



WWF
NEWS
LETTER

KERALA

2013

May-June 2013

Mruthika

Newsletter of WWF - India, Kerala State Office

FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Earth Hour 2013 was made more meaningful in Thiruvananthapuram with the launch of the scheme to distribute two CFLs each to all the households in the five slums in Thiruvananthapuram. Initially the help of the local volunteers were sought to prepare the database of all the slum households and the beneficiaries. After completing this, the CFLs were distributed starting from Karimadam Colony. The efforts put in by Syril, Sajjin and Smt. Radha is highly appreciated. Continuing in this line, SunTec Business Solutions partnered with WWF to distribute a set of notebooks to all the school and college students of the financially backward colonies. The necessary arrangements were made in this regard and the staff from SunTec volunteered to distribute the notebooks to the children as per their grades. In these two months, we could organize various field oriented events in the form of treks, nature trails, bird watching sessions etc. As in previous years, World Migratory Bird Day was observed this year, with a two days programme in Kumarakam involving basic sessions on ornithology, bird photography, bird identification etc and also field observations in the KTDC Bird Sanctuary. This was made possible with the support from the Kerala State Biodiversity Board and all the field level support from KTDC. This year, for the World Environment Day on June 5, we could conduct a successful and moreover very relevant programme with the support of Academy for Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (AMAS), Neyyattinkara, Thiruvananthapuram. It was actually AMAS who took up the initiative with us and also ensuring the involvement from different sections of the society making it a totally bottom-top people's programme. The project titled 'Neyyar Harithatheeram Project' envisaged to plant around 10,000 bamboo saplings along the banks of Neyyar River. The contribution by the Social Forestry Division headed by Dr.B.S. Corrie, IFS under the Kerala

Forests and Wildlife Department by proving the required bamboo saplings is fully acknowledged. Smt. Sugathakumari, Poetess and environmental activist inaugurated the project on June 5 which witnessed the participation of NSS, NCC, MNREGS workers, school and college students, corporates represented by Allianz Cornhill and a whole lot of concerned citizens making it a grand event. The Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department gave the Green Partner Award to WWF-India taking into consideration our joint efforts in the field of forests, biodiversity and wildlife conservation and the award was received by the State Director from Smt. Sugathakumari in a formal function organized by the Department in Sarvodaya Vidyalaya, Thiruvananthapuram on June 5. Like in previous years, we have started organizing the Teachers Training Workshops in Kerala targeting School Teachers and Teacher Trainees with the cooperation of CPREEC, Chennai. For this year's series of about fifteen workshops, it has been decided to keep the theme as 'Water Conservation' taking into consideration the fact that the year 2013 has been declared as the UN International Year of Water Cooperation. A Nature Orientation Camp was also organized in and around Kotagiri wherein around 15 nature enthusiasts participated in the three days camp with diverse activities of trekking, bird watching etc. Kerala has been witnessing a lot of controversies regarding the upcoming Vizhinjam International Seaport regarding its functional, financial, and environmental feasibilities. The EIA was carried out under the leadership of L&T Ramboll and the EIA Report and the EMP was tabled inviting comments and suggestions from the general public. The Public Hearing on the same was conducted and WWF also was represented in the Public Hearing by the State Director and our comments and suggestions were submitted in writing to the District Collector.

Renjan Mathew Varghese,
State Director

IMPORTANT NEWS ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE

GLOBAL

U.S. to retire most chimpanzees from medical research

"Chimpanzees are very special animals ... We believe they deserve special consideration," said NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins, announcing the move. The decision followed a recommendation by the U.S. Department

of Health and Human Services in January. About 300 newly retired chimps will join more than 150 others in sanctuaries, with only 50 being kept for future research. Animal rights groups applauded the move. The NIH said those chimpanzees kept for research will not be bred and will be selected according to research projects that meet the funding criteria of the Institute of Medicine. The likeness of chimpanzees to humans has made them uniquely valuable for certain types of research, but also demands greater justification for their use. Some of those justifications were suggested by the Institute of Medicine in 2011. It identified

areas in which the use of chimpanzees was critical and could continue, including the development of vaccines for the hepatitis C virus. No other suitable animal models exist to test vaccines for hepatitis C, it said in a report. The number of chimps kept for research will be reviewed every five years to determine whether that is sufficient, said NIH spokesperson Renate Myles. (Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/27/us-usa-chimps-research-idUSBRE95P1I520130627>)

