

Chapter 19

AWARENESS PROGRAMME

Environmental legislation and its implementation alone cannot address the very complicated environmental issues of the developing country like India. West Bengal is no exception in this principal. It is very important to involve the people at large in the environmental movement working along with government machineries to improve the environmental conditions. Generation of proper environmental awareness among various sector of the civic society obviously will help the government machinery to implement the environmental laws in much better way. The Government of West Bengal and State Board all along utilize this concept through environmental awareness programmes among the masses. However, these programmes were given a much more structured form from 2003 onwards when the Government of India started funding the National Green Corps (NGC) Programme programmes throughout the country with overall objective of spreading environmental awareness among school children. The Department of Environment, Government of West Bengal and the State Board with active cooperation from the Paschim Banga Vigyan Mancha have been very successful in spreading environmental awareness to the school children by extending NGC programmes to more schools. Currently 4750 schools have been included in this programme. Besides, educating the students about various environmental issues, the Board also involves a wide spectrum of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) utilizing their services towards generation of environmental awareness among general people. During 2007-

2008, various events were carried out under the State Board's environmental campaign under five different themes, namely:

- a) **Forest & Wildlife:** Nature trail programme, Nature Study Camp for normal as well as special school students were organized under this theme;
- b) **Environmental studies:** Workshops were conducted for school children on the most important global environmental issue at present i.e., 'Climate Change';
- c) **Biodiversity:** Environmental Awareness programmes to identify the different components of nature by touching, smelling and to identify animals, birds by their calls, Sit and Draw Competition on "Nature & Environment", Clay Modeling etc. were conducted for mentally and physically challenged students and underprivileged children under this theme;
- d) **Nature, Natural Resource, Environment & Society:** Various competitive events were conducted under the NGC Programme and the winners of these competitions were taken for an activity-filled nature study camp and *sensitization* Programme for NGOs were conducted under this theme.
- e) **Noise Pollution:** A number of training programmes for Operation & Management of Auto Emission Testing Centres (AETCs) in Kolkata & its adjoining areas and awareness programmes in Silence Zones were organized under WBPCB Environmental Campaign Programme.

These programmes conducted by the State Board's in 2007-2008, generated public awareness to a greater extent regarding various

environmental issues, such as global climate change, noise pollution etc. and provided encouragement to the general people of all levels to contribute towards environmental protection for a better and safe environment to live in. These programmes were highly publicized and were attended by people from all quarters. A total of 42 events were conducted under four different themes during the time period in question (Table- 19.1). A brief summary of the programmes held under the Environmental Campaign Programme during 2007-2008 is given in Annexure- VIII.

Table 19.1: Environmental Campaign Programme during 2007-2008

Sl. No.	Themes	No. of programmes
1.	Biodiversity	17
2	Forest & Wildlife	02
3	Nature, natural resource, environment & society	02
4	Environmental Studies	05
5.	Noise Pollution	16
	Total	42

Nation Green Corps Programmes in West Bengal

The National Green Corps (NGC) had been introduced by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Government of India with the aim of spreading awareness about environment, various environmental problems, way to solve those problems etc. among school children by involving them in various environment-related programmes through the Eco-clubs constituted in the respective schools. Under this programme, initiatives have been taken to set up Eco-clubs in maximum number of schools in every district of each State/Union Territory of the country. The members of these Eco-clubs constitute the National Green Corps.

In order to facilitate the NGC programmes, a Nodal Agency and an Implementing Agency have been designated for every State/Union Territory. In West Bengal, the State Board is the State Nodal Agency and the Paschim Banga Vigyan Mancha is the State Implementing Agency. In the year 2007-08 the number of NGC schools in West Bengal is 4750. The common programmes undertaken by the Eco-clubs of the NGC schools in West Bengal are as follows:

Seminars/talks/debates: A number of seminars/talks/debates were organized under NGC Programme on the topics related to different global environmental issues, present state of environmental pollution, different pollution mitigation and control measures etc. to generate knowledge as well as awareness and concern for the environment amongst the school children.

