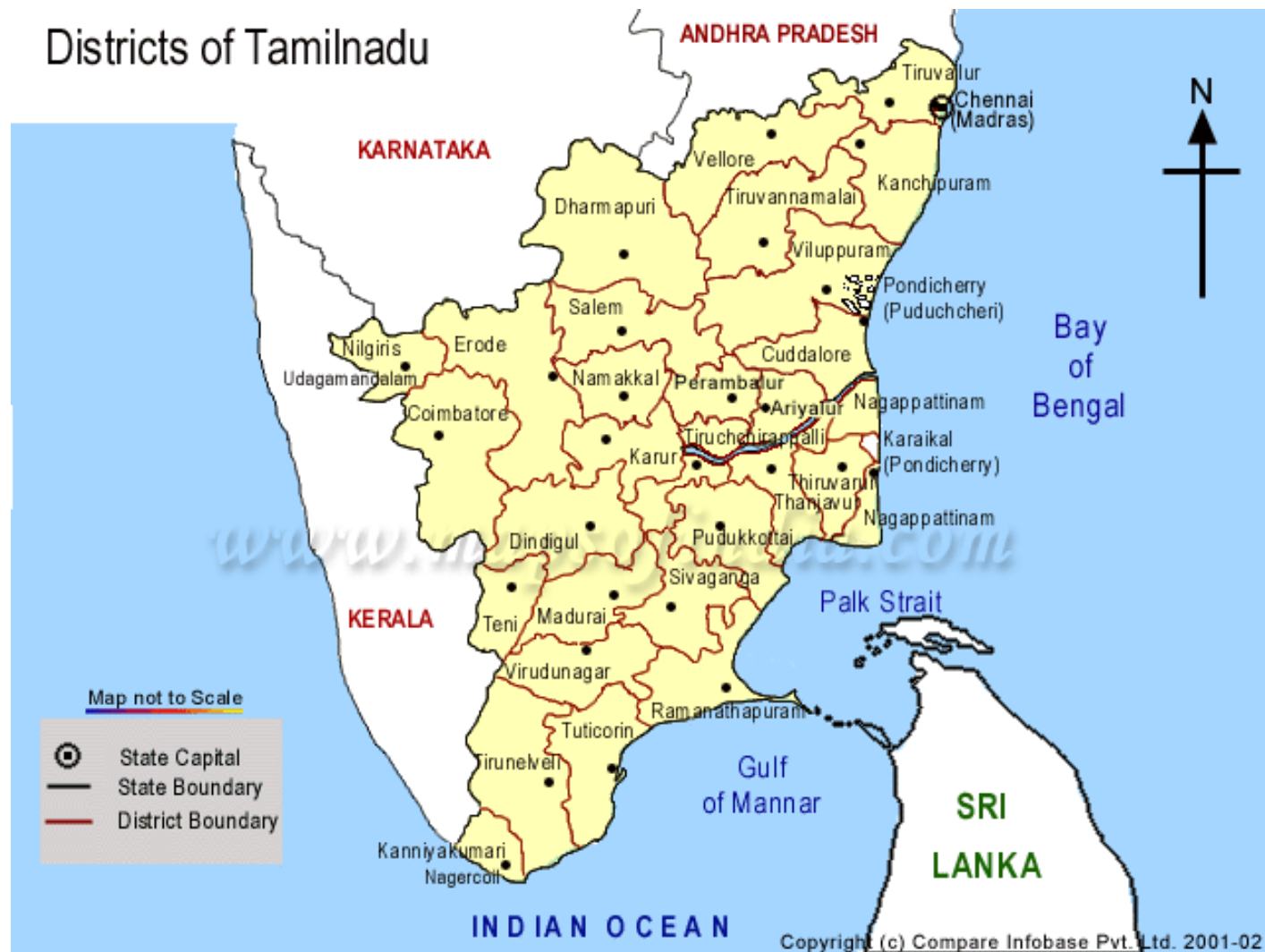


# Ecoclub school **nature camp** **experience** in the Forest

---

Alexander Amirtham, John Britto, Mohan Kumar  
**GREENS Biodiversity Sanctuary**  
South India

# Location



# 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 in to 5 ecosystem : Kurinji, Mullai, Marutham, Naithal, Palai**
- **Sacred groves & Sthala Vruksham**
- **Traditional, cultural and religious connection with nature**



