Ecocclub school *nature camp experience* in the Forest

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GREENS Biodiversity Sanctuary
South India
Location

Districts of Tamilnadu

- Map not to Scale
- © State Capital
- State Boundary
- District Boundary

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Key Messages

• Emotional connection – love & respect (students & teachers)

• Reconnect Ecoclub student with natural world

• Cater for different senses (direct experience)

• Inspiration, Leadership & Partnership
Overview: Nature worship in India

- Old tradition of nature conservation
- Land divided into 5 ecosystems: Kurinji, Mullai, Marutham, Naithal, Palai
- Sacred groves & Sthala Vruksham
- Traditional, cultural and religious connection with nature
Sacred Groves

- Patch of Forest
- This natural **climax vegetation** protected on the **spiritual belief** by the local communities
- Living creature **protected by Deity** and folklore associated
- Traditional way of Biodiversity conservation

- **Nadavanam**
- **Sthala Vruksham**
Cultural and traditional way of biodiversity conservation

Kollam – to feed ants
(Now rock dust with colouring)

Tulsi madam –
lost the connection

Nowadays the Younger Generation are alienated from Nature conservation
Nature Experience Programme in India

- Four walls teaching predominant in schools
- No encouragement from Government for outdoor learning
- Books and blackboard
- Less inspiration from teachers
The Ecoclub approach

- Emotional connection first - “Anna”
- Group of students age 7-12
- To create a ‘clean and green consciousness’
- Long-term partnership with students and teachers

Reconnect ecoclub student with nature (Direct experience with different sense)

Core programme – ecoclub approach

Active ecoclub students wait at least a year

Attitude and behavior change
Eastern Ghats Experience

First day
- Prepare their mind & body
- overview – forest and biodiversity
- degraded forest visit - debate

Second day
  “Direct Forest Experience“
- Observation , group activities
- Walk in the forest – experience the hot, cool, chillness, smell, touch, hug a tree, listen the music of the forest
- Forest stream rubbish cleaning
- Skit to local people
- Enquire based learning

Third day
  “Hands-on Experience”
- Nursery techniques
- compost making
- Action plan at school level
- feedback and evaluation
Nature camp

Day - one

Prepare their mind and body

Overview - Forest ecosystem game “web of life”

Direct experience degraded forest

Debate among the students
Forest Experience – Day 2

Guided Walk Inside the forest”
Enquired based learning

Forest Experience sharing with local public
Practical Hands-on Experience

Nursery Raising techniques and composting

Final day indicator – dance/cry
Comparative study of Kaluveli wetland and sacred groove link

inside the Sacred grove
Western Ghats – Shola forest 2000m
Natural forest vs. Monoculture

A comparative study

Shola forest

Monoculture pine tree plantation
Impact

School campus cleaning

School green garden

Public cleaning
Coromandel coast

Cycle rally on TDEF restoration

Public awareness TDEF restoration

School Herbal Garden
Western Ghats

Organic Vegetable
Harvest for Noon meal

School Organic garden visit
Bhutan agriculture officers
Public awareness programme
Key Challenges

• Nature camp relies on **personal risk**
• **Inadequate funding** / lack of resources
• Gaining all teachers confidence
• Good relationship needed with Education Department
• **Limited resources** not all ecoclub students get opportunity
• Not much encouragement from government
• Ecoclub concept – diluted
Future Direction

- Contemporary garden
- Reunion of old ecoclub key students
- Revitalize Ecoclub
- Change mindset education policy
- First 5 district
### Inspiration is the Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Accept your own sister/brother</td>
<td>• More knowledge and information</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Walk the talk</td>
<td>• More inspiration than teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Emotional connection</td>
<td>• Respect them</td>
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<td>• Treat them equal partner – never treat them as child</td>
<td>• Strong Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Encourage responsibilities</td>
<td>• Build a great team</td>
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In the end we will conserve only what we love.
We will love only what we understand.
We will understand only what we are taught.

Thank you.