Nature camp/Field Visit: Through such Nature Camps/Field Visits the school children of different Eco-clubs get the opportunity to directly interact with and study on the nature, which is a unique combination of both the plants and animals, living and non-living components, biotic and abiotic factors of the environment. It is imperative for the children to understand the scientific processes influencing the distribution and abundance of organisms, the interactions among organisms, and the transformation of energy-flux.

Plantation programmes: Plantation programme is one of the most important initiative undertaken by maximum number of Eco-club members of respective schools under NGC activity. The main aim of this activity is to increase the earth's total green cover through extensive afforestation and prevention of illegal tree-cutting and encourage the whole society towards the same to save the environment.

Cleanliness Drive: With a vision that "Cleanliness begins in schools", the school

children are involved in activities, such as cleaning their school premises, before starting to make efforts to make the world a cleaner place to live in.

Awareness by rallies: The student members of the Eco-clubs organize and participate in rallies to make the people in their locality aware of various environmental issues, such as Climate Change, plastic pollution, noise pollution and observation of various environmentally important days etc.

Survey: Intensive nature survey works conducted by school children of different Eco-clubs enable them to get knowledge about the environmental condition of a particular area/ecosystem, biodiversity, recognize the intricate problems and probable measures to eliminate them. For instance, wetland survey carried out by Eco-club members helps them to study about the ecosystem biodiversity, the problems easily and pave the way towards solving the particular environmental problem.

Other activities: The other key activities undertaken by the individual schools and District Committee are Eco-club meetings, preparation of Eco-club diaries, Sky watching, setting up medicinal plant garden, observation of important days related to environment, such as World Environment Day, World Wetlands Day, National Science Day, Forest Week, etc.

Nature Study Camp at Gorumara

Under the WBPCB Environmental Campaign during 2007-2008, various competitions were organized for the student-members of the NGC programme in West Bengal. Under the broad heading '*Prakriti Amader*', the NGC students had participated in different individual and group level competitions under the theme 'Biodiversity for Life Sustenance'. The four individual events were 'Sit-and-Draw-Competition', 'Poster with Slogan', 'Report

Writing' and 'Essay Writing' and the five group events were 'Eco-Club Diary', 'Biodiversity Inventory', 'Environmental Status Survey', 'Best Medicinal Plant Garden' and 'Plantation programme at the school premises'. The district-level toppers of the individual events, and the candidates securing the first, second and third positions (for the individual events) and the top group (for the group events) at the state level are been taken for Gorumara Nature Study Camp.

A total number of 49 students as well as their teachers-in-charge from the various districts of West Bengal participated in the nature camp held at Gorumara Jungle Camp, Chalsa, Jalpaiguri district from January 4-7, 2008.



Nature Study Camp at Gorumara.



Nature Study Camp at Gorumara

Major Environmental Awareness activities by WBPCB

World Environment Day

World Environment Day, commemorated every year on June 5, is one of the major programme through which the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) stimulates worldwide awareness regarding environmental issues. The State Board celebrated the "World Environment Day, 2007" in a befitting manner. The World Environment Day theme selected by the United Nations Environment Programme for 2007 was "Melting Ice - a Hot Topic?". In support of International Polar year, the theme selected for 2007 focuses on the effects of climate change on polar eco systems, communities and other important consequences around the world.

A special programme was held at the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre, Bidhannagar on June 5, 2007. Shri Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal inaugurated the programme in connection with the celebration of World Environment Day 2007. Shri Sainen Sarkar, Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, Department of Parliamentary Affairs and Environment, Government of West Bengal was present in the inaugural programme. Prof. S. K. Sanyal, Vice Chancellor, Jadavpur University; Shri M. L. Meena, Principal Secretary, Department of Environment, Government of West Bengal; Prof. A. N. Basu, Chairman, WBPCB; Shri Debal Ray, Member Secretary, WBPCB; and Shri S. K. Bangur, President, Indian Chamber of Commerce were present amongst the other dignitaries attending the programme. Hon'ble Chief Minister released a publication 'WBPCB Environmental Campaign: An Update 2006-2007' and a CD on 'Air Quality Data of West Bengal 2006' during the inaugural programme.