Obama unveils broad climate plan

U.S. President Barack Obama has unveiled a comprehensive blueprint to combat rising seas and more frequent severe weather caused by climate change, including a long-awaited promise to regulate carbon dioxide as a pollutant at power plants. The 21-page plan would expand production of solar and wind energy and includes billions of dollars in loan guarantees to develop cleaner fossil-fuel and other energy technologies. It also funds new efforts to armour communities against flooding, wildfires, and drought, and puts more emphasis on working with countries such as India and China to jointly lower emissions of gases that warm the atmosphere. Surprisingly, he also said the controversial Keystone pipeline that would bring oil extracted from Canada's tar sands to Gulf Coast refineries should not be built if the overall result is more greenhouse gases. (Source: *The Hindu*, 27th June 2013)

NATIONAL

India bans testing of cosmetics on animals

India is the first country in South Asia to ban the testing of cosmetics and its ingredients on animals. Alokparna Sengupta, Humane Society International (HSI)/ India's Be Cruelty-Free Campaign Manager, said: "This is a major victory for countless animals who will no longer be made to suffer, and it is a proud moment for India as it becomes the first country in South Asia to end cosmetics cruelty." The decision was taken at a meeting of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Cosmetics Sectional Committee, chaired by the Drugs Controller General of India and is in line with the European Union's stand. The decision follows appeals from various quarters, including that from the National Advisory Council Chairperson Sonia Gandhi and campaigner for animal rights Maneka Gandhi, to prevent cruelty to animals. The People for Ethical Treatment of Animals, India, has also been campaigning to end the testing of household products and their ingredients on animals. (Source: *The Hindu*, 29 June 2013)

'Rajasthan - National Leader in solar energy'

Rajasthan is set to play a major role in solar and renewable energy, according to its Governor Margaret Alva. "Energy is the key to progress. At the same time, it is a big challenge too. Rajasthan is a national leader in solar energy and under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission, a majority of the solar projects are located in Rajasthan. In wind energy,

India is globally positioned at No. 5, generating 11,000 MW after the U.S., Germany, China and Spain," she said. Ms. Alva was speaking at the inaugural session of the 4th National Conference on Green Buildings & Renewable Energy, jointly organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry, Indian Green Building Council and the Rajasthan Government. The solar mission was launched in 2010 with an ambitious target of deploying 20,000 MW of grid connected power by 2022. It aims at reducing the cost of solar power generation through long-term policy, large-scale deployment goals, aggressive R&D and domestic production of critical raw materials, components and products, in order to achieve grid tariff parity by the target year. (Source: *The Hindu*, 10 May 2013)

STATE

72% excess rainfall in State

The State received 72 per cent excess rainfall during the first 19 days of the Southwest monsoon which set in over the State on June 1. Of special interest to the State is the 93 per cent excess rainfall in Idukki district which houses a major share of the State's hydel power reservoirs. Idukki received a stunning 716 mm rainfall between June 1 and 19, against the normal 370 mm for the period. Pathanamthitta, which is the second major hydel district, received only 1 per cent excess rain. It got an area-weighted rainfall of 357 mm against the normal 355 mm. Kannur revived more than double the normal rainfall, with the excess coming to 114 per cent. The excess, in percentage in the other districts are: Alappuzha - 68; Ernakulam - 84; Kasaragod - 63; Kollam - 70; Kottayam - 68; Kozhikode - 75; Malappuram - 77; Palakkad - 69; Thiruvanthapuram - 71; Thrissur - 69; and Wayanad - 50. (Source: *The Hindu*, 20 June 2013)

Eco-activists hail Chandy's intervention

Environmentalists have welcomed the intervention of Chief Minister Oommen Chandy in protecting the Sasthamcotta freshwater lake in Kollam district. Mr. Chandy will chair a high-level meeting in this regard on May 8. Terming it a step in the right direction, eco-activist V.K. Madhusudhanan, who had been taking up the cause for over a decade now, said conservation efforts should be supported by genuine, eco-friendly solutions. The lake was listed as a Ramsar Site in 2002. Livelihood activities and biodiversity protection are also important. Serious concerns were raised only when the water level dropped alarmingly. But many people had for long been raising the issues of biodiversity and livelihood destruction. Finally the water level began receding, mainly due to rampant sand-mining. The Chief Minister's intervention, though delayed, brings much hope. The Chief Minister should also ensure that the intervention will not lead to a situation that would serve the interests of contractors and engineers, he said. (Source: *The Hindu*, May 5th 2013)