**Sacred grove**



**Sthala Vruksham**

# 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**



# Nature camp –What? Whom? Why?

---

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

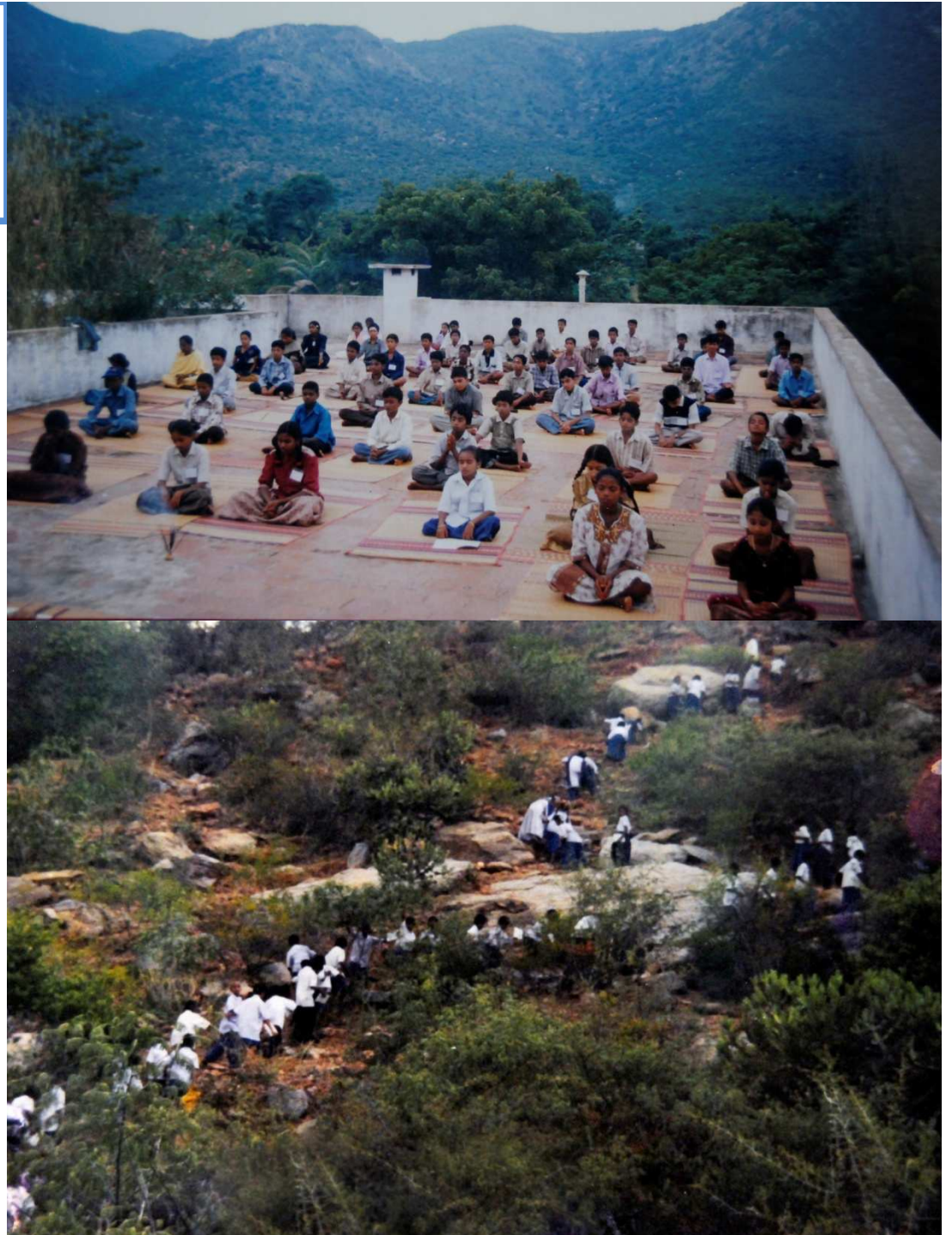
## Day - one

Prepare their mind  
and body

Overview - Forest  
ecosystem game  
“web of life”