Following the inaugural session of World Environment Day 2007, the Board organised a seminar on 'Global Climate Change: Issues &

Challenges for India' in association with the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Jadavpur University. Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal inaugurated the seminar. The seminar had two technical sessions. Technical Session I was chaired by Prof. A. N. Basu, Chairman, WBPCB and the key speakers were Dr. Prodipto Ghosh, Former Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests and Dr. Surya Sethi, Principal Advisor, Energy, Planning Commission, Government of India. Technical Session II was chaired by Dr. Prodipto Ghosh, and the key speakers were Prof. Jayashree Roy, Department of Economics, Jadavpur University; Dr. K. Krishna Kumar, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, and Dr. P. K. Aggarwal, Division of Environmental Sciences, Indian Agriculture Research Institute.

In connection with the celebration of World Environment Day 2007, a "Sit & Draw Competition" was organised in collaboration with the Pashim Banga Vigyan Mancha at the Netaji Indoor Stadium, Kolkata for school children only on June 3, 2007. More than 1300 students from different parts of West Bengal participated in "Sit & Draw Competition" in three age groups between 6 and 16 years (namely A, B and C). The topic given to Group A was "Tomar Paribesh" (Your Environment), while the topic given to Group B and C was "Tomar Chokhe Global Warming" (Global Warming in Your Eyes).



Sit & Draw competition at Netaji Indoor Stadium

The winners of the sit-and-draw competitions held in the previous years have received various national and international awards for art. Four such talented painters, namely Pallabi Majumdar, Riya Das, Arpita Das and Subhonil Saha performed their special work of art on the subject of global warming.

Also, at the same ceremony at Netaji Indoor Stadium, prizes were given to the winners. Shri Sailen Sarkar, Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, Departments of Parliamentary Affairs and Environment, Government of West Bengal; Prof. A. N. Basu, Chairman, WBPCB; Shri Debal Ray, Member Secretary, WBPCB and Shri Sankar Chakaraborty, President, Paschim Banga Vigyan Mancha were present during the prize-distribution ceremony to encourage the winners. The sit-and-draw competition created a feeling of environmental awareness among the young participants, and helped to reflect the underlying objective of achieving a cleaner and safer environment.



Prize distribution ceremony for Sit & Draw competition at Netaji Indoor Stadium

All the Regional Offices of West Bengal Pollution Control Board celebrated "World Environment Day" with the help of local NGOs and other organisations.

Janaswasthya Mela

The State Board participated at the Janaswasthya Mela held at Park Circus Maidan,

Kolkata from 17-22 April, 2007 in a befitting manner. The Mela was organized by Kolkata Janaswasthya Udjapan Committee in association with Kolkata Municipal Corporation. The various activities of the Board related to environmental protection were displayed at the fair. Different environmental monitoring equipment like sound level meter, gauge meter, high volume sampler were exhibited. Different types of informative leaflets were also distributed to raise the awareness on environmental matters among the general visitors especially school children. Apart from this, Board Officials satisfied visitors to answer their queries every day.

Debate Competition on “Global Climate Change and its impact”

Like every year, this year also District Students’ Seminar ‘07, South 24 Parganas organised by the Department of Youth Services, Government of West Bengal in collaboration with Birla Industrial & Technological Museum, Government of India on the topic of “Global Climate Change and Its Impact”. This was basically a debate competition amongst the students upto 10 standard. Shri Arup Guchait, Public Relation Officer attended the programme as judge.

Malda Book Fair

Malda District Book Fair & Exhibition committee organised their 19th Malda District Book Fair & Exhibition-2008 at Malda College Maidan from 08.01.2008 to 14.01.2008. Theme of the exhibition was “Nature & Environment, Pollution problem & its solution of Malda district”.