EXPERT'S TALK

NATURAL DISASTERS

Renjan Mathew Varghese

There is no better time to talk about natural disasters than now, as the country, especially the state of Uttarakhand is battling to cope up with the recent cloud burst and flash flood which has resulted in the wiping away of several villages leading to immense loss of life and property. The correct figures have not been revealed, but sketchy figures put the death toll between 20,000 to 50,000. The recent flash flood in Uttarakhand has been one of the major natural disasters in the country in the recent past after the tsunami that struck several parts of our country as well as other countries like Indonesia. As you all know, natural disasters can be of various types like cyclones, thunderstorms, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, landslides and landslips, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, droughts, forest fires etc. Different regions of the world based on their location on the earth's surface is prone to different natural disasters, for eg., Japan is very much prone to earthquakes, California to forest fires, many parts of US to cyclones and hurricanes etc. In India also, the picture is not different. Our eastern parts of the country like Orissa and West Bengal are many times attacked by cyclones, Gujarat very much prone to earthquakes, west coast region to tsunamis etc. Other natural disasters like forest fires, landslides and landslips have occurred in different parts of the country. Over the past many years, we have learned our lessons and come up with the Natural Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Natural Disaster Response Force (NDRF). Natural disasters make major short term direct impacts during the disaster phase, but post disaster, it creates many major and minor direct and indirect impacts which affects life, both of humans and other life forms, and also extensive loss of property accounting to great financial losses. It is usually said that, a high impact and extensive natural disaster can take a country back to maybe 20 years or so. Over the past few years, we have tried intensively on disaster preparedness and response. But still our plans are weak and our responses are usually delayed and weak. We still have a big way to go with regard to our preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitation, risk reduction and mitigation. Kerala is very much blessed for the fact that we do not have many problems of natural disasters. But still we sometimes face problems of landslides and landslips, floods etc. Through education, capacity building, infrastructure development, proper planning and integration, we need to prepare ourselves to face any natural disaster that comes our way.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

HOME ENERGY AND WATER AUDIT

With all the talk of energy and water conservation in India today, have you given, how much energy and water you consume at home, a thought? This audit will help you get an estimate of where you stand!

Section (1)

- (1) Do you use the shower or a bucket to have a bath?
 - (a) Bucket bath (0 points)
 - (b) Showers (2 points)
- (2) How many baths do you take in one day?
 - (a) 1 (6 points)
 - (b) 2 (1 points)
 - (c) 3 and over (-5 points)
- (3) How long are your showers (in case you use a showerhead)?
 - (a) 10 minutes (-10 points)
 - (b) 5 minutes (0 points)
 - (c) 3 minutes and under (5 points)
- (4) Do use a washing machine to wash clothes?
 - (a) Yes (-5 points)
 - (b) No, we handwash clothes (7 points)
- (5) Your drinking water is?
 - (a) Bottled water (-20)
 - (b) Boiled water (-12 points)
 - (c) Electronically filtered water (-10 points)
 - (d) Filtered water (5 points)
 - (e) Tap water (10 points)

Total Scores for Section (1) = _____

Section (2)

- (6) Do you use a water heater at home?
 - (a) Yes (-10 points)
 - (b) No (2 points)
- (7) Any cooling devices?
 - (a) Air conditioners (-10 points)
 - (b) Air coolers (-5 points)
 - (c) None (5 points)
- (8) Number of electrical appliances:
 - (a) 7 and above (-15 points)
 - (b) 5 (-7 points)
 - (c) 3 and below (2 points)
- (9) Car use:
 - (a) 2 times or more/day (-30 points)
 - (b) once a day (-15 points)
 - (c) No car/public transport (1 point)
- (10) What kind of lights are used?
 - (a) (-10 points)
 - (b) Tube-lights (5 points)
 - (c) Energy efficient bulbs (10 points)

Total Scores for Section (2) = _____

If your total score for Section (1) is between -40 to -8, then you need to very seriously evaluate your water consumption patterns. You need to pay attention to the following aspects:

1. Amount of water consumed for baths and drinking (you are going overboard!)
2. In the name of comfort and safety you have been relying on too many devices for water cleanliness (There are over a billion people in Africa and our own country who do not have access to clean drinking water. Please have some respect for this indispensable resource).

