

A platter of joy and learning: “Chakka, Manga, Thenga” provided children a ‘natural’ experience this summer

Overview

Change is the law of nature. It is necessary to adapt if a society is to keep pace with the ever-changing world but, when this change comes at the cost of the culture, the society instead of progressing moves backwards. Our culture too is being threatened by the present era of modernisation. Though we have come a long way from the ancient times, we have forgotten our culture in the process. Our present generation is hardly aware about our culture. Most of us have forgotten our language, our traditions and in the process our identity. It is only a matter of time before we completely lose our culture and traditions to modernisation. Many of the good practices yesteryear parents have followed is slowly dwindling. Fast food and ‘use and throw’ culture have become rampant and even treated as the present-day norm. Many of the present-day parents want to keep their children indoors, make them play some indoor games and feed them with packaged and treated foods. In this process, the children get habituated to a self-centred society which ignores traditional practices, healthy eating habits and the ‘give and take’ culture. This causes many of our valued practices die down, our priced natural resources decline and used materials made of plastic and other non-bio degradable bleed our planet earth.

Fresh air, exercise, and observation of the natural world are synonymous with childhood. All children should get opportunity to understand nature. Information dovetailed with fun and entertainment in natural surroundings will be relished and remembered by children for long.



It is in this context that Suchitwa Mission has joined hands with education department and local self-government institutions to come up with an innovative concept of summer camp for children aimed at inculcating good practices on hygiene and healthy living – all through entertainment, observation, hands on experience and group activities.

This innovative camp provided schoolchildren with the first-hand experience in solid waste management and organic farming through infotainment and fun. The three-day camp was held in select schools in every district this summer (April- May 2017). Children from Lower Primary, Upper Primary and High School -from both private and government- attended the camps.

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Objectives:

- To make the children aware of proper sanitation and waste management
- To make them acquaint with the sanitation programmes of the government
- To inculcate an awareness on green protocol
- To inculcate the habit of 3Rs- Reduce, Reuse and Recycle- and various methods to practice these principles like swap shops, repair shops etc., among students
- Teach students how to manage bio degradable waste at source through demonstration and field visits

The programme focused on the Suchitwa mission's theme of responsible waste management.

Discussions, awareness rallies and household visits were part of the camp. The activities include visiting houses in the locality collecting plastic bottles. The same were handed over to certified scrap dealers from whom they learned how they used to dispose of such wastes. The students also visited organic agricultural farms and interacted with their owners. The aim was to enable them to get a first-hand experience on various techniques of organic farming. The students themselves planted saplings and did the primary things in cultivation.

In this modern fast food era, we now tend to neglect the traditional fruits easily available in our own land. To showcase the significance of traditional fruits, each day of the 3-day camp were given name of traditional fruits in the state viz., jack fruit (chakka), Mango (Maanga), Cocunut (Thenga) to highlight the need to grow and eat traditional fruits which are rich in vitamins. Foods were prepared with these fruits on all three days and served. The children were asked to collect food wastes and were taught how to make ring compost, pot compost and bio-bins. They were also encouraged to implement effective waste disposal at source.



"This camp has made me to think of my waste management. From today, I will remind my parents to take a recyclable bag whenever they go shopping" Says, Abdul Khadhar, a student of IXth standard in Thirumaradi government school in Pampakuda block.

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The camps: how were they scheduled

The first day of the camp was devoted to mango. Exhibition of different varieties of mango were held on the day. The second day was devoted to coconut. And third day on jack fruit. Food prepared with coconut and jack fruit were served

Classes were held on recycling of waste material. There were sessions on methods to reduce the use of plastic material. NSS, science club, nature club members also participated in the camp. Students of 3-4 schools were pooled in one batch. Green protocol was strictly followed in the camp.



The main attraction of the camp included paper bag making, mat making, umbrella, bag, chappal repairing, swap shops (where children brought materials, clothes etc in good condition which are no longer used by them

and exchanged with friends who can use it) and honouring the Scrap dealer and his experience sharing. This helped the students to understand the value of resources and how to reduce creating waste and to honour the repairing labourers.

IEC materials (leaflets, pamphlets etc) related to waste management was distributed to the students as well as to the neighbouring households by the students. The children visited the nearby houses and explained the need for scientific waste management and they invited the residents to the camp during this door to door campaign. A message and a powerpoint presentation by Dr. K. Vasuki IAS, the Executive Director was presented in the camps.