In this connection the organiser proposed and requested the State Board for participation by installing one State Board’s stall for exhibiting the activities of the State Board, related to environmental matter. The State Board pleased to approve the same and Malda

Regional Office was directed to make arrangement for erecting a stall bearing State Board’s name and logo, manning of the stall, decoration of the stall etc., Accordingly, Malda Regional Office took necessary action and installed a stall, displayed & demonstrated different equipments like Sound Level Meter, Gauge Meter, High Volume Sampler, display board and circulated leaflets also for creating mass awareness amongst the people. The Book Fair was inaugurated by renowned poet & writer Shri Sunil Gangopadhyay and Shri Sailen Sarkar, Hon’ble Minister-in-charge, Departments of Parliamentary Affairs and Environment, Govt. of West Bengal were present as Chief Guest. The State Board’s stall was inaugurated by the Hon’ble Minister-in-charge, Department of Environment.

Malda Regional Office also took initiative to restrict the use of banned plastic carry bags by different stall occupiers / customers and use of plastic cups by the hawkers inside the mela ground. In this effect a meeting was held between the organiser of Malda District Book Fair & Exhibition-2008 and Malda Regional Office, prior to opening of this book fair. During the time of mela necessary announcement had also been made time to time and requested to all concerned for not to use any banned plastic carry bags. The officials of MRO also visited and made raids to different stalls and, if found, there was any stock of banned plastic carry bags in any stall and or using the same, immediately the same had been seized and requested the stall occupiers not to use the same further more. Plastic cups had also been seized from some hawkers. During mela, everyday the State Board’s officials made routine visit/inspection to different stalls to oversee whether the restriction of use of banned plastic carry bags was strictly maintained.

With these efforts, use of banned plastic carry bags & plastic cups could be restricted in this Book Fair and the people also appreciated

& supported these activities of the State Board. The Book Fair ended peacefully and successfully.

Acharya Satyendranath Bosu Smarak Bigyan 'O' Projukti Mela

The State Board erected a well decorated stall at Acharya Satyendranath Bosu Smarak Bigyan O Projukti Mela which was organised at Hedua, Kolkata on and from January 17 – 21, 2008. The various activities of the Board related to environmental protection was displayed at the fair. Different machines like sound level meter, gauge meter, high volume sampler were exhibited. Different types of informative leaflets were also distributed to raise the awareness on environmental matters among the general visitors and specially school children. Apart from this, Board Officials satisfied visitors to answer their queries everyday.

Seminar on Environment

Public Relation and Information Cell of the State Board participated in a seminar on environmental issues on the occasion of celebration of Silver Jubilee Programme of Rathtala Colony High School, Ranaghat, Nadia on 3rd August, 2007. Other than Shri Arup Guchait, Public Relation Officer of the Board, Shri Debendra Nath Biswas, Member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly was one of the speakers in this seminar.

Rakamari Trek and Tour, one of the prominent environment friendly organisation of Basirhat Town of South 24 Parganas organised a seminar on environmental issues like water crisis, air pollution, sound pollution, river erosion etc.

Amongst the speakers Shri Ajoy Chakraborty, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Shri Zahidul Sarkar, Dr. Ramlal Roy, Principal, Basirhat College, Dr. Hiranmoy Rakshit, Professor, Basirhat College, Shri Swapan Roy, Head Master, Basirhat High

School, Shri Sukumar Rakshit, Teacher, Basirhat High School and Shri Arup Guchait, Public Relation Officer of the Board deliberated their lectures on above subjects. Dr. Narayan Das, Principal, Sahidullah College chaired the seminar.

Ghatal Vidyasagar High School of Paschim Medinipur celebrated the year long closing ceremony of the 125th Anniversary during 24-29 November, 2007 at their school maidan. One seminar on environment, water resource, global warming and bio-technology was organised on 27th November 2007. Amongst the speakers Prof. B. C. Mal, Departmental Head of Agriculture & Food Processing, and Prof. B. C. Ghosh and Retired Prof. R. N. Chattopadhyay of same Department of IIT, Kharagpur and Shri Arup Guchait, Public Relation Officer of the Board deliberated their lectures on the above subjects. Moreover, the State Board participated in their exhibition with some of the best campaign materials which create a lot of enthusiasm among the local students as well as general mass.