If your total score for Section (1) is between -7 to 10, then you are relatively aware of the importance of water. You may still need to introduce some measures by which you can improve your score!

If your score for Section (1) is between 11 to 30, then you are an exemplary citizen and would do David Attenborough proud!

If your total score for Section (2) is between -75 to -35, then you need to very seriously evaluate your energy consumption levels. You need to pay attention to the following aspects:

1. The number of appliances you have at home.
2. Trips made using private vehicles. Fossil fuels are a non-renewable resource you know!
3. Emphasis on using (certified) energy saving devices and lights
4. In the name of comfort you have been relying on too many devices. Cutting down on a few isn't going to do you much harm and will only help improve your score on this audit!

If your total score for Section (2) is between -34 to 8, then you are relatively aware of the importance of energy conservation. You may still need to introduce some measures by which you can improve your score! Keep working!

If your score for Section (2) is between -7 to 20, then you are an exemplary citizen. Keep up the good work! Your actions will help create wonders. Please do WWF the favour of enlightening others and guiding them to a more sustainable lifestyle.

MEMBERS DESK

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY 2013

Neha Waikar

The World Migratory Bird Day is celebrated each year in the 2nd weekend of May. This year too WWF – India, Kerala State Office arranged a 2-day programme for bird watchers at the Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary of Kottayam district and also part of the largest Ramsar Site of our country.

Following the official inaugural session, there was a presentation on 'Identifying and Observing Birds'. It was very useful for all levels of birders. Tips given during this presentation were well received by all the participants of whom many were beginners. We were surprised to see the enthusiasm to learn about birds from young to old. They were as young as 6-years and as old as 60-years, all eager with their ears and eyes for birds. There was a quiz on birds which saw an enthusiastic participation. Small gifts were given for each correct answer then and there. All participated.

The members were divided into 5 teams and each team had to present and enact a drama about a pre-assigned topic. The topic given to our team was "Man-made infrastructure". Pollution, predation, land use change and global warming were the other topics, primary reasons affecting migratory birds today. We thoroughly enjoyed all the enacting.

Then we had a boating through the Vembanad Lake and spotted several water birds like Oriental darter, Pond heron, Large egret, Little cormorants, Indian shag, Brahmini kite, Purple heron etc. In Pathiramanal Island also, we could see several birds, but the garbage dump in the island was very shocking.

Next day we had an early morning session of bird watching in the sanctuary. We observed waders around the lake and a 'Barn Owl' up close front, many sunbirds, and a 'Darter' too up very close. Then learned to identify a 'Little Cormorant' when it is in flight. Also how the Whistling teal got their name. It was an unforgettable learning experience. In the afternoon, an interesting movie about 'Birds of Kerala' was screened, again an additional input to bird enthusiasts. The Forest Department and other officials were all praise for WWF-Kerala. The arrangements for boarding and lodging were very homely and we had a comfortable stay. Thank you WWF.

ACTIVITIES OF WWF-INDIA KERALA STATE OFFICE

Session on bird watching

Sri. A.K. Sivakumar, Senior Education Officer (SEO) conducted a short multimedia session on bird watching and film screening on 'Birds and Bird watching' at Kerala State Housing Board Colony at Pattoor, Thiruvananthapuram where around 30 students gathered. They were exposed to the world of bird watching and also introduced to the birds in their surroundings. They were asked to prepare a list of birds of the colony as the follow up of the event.

Exhibition on Biodiversity



WWF-India, Kerala State Office conducted a single day exhibition on the theme of 'Biodiversity' at Panmana Asramam, Kollam on 9th May 2013 in connection with Green Day as part of Chattambi Swami Jayanthi and Kumbalathu Sankupilla Death Anniversary in which thousands of local people gathered and shared their views and concerns.

Free distribution on CFLs



In Thiruvananthapuram, as part of 'Going beyond the hour' for Earth Hour 2013, Kerala State Office distributed 5000 CFLs in 2500 houses of the five slums within the city. This was a joint initiative of WWF-India, Energy Management Center, Kerala State Electricity Board and Dept. of Environment & Climate Change. The launch of the same held at Karimadom Colony on 7th May 2013 at 5.00pm. Sri.G.Vijayaraghavan, State Planning Board Member and Sri.K.Dhareshan Unnithan, Director, EMC participated in the launch and distributed the CFLs.



