,
India

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

1.0. PROJECT TITLE: -

Bird Awareness Education Project in 10 tribal schools of KRISHNA DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA.

2.0. BACKGROUND: -

The project targets 10 tribal schools in the precincts of the Kolleru lake, a Ramsar site, which is shrinking rapidly due to severe invasion by commercial syndicates. As a result many trees have withered away and the migratory birds have lost much of the nesting and roosting space. The migratory birds found in the area are Siberian cranes, wild ducks, pelicans, flamingoes, storks, etc. As the ecological degradation has reached a dangerous level there has been a vocalised concern from the tribals inhabiting the kolleru lake areas, whose survival systems depend on the lake's ecological health, for stepping up lake restoration and conservation measures. Responding to this grave concern from the inhabitant tribals, Ms. K. Rajya Lakshmi, the President of Bharathi Educational Society has teamed up with Ms. B. Sakunthala and Ms. K. Latha, all of whom are environmental activists and educators, to implement the aforementioned project as the initial step for restoring the lake ecology and the migratory birds' habitat.

The goal of the project is to facilitate a consciousness among the school children regarding the depletion of natural resources, reduction in the number of migratory birds due to habitat destruction and low survival rates of chicks; and to foster a conducive environment for proactive bird conservation efforts. The strategy is to create a proactive environmental outlook among children through a combination of education, awareness generation and training programmes.

3.0. IMPLEMENTATION: -

The project has been implemented in 10 schools for a period of six months i.e. from October 2008 to March 2009. The initial stages of the programme were focussed on problems identification and needs assessment, rapport building and ice breaking sessions. Bird conservation education has been imparted to the children and peer leaders regularly in all of the schools. In each class, one hour per week has been allocated for bird conservation education. The bird conservation education has been imparted routinely throughout the project period by the project team, volunteers from NGOs and the Wild Life Department. The focus of the effort was on creating an attitude, interest and fascination for

birds among the children. Various topics like species of birds, seasonal migration of birds, roosting, life cycle, threatened species, habitat of birds, environmental conservation, birds' conservation, local issues threatening the lake's ecology, etc., have been dealt with. A special impetus on training and communication skills has been placed so that the peer educators will be able to in turn train their friends, parents and communities in the areas of bird and environmental conservation.

Internal school competitions and inter school competitions have been conducted on a monthly basis in the areas of drawing, quiz, elocution, role plays and skits with a view to enhance their in depth understanding of the issues in question. With a view to sensitise the children and motivate them to take up bird conservation activities, cultural programmes have been conducted in the schools on a monthly basis. The cultural tools employed were burrakatha and veedi bagotham (traditional story telling), puppet shows, drama and skits, etc.

As part of the Information, education and communication campaign we have pasted 5,000 wall posters in the target villages. We also have written 100 motivating slogans on walls and have distributed around 20,000 handouts to the children and general public. We have facilitated 10 rallies with school children as a part of the advocacy and lobbying component with a view to sensitise the public and the government officials regarding the need to conserve the lake ecology and foster bird protection and conservation efforts in the area.

4.0. IMPACT: -

The consciousness among the children regarding the dwindling number of migratory birds in the precincts of the Kolleru lake due to habitat destruction and low chick survival rates has been raised to a considerable extent. The children are highly motivated to contribute to stalling the bird displacement process through proactive actions, advocacy and lobbying. Through advocacy and lobbying efforts, the public opinion has been influenced positively and the commitment of the government authorities garnered to protect and conserve the lake ecology. The training and communication skills of the school children have been honed well and they are able to in turn impart environmental and bird conservation education to their friends out of school, families and communities. Through the cultural programmes and inter school competitions the conservation knowledge of the children has been elevated.

5.0. CONCLUSION: -

The project has fairly succeeded in achieving the environmental and bird conservation education objectives. Concerning bird conservation education the project is sustainable as

the children will be in turn transferring the knowledge to the other children and communities, both in formal and informal settings. Co-ordinated efforts to convert the acquired knowledge into action need to be promoted.

6.0. EXPENDITURE INCURRED: -

Income	INR	Expenditure	INR
Grant from Oriental Bird Club, U.K.	74,865.0 0	Bird conservation education in schools	28080.00
		Cultural programmes in bird conservation	9360.00
		Educational materials	3900.00
		School rallies	7800.00
		Information, education and communication campaign	10125.00
		Public rallies	8800.00
		Reporting and administration expenses	6800.00
Total	74865.00	Total	74865.00

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