Green Protocol

Increase in population as claimed by many is not the main reason for huge increase of waste. If one analyses critically the reason why only in recent times waste management has become such a big problem, it boils down to one word "Disposables"

Green Protocol abbreviated "GP" is best explained as "Garbage prevention" that alleviate "Garbage Picking". Thus, GP leads to specific actions that will create a life style leading to zero waste communities

By disposables what is meant here is that the use of one time use and throw products has increased drastically in the past ten to fifteen years and with it the magnitude of the problem of its disposal. Disposable water bottles, disposable paper, Styrofoam and plastic cups, disposable paper, plastic and Styrofoam plates, disposable food packaging including aluminium and Styrofoam packaging, plastic bags, etc

The biggest challenge is, these disposable materials causes mixed waste which can neither be composted (Biodegradable part) nor recycled (the non-biodegradable part) increasing the percentage of inert in a waste stream. Currently inert forms 30% of the MSW. It is in this context that green protocol becomes imperative to be implemented across all sectors/institutions

Green protocol is essentially a set of measures which when implemented results in significant reduction of waste. The primary focus is on waste minimization through prevention of use of disposables. However, waste that is still produced is treated in the most scientific and the most environment friendly manner

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Before rolling it out....

Following a state level resource person workshop, preparatory activities started in the districts for holding the camps. To name a few:

- Meeting of district level officers @district Collector's chamber.
- District Collector's communication to all Grama Panchayath Secretaries
- Resource Person's orientation & training on summer camp@ district level
- Discussions and clarifying doubts with all Grama Panchayath Secretaries regarding the camp by district suchitwa mission officials
- Grama Panchayath level meetings to select various committees for camp
- Grama Panchayath level meetings of different committees

Those who partnered to make the camps a success

- Health department: health officials like Medical Officers, Health Inspectors, JPHNs, and ASHA workers
- Kudumbasree, ADS, CDS & Balasabhas
- Social Justice department: Anganwadi workers and Helpers, ICDS Supervisors
- Police department
- Literacy mission Preraks
- Resident associations
- Local clubs
- Religious Institutions
- Parents Teachers Association

And many more!

How they were mobilised

- Press releases
- Letter via education department to all schools and BRCs
- Letter from suchitwa mission to all gramapanchayaths
- Publicity campaigns using kudumbasree, ASHA Workers, Sakshratha Preraks, Ward members & Balasabhas
- Committee meetings at gramapanchayath level
- Propagation through Resource Persons



The camps helped the children in:

Generating awareness regarding the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle principles with live examples and models

Generating awareness regarding the significance of segregation at source and source level management of bio degradable waste

Generating awareness regarding the aftermaths of use & throw culture (over dependence on disposables)

Familiarizing ecofriendly alternatives to harmful disposables

Generating awareness on creative use of scrap & dry waste management (MRF and scrap dealers), and don't dump' don't burn policies

A total of 985 camps were conducted throughout the state attended by 54245 students.

Table 1: No of camps held district wise

S. N	District	No. of camps held	Total no. of children participated
1	Trivandrum	62	3150
2	Kollam	64	3356
3	Pathanamthitta	58	2515
4	Kottayam	109	7645
5	Alapuzha	52	2912
6	Ernakulam	49	2744
7	Idukki	25	1600
8	Thrissur	92	5114
9	Palakkad	110	5524
10	Malappuram	76	4256
11	Wayanad	23	1323
12	Kannur	113	6441
13	Kozhikode	126	6243
14	Kasaragode	26	1422
	Total	985	54245

The camp implemented in *Government Vocational Higher Secondary Thirumaradi* in Ernakulam district shares the story of live exposure to waste segregation as well. Summer Camp was organized on May 8th-10th 2016. About 75 students participated in the camp. Inauguration of the camp was organized with the esteemed presence of panchayath sarpanch. Following the inauguration, a competition of 'beating the mango tree' was executed with the active participation of students and panchayath committee. Most beautiful part of this camp is that, it was implemented in 100 % green protocol mode. As part of revisiting the traditions, meals prepared from Jackfruit, Mango and Coconut were given to the students.

Technical sessions on waste management were provided by Suchitwa Mission faculties in the three days. Also, a video of Suchitwa Mission programmes including the speech of executive director was shared with students. Students were given opportunities for group work as well. As the part of this group work, students collected the waste in the campus, segregated and stored in a tank. After this exercise, the team decided to have a compost unit, which will be managed by the composting club. They also used the concrete pit in the school to store the dry waste and this will be acts as a resource collection centre, permanently. The house visit programme helped the students to interact with the adults and to share their idea on waste management. Students planted the seeds of Jackfruit and mango in households during these visits. Students were also given the sessions on health and premonsoon preparedness as well.