World Migratory Bird Day



World Migratory Bird Day 2013 was observed at Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary, Kottayam with two day's events including poster release, technical sessions, activity sessions, bird watching, interactive quiz competition and documentary screening. It was organized jointly by WWF-India, Kottayam Nature Society, KTDC and Kerala Forests & Wildlife Dept. with the support of Kerala State Biodiversity Board on 11th & 12th May 2013.



The programme was inaugurated by Smt.Dhanya Sabu, President, Kumarakom Grama Panchayat on 11th. A set of two posters, 'Bird Migration' and 'Common Migratory Birds of Kerala' were released by her during the inaugural session. Sri.Sujil Mathew, General Manager of KTDC, Kumarakom presided over the session and Sri.Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director of WWF-India introduced the programme. Sri. A.K. Sivakumar, SEO, WWF-India, Sri. Augustin Mathew, Forester, Kerala Forests & Wildlife Dept. and Mrs. Shibi Moses, Kottayam Nature Society spoke on the occasion. Technical sessions and activity sessions were led by Sri. Sivakumar and the bird watching sessions were led by Dr.Jinesh.P.S, Smt.Maya Vinod and Sri.K.Sivaprasad.

**World Environment Day 2013 –
Neyyar Haritha Theeram Project**



WWF-India Kerala State Office, Academy for Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (AMAS), Neyyattinkara, Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department, Allianz Cornhill and others jointly observed WED 2013 by launching the Neyyar Haritha Theeram Project to plant 10,000 bamboo saplings along the banks of River Neyyar. Smt.Sugathakumari, renowned writer, poetess and environmental activist inaugurated the project in the premises of Aruvippuram Madom on 5 June. Sri. A.T. George MLA, Sri. P. Sreekantan Nair, Director, Dept. of Environment & Climate Change, GoK, Sri.

Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, WWF-India, Adv. Manju, Block Panchayat Member, Sri. C. Rajendran and Sri.K.Sivanandan of AMAS also spoke on the occasion.

Friday Forum



The regular open forum for students to discuss and debate on environment related topics in Thiruvananthapuram was held on Friday, 7th June 2013 on the theme of Rainwater Harvesting. The topic was presented by G.S. Binukumar, Project Officer, ATREE CERC, Alappuzha.

Birding Camp at Melpadom Wetlands

As follow-up of the World Migratory Bird Day 2013, a half-day bird watching session was organized in Melpadom paddy fields on 9th June 2013. The event was led by Sri.C.Harikumar and Sri.Sivaprasad and the participants sighted around 49 species of birds.

Nature Orientation Camp at Kotagiri

A three day camp was conducted at Kotagiri, i.e. the eastern part of Nilgiris from 14-16th June 2013 which was attended by 14 participants accompanied by the SEO and a volunteer. The camp covered variety of habitats and places like Longwood Shola, Banagudi Shola, Mamaram forests, Bikapathy Mund, Kodanad view point, Gene pool area and so on.



Teachers Training Workshop at Kollam

The first Teachers Training Workshop on Water Conservation and Environment Education for the academic year 2013-14 organized by WWF-India and supported by

CPREEC, Chennai was held at Public Library Hall, Kollam on 26th June 2013. It was conducted in local association with HELP Foundation and Grasshopper Nature Club of Kollam. The workshop was attended by 30 Teachers. The workshop was inaugurated by Sri.G.Suresh Kumar, District Convener (Kollam), National Green Corps (NGC). Sri. S. Nalinakumar, Hydrogeologist from Agricultural Ecosystem Management Group of CCDU, Kerala and Sri. A.K. Sivakumar, SEO, WWF-India were the resource persons.



Review of the proposed VISL project

WWF-India Kerala State Office took a very proactive step with others in review of the ESIA reports, DPRs and EMP of the proposed Vizhinjam International Seaport. Prepared the submission on behalf of WWF and submitted in the Public Hearing.

Participation in the mass protest against Aranmula Airport Project

The State Office took proactive role in the mass protest against the proposed Aranmula Airport Project as it is likely to impact vast extent of wetlands and paddy fields and have other major and minor, both direct and indirect impacts on the local environment and its people. The protest was organised under the initiative of Thanal at Martyr's Square, Palayam.