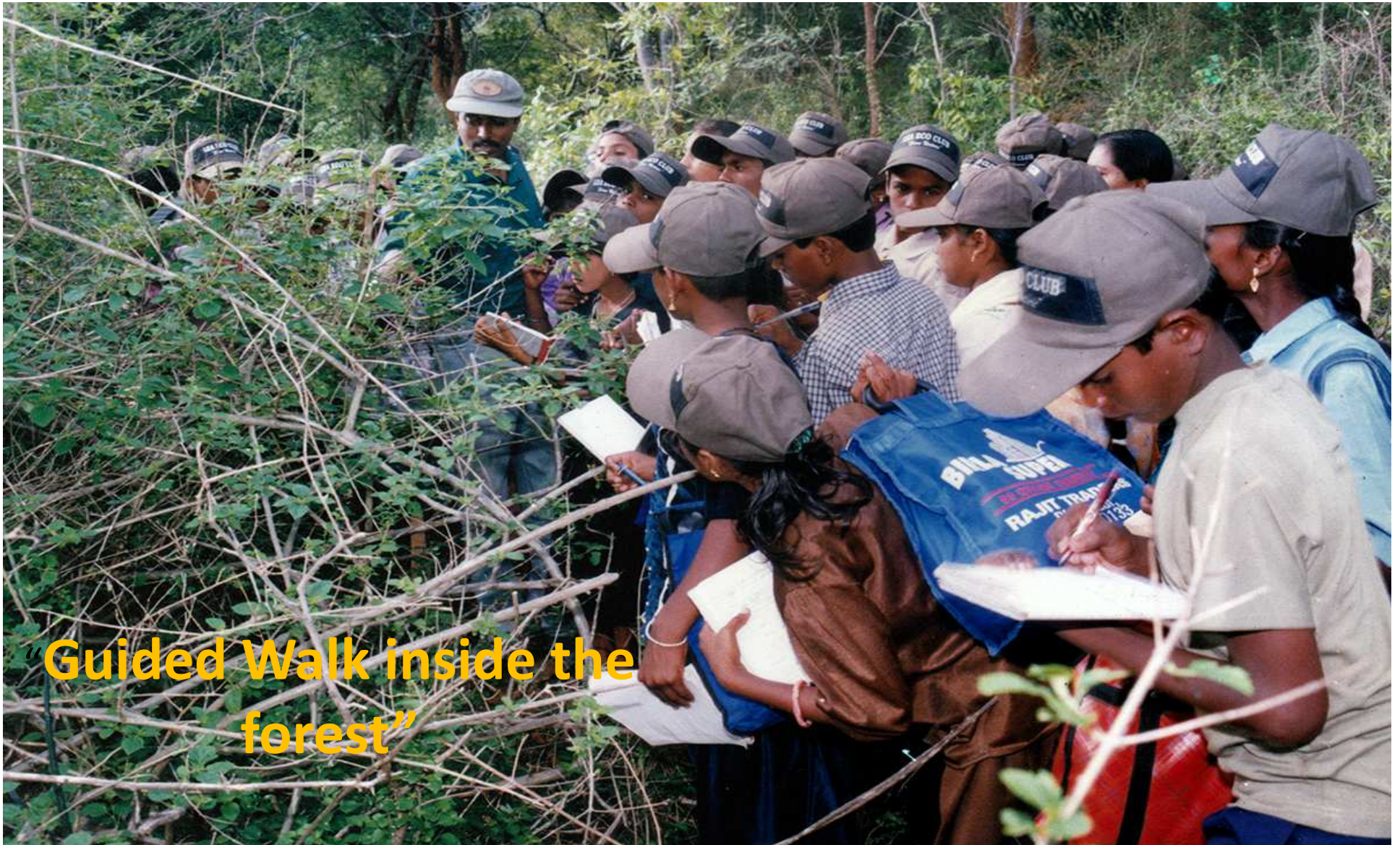
Direct experience  
degraded forest

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**







# Coramantal Coast Experience

inside the **Sacred grove**

**Comparative study of Kaluveli  
wetland and sacred groove  
link**





# 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

## **Students**

- **Accept your own sister/brother**
- **Walk the talk**
- **Emotional connection**
- **Treat them equal partner – never treat them as child**
- **Encourage responsibilities**

## **Teachers**

- **More knowledge and information**
- **More inspiration than teaching**
- **Respect them**
- **Strong Leadership**
- **Build a great team**

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**