Children from Avanoor and Kaiparambu grama panchayat of Thrissur are studying in Varadiyam Govt upper primary school. Children studying in this school attended the summer camps organised by Avanoor and kaiparambu grama panchayats. Based on the messages they got from the camp, they decided to discard ball point pen and towards reducing the generation of waste the students had a discussion with PTA and school authorities and as a result the school authorities distributed ink pen to all the students in the school

To conclude

A gentle, but robust initiative has generated lots of interest and enthusiasm to not only to those who are organising this activity but to the target group i.e., the students as well. Seeds of change have now been sown and will certainly bring positive changes in the years to come.

Pictures from the camps



Food prepared at a summer camp site using locally available fruits



Re use of used materials: Children learning umbrella repairing at a summer camp site



Children enjoying lunch in a totally disposable free environment



Rally to make public aware on solid waste management organised as part of summer camp











പ്രകൃതിയെ അറിയാൻ കുട്ടികൾക്ക് ചക്ക, മാങ്ങ, തേങ്ങ ക്യാമ്പ്

കണ്ണൂർ • മലിന്യനിർമ്മാണ മോഡേഴ്സൈസേഷൻ പ്രകൃതി യോഗ്യതയുള്ള ജീവിതത്തിന് പ്രാധാന്യം വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് പകരമായി ജില്ലയിൽ 200 അധികാര ക്യാമ്പുകൾ സംഘടിപ്പിക്കാൻ ജില്ലാ ശുചിത്വ സമിതി തീരുമാനം. ചക്ക, മാങ്ങ, തേങ്ങ എന്നു പേരിട്ടിരിക്കുന്ന മൂന്നു ദിവസത്തെ ക്യാമ്പിൽ ആറു മുതൽ 12 വരെ പ്രായക്കുള്ള കുട്ടികളാണു പങ്കെടുക്കുക. ഓരോ പഞ്ചായത്തിലും രണ്ടു വീതം ക്യാമ്പുകളാണു സംഘടിപ്പിക്കുക. നഗരസഭകളിൽ 10 വാർഡിന് ഒന്ന് എന്ന നിലയിലായിരിക്കും ക്യാമ്പ്.

ഒരു ക്യാമ്പിൽ തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കപ്പെടുന്ന 50 കുട്ടികളെ പങ്കെടുക്കും. സർക്കാർ, എൽഡസ്, അൺ എൽഡസ് സ്കൂളുകളിൽ നിന്നുള്ള വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളെ 1:1:1 എന്ന അനുപാതയിലാണ് തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കുക. തദ്ദേശസ്വയംഭരണം, വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം, ആരോഗ്യം, പൊലീസ് വകുപ്പുകളുമായി സഹകരിച്ചു ശുചിത്വ മിഷനാണ് പരിപാടി സംഘടിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്.

ഈ മാസം അവസാനവും മേയ് ആദ്യവുമായിട്ടായിരിക്കും ക്യാമ്പുകൾ. ജില്ലയിലെ മലിന്യനിർമ്മാണ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ മികച്ച രീതിയിൽ പുരോഗമിക്കുന്നതായി യോഗത്തിൽ കലക്ടർ മിർ മുഹമ്മദ് അലി പറഞ്ഞു. ഡിസ്പോസിംഗ് ട്രിപ്പിംഗ് ക്യാമ്പായ് നല്ല പ്രതികരണമുണ്ടാക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞു. ഇതിന്റെ തുടർപ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ ശക്തമായി നടത്താൻ യോഗം തീരുമാനിച്ചു.



Chakka-manga-thenga for clean message

DC CORRESPONDENT KOLLAM, MAY 11

In an effort to train students to keep their environment clean, the Suchitwa Mission has organised a school students' camp 'Greeshmotsavam 2017' in the district. The three-day camp with the slogan 'Join with children for a cleaner world' has been named 'chakka-manga-thenga'.

Over 50 students from upper primary, high school, and higher second-

ary will take part in each camp organised at the panchayat and municipality level. The camp will also have the cooperation of education and health departments. "The camps intended to spread awareness on cleanliness, health, and waste disposal will have classes and video demonstration apart from fun filled games for children. To make them aware of the importance of ethnic fruits, each day they will be given food items pre-



Procession by students of UPGS Karunagappally as part of the camp.

Suchitwa Mission district coordinator. The students will be taught to segregate household waste products. They will spread the knowledge to the public in 'people communities' sharing with them with methods of garbage processing. The students will also get knowledge to repair their bags and umbrellas by themselves. The first such camp by the Karunagappally municipality was inaugurated at Karunagappally UPG school.

Greeshmotsavam in the news