Critical review of the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation Master Plan (draft)

The Kerala State Office, with the help of intern Ms. Revathy, carried out a critical review of the Master Plan (draft) of Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, which was published recently inviting comments.

Internship

Three students i.e. Mr. Ushnav Zarir Shroff from SIMC-UG, Pune, Ms. Revathy and Ms. Reshma from School of Legal Studies, CUSAT did their internships in the Kerala State Office in the month of June.

Green Partner Award



As part of observing the WED 2013, the Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department announced their Green Partners and the Mementos were distributed in the function organized at Sarvodaya School, Thiruvananthapuram. The State Director received the award on behalf of WWF-India Kerala State Office.

Notebook distribution at Karimadam Colony



WWF-India has been taking various possible initiatives at Karimadam Colony. As part of that, school notebook sets were distributed freely to all the school students in the Colony. This initiative was supported by SunTec and their team consisted of Dr. Sreekumar, Ms. Anitha and others.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Mr. A.V. George
Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese
Mr. A.K. Sivakumar

ആന്റപ്പനോർമ്മ



പ്രകൃതിയോടുള്ള പ്രണയത്താൽ പരിസ്ഥിതി അവബോധത്തിലേറിഞ്ഞി പരിസ്ഥിതിയുടെ പരിശുദ്ധിക്കുവേണ്ടി ജീവിക്കുകയും ജീവനർപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തൊരാൾ. ഹരിതാഭമായ ഭൂമിയുടെ പച്ചപ്പ് നിലനിർത്തുവാനും വരണ്ടുണങ്ങിയ ഭൂമിയുടെ ദാഹമടങ്ങാനുമുള്ള മഴയ്ക്കായി വേഴ്ചമ്പലിനെപ്പോലെ കാത്തിരിക്കാനും പ്രപഞ്ചത്തെയും ചുറ്റുമുള്ള പ്രകൃതിയെയും പരിസ്ഥിതിയെയും അതിനെ ആ

ദിമ വിശുദ്ധിയോടെ കാത്തുസൂക്ഷിക്കാനും ജാഗ്രതയോടെ ചുവടുവെച്ചൊരാൾ, ആന്റപ്പൻ അമ്പിയായം.

ആകസ്മികമായി അരങ്ങത്തുനിന്നും പിൻവാങ്ങിയ വാർത്ത പരിസ്ഥിതി സ്നേഹികൾ അതീവ വേദനയോടെയാണ് ശ്രവിച്ചത്. ഇക്കഴിഞ്ഞ ജൂൺ 3 ന് തൃപ്പൂണിത്തുറയിലുണ്ടായ വാഹനാപകടത്തിൽ അകാലചരമമടഞ്ഞ ആന്റപ്പൻ അമ്പിയായമെന്ന അനശ്വരനായ പരിസ്ഥിതിപ്രവർത്തകന്റെ വേർപാടിന്റെ വേദനയിൽനിന്ന് പരിസ്ഥിതി സ്നേഹികൾ ഇനിയും മോചിതരായിട്ടില്ല.

കൂട്ടനാട്നേച്ചർസൊസൈറ്റിസ്ഥാപിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് കൂട്ടനാടിന്റെ പരിതോവസ്ഥയെ വീണ്ടെടുക്കുന്നതിനും വിശുദ്ധീകരിക്കുന്നതിനുമായി രംഗത്തുവന്ന ആന്റപ്പനിലെ പരിസ്ഥിതി പ്രവർത്തകൻ പിന്നീട് കേരളത്തിലങ്ങോളമിങ്ങോളമുള്ള പരിസ്ഥിതിസംഘടനകളെയും പ്രവർത്തകരെയും ഗ്രീൻ കമ്മ്യൂണിറ്റി എന്ന മഹത്തായ ആശയത്തിന്റെ-പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ കൂടക്കീഴിൽ അണിനിരത്തുന്ന മനോഹരമായ കാഴ്ചയാണ് കഴിഞ്ഞ 2 വർഷങ്ങളിലായി കേരളം കണ്ടുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നത്.

പാലക്കാട്ടേക്കും ഇടുക്കിയിലേക്കും കാസർകോട്ടിലേക്കും കണ്ണൂരിലേക്കും വയനാട്ടിലേക്കും വാഗമണ്ണിലേക്കും സൈലന്റ് വാലി വനത്തിലേക്കും ഗവിയിലേക്കും ഭാരതപ്പുഴയിലേക്കും കാലടിയിലേക്കും കരുണാപുരത്തേക്കും മൂന്നാറിലേക്കും മുവാറ്റുപുഴയിലേക്കും ആന്റപ്പന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ നടത്തപ്പെട്ട ഹരിത തീർത്ഥാടനങ്ങളും അവിടങ്ങളിൽ സംഘടിപ്പിക്കപ്പെട്ട പരിസ്ഥിതി സഹവാസക്യാമ്പുകളിലേക്കും നാശോന്മുഖമായിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന കേരളത്തിന്റെ അപൂർവ്വങ്ങളായ പരിസ്ഥിതിയെ തിരിച്ചറിയുന്നതിനും വീണ്ടെടുക്കുന്നതിനുമുള്ള വേറിട്ട അന്വേഷണങ്ങളും വിശുദ്ധമായ പരിശ്രമങ്ങളുമായിരുന്നു ആ ഹരിത തീർത്ഥാടനങ്ങളിലൂടെയും സഹവാസങ്ങളിലൂടെയും ഒരുമിച്ച് ചേർക്കപ്പെട്ട പരിസ്ഥിതി കൂട്ടായ്മയിൽ പണ്ഡിതരും പാമരരും ധനവാനും ദരിദ്രനും അധ്യാപകനും വിദ്യാർത്ഥിയും യുക്തിവാദിയും വിശ്വാസിയും കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റുകാരനും കോൺഗ്രസ്സുകാരനും യുവാക്കളും വൃദ്ധരുമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. അവരുടെ ലക്ഷ്യങ്ങൾക്ക് ഏക ഭാവവുമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. പ്രകൃതിയെയും പരിസ്ഥി

തിയെയും തച്ചുകർക്കുന്ന ശക്തികളിൽനിന്നും കേരളത്തെ എന്തു വിലകൊടുത്തും സംരക്ഷിക്കുന്ന കൂട്ടായ്മ ദിവസംതോറും വിപുലമാവുകയും ശക്തിപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്തു.

അനാദ്യശ്യാമായ ഇച്ഛാശക്തിയും സമർപ്പണബോധവുമായി രുന്നു ആന്റപ്പന്റെ കൈമുതൽ. ജന്മസിദ്ധമായ സ്നേഹവിനയ ഭാവങ്ങൾ സ്വർണ്ണത്തിന് സുഗന്ധമെന്നപോലെ ആന്റപ്പനെ ജനകീയനും സ്വീകാര്യനുമാക്കി. അതുകൊണ്ടാണ് ഒരു പക്ഷേ 14 ജില്ലകളിൽ നിന്നും വിയോഗമറിഞ്ഞ് ആന്റപ്പന്റെ ഭൗതികദേഹമെങ്കിലും കണ്ട് സ്നേഹാഞ്ജലികളർപ്പിക്കാൻ അത്രയേറെ പരിസ്ഥിതിപ്രവർത്തകർ ആന്റപ്പന്റെ ജന്മദേശമായ എടത്വയിലേക്ക് ഒഴുകിയെത്തിയത്. ഇവിടുത്തെ മുഖ്യധാരാ മാധ്യമങ്ങൾ പ്രായേണ അവഗണിച്ച ആന്റപ്പന്റെ വിയോഗം പരിസ്ഥിതി പ്രവർത്തകർ ഫോൺ വഴി ചെവിയോട് ചെവി അറിയിക്കുകയാണുണ്ടായത്. സെലിബ്രിറ്റികളെ കൊണ്ടാടുന്ന ചാനലുകൾക്കും വാർത്താമാധ്യമങ്ങൾക്കും ഒരു പരിസ്ഥിതി പ്രവർത്തകന്റെ അനാർഭാടമായ വിയോഗം എങ്ങനെ വാർത്തയാകാൻ.

ആന്റപ്പന്റെ അന്യാദ്യശ്യാമായ സംഘടനാപാടവമാണ് കേരള തലസ്ഥാനത്തു വച്ച് മൂന്ന് ദിനം നീണ്ടുനിന്ന ഒരു പരിസ്ഥിതി ഉച്ചകോടി ഗ്രീൻ കമ്മ്യൂണിറ്റിക്ക് സംഘടിപ്പിക്കാൻ സാധിച്ചത്. തുടർന്ന് 14 ജില്ലകളിൽ ഒരു മാസം ഒരു ജില്ല എന്ന ക്രമത്തിൽ പരിസ്ഥിതി പ്രവർത്തകരുടെ മാഗ്നാകാർട്ടയായ റേച്ചർ കാഴ്സന്റെ സൈലന്റ് സ്പ്രിംഗ് എന്ന പുസ്തകത്തിന്റെ അമ്പതാം വാർഷികം വിജയകരമായി സംഘടിപ്പിക്കുവാൻ ആന്റപ്പന്റെ സംഘാടകമികവിനായി. ഒരു ജില്ലയിൽ ഒരു മാസം താമസിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് പരിസ്ഥിതിപ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് കേരളത്തിലെങ്ങും ഊർജ്ജം പകരുവാനും പരിസ്ഥിതി അവബോധം ജനകീയമാക്കുവാനും ഈ പരിപാടികൾ ഒട്ടൊന്നുമല്ല സഹായിച്ചത്. പരിസ്ഥിതി സംരക്ഷണപ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലേക്കും ഗ്രീൻ കമ്മ്യൂണിറ്റിയുടെ മുൻനിരയിലേക്ക് ഏറെ ആളുകളെ അണിനിരത്താൻ ഈ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് കഴിഞ്ഞു.

കടൽത്തീരത്തും കായലോരത്തും വയൽവരമ്പിലും കുന്നിൻ നെറുകിലും ആന്റപ്പന്റെ പാദങ്ങൾ പ്രകൃതിയെ തിരഞ്ഞെത്തി. റെയിൽവേ സ്റ്റേഷനും റെയിൽവേ കമ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റുകളും ബസ്റ്റാൻഡും വഴിയീറമ്പുകളും ഇന്ത്യൻ കോഫിഹൗസും പള്ളിയങ്കണവും അമ്പലമുറ്റവും വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളും കലാലയങ്ങളുമെല്ലാം പ്രകൃതിസ്നേഹികളെ കണ്ടുമുട്ടി പരിസ്ഥിതിയെ സംരക്ഷിക്കുവാനുള്ള സംഗമവേദികളായിരുന്നു ആന്റപ്പൻ. ചെന്നുചേർന്നിടങ്ങളിലെല്ലാം പുതിയൊരു പരിസ്ഥിതി സംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ വിത്തുവിതച്ച് അതിലധിഷ്ഠിതമായൊരു സാസംസ്കാരിക അവബോധം രൂപപ്പെടുത്തുവാൻ ആന്റപ്പന്റെ ഈ ഒറ്റയാൾ പോരാട്ടത്തിന് വലിയൊരളവിൽ കഴിഞ്ഞു. വെയിലോ മഴയോ പകലോ രാത്രിയോ ചുടോ തണുപ്പോ ഒന്നും ഈ തുടർപ്രക്രിയയിൽ നിന്നും ആന്റപ്പനെ പിന്തിരിപ്പിച്ചില്ല. അങ്ങനെ ഗ്രീൻ കമ്മ്യൂണിറ്റിയുടെ കൂടക്കീഴിലും കൊടിക്കീഴിലും പരിസ്ഥിതി സൗഹൃദ സംസ്കൃതിയെ നെഞ്ചേറ്റുന്ന പുതിയൊരു സന്നദ്ധസഖ്യം രൂപംകൊണ്ടു. ആ സന്നദ്ധസഖ്യത്തെ പുതിയ പടച്ചുയണിയിച്ച് നമ്മുടെ നാട്ടിൽ രൂപംകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന അങ്ങേയറ്റം പ്രതലോമകരവും ആപത്ക്കരവുമായ ആസൂര സംസ്കാരത്തിനെതിരെ പോരാടാൻ സന്നദ്ധമാക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള ശ്രമത്തിനിടയിലാണ് ആന്റപ്പന്റെ ആകസ്മിക വിയോഗവാർത്ത പ്രകൃതിസ്നേഹികളെ കഠിന വ്യഥയിലാഴ്ത്തിയത്.

കടപ്പാട്: എന്റെ ദേശം, മലയാളം സാംസ്കാരിക മാസിക

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