21st Industrial India Trade Fair

The State Board participated at the 21st Industrial India Trade Fair held at Melan Mela Complex (Opposite Science City), organised by Bengal National Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Department of Commerce and Industries, Government of West Bengal in association with India Trade Promotion Organization on and from January 17, 2008 to January 28, 2008. An area of 500 sq. ft. was allotted for Board's stall in the West Bengal pavilion. The Board's stall was decorated with various informative display boards, important newspaper clippings, different machines like sound level meter, sound limiter, gauge meter, high volume sampler and publications of the Board etc. Different types of informative leaflets were distributed to raise the awareness on environmental matters among the general

visitors. Apart from this, Board Officials satisfied visitors to answer their queries everyday.



Stall of the Board at 21st Industrial India Trade Fair.



Stall of the Board at 21st Industrial India Trade Fair.

Exhibition in connection with State Science & Technology Congress

West Bengal State Council of Science & Technology and Department of Science & Technology, Government of West Bengal organised the 15th State Science & Technology Congress at Bengal Engineering & Science University, Shibpur, Howrah during 28-29 February, 2008 in collaboration with the said University and in association with Paschim Banga Vigyan Mancha to celebrate the National Science Day. In this occasion, one science exhibition was also organised. The West Bengal Pollution Control Board took part in this exhibition by displaying various campaign

boards on different subjects of environment and pollution control activities.

Celebration of Independence Day and Republic Day

The Independence Day was celebrated with enthusiasm in the Head Office. All the employees took part in this programme.

The Republic Day was celebrated with enthusiasm in the Head Office. All employees took part in this programme.

Special campaign during Puja Days

The State Board organised a meeting with the enlisted NGOs of the Board and 50 nos. of noted Puja Committees of the districts of Kolkata, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas and Howrah on October 05, 2007 at the auditorium of Paribesh Bhawan. Shri Debal Ray, Member Secretary of the Board presided over the meeting. Shri Biswajit Mukherjee, Senior Law Officer and Dr. Debashis Chakraborty, Scientist remained present in this meeting. The Member Secretary in his inaugural speech described the role and activities of the State Board during festival season. He also praised the role of the NGOs in case of "Campaign Project on Restriction of Using Plastic Carry Bags". Shri Ray requested all the NGOs and the Puja Committees to restrict the Noise Pollution and other types of pollution during the puja days. Shri Biswajit Mukherjee, Senior Law Officer made a beautiful screen presentation on different environmental matters. Shri Mukherjee projected the rules & regulations, norms of different environmental issues relating to festival season. For better campaign on various environmental matters, the State Board distributed hundreds of posters, banners, leaflets amongst the participants of the meeting.

Special Campaign on "Restriction of Using Plastic Carry Bags"

The West Bengal Pollution Control Board

banned the manufacture, use and storage of plastic carry bags of less than 40 microns thickness and with dimension less than 16 inches X 12 inches with effect from June 5, 2007. Moreover, on the basis of the circular issued by the Chief Secretary to the Government of West Bengal (vide memo no. EN/981/T-V-1/002/2004, dated 23.05.2007), the WBPCB devised a rigorous campaign programme in different markets and schools all over the State to popularize the restriction of using plastic carry bags. Accordingly, the State Board floated a campaign project on "Restriction of Using Plastic Carry Bags" amongst the 62 enlisted NGOs of the Board. Project proposals of 58 nos. of enlisted NGOs were accepted and approved by the Board. A sum of Rs. 5,000/- (Rupees five thousand) only was awarded in favour of each selected proposal. Accordingly, sanction order of Rs. 5,000/- were issued in favour of 58 nos. of NGOs of different districts of West Bengal.

The aforesaid project started on 16.08.2007 and ended on 15.09.2007. During the 30 days project time, each NGO performed their campaign programme on "Restriction of Using Plastic Carry Bags" minimum in five schools and in five market places. Each NGO organized meeting with all market committees, discussed the matter with all shop owners, tried to convince general people. During their campaign in schools, each NGO discussed the importance of restriction of using plastic carry bags with teachers, non-teaching staff members as well as students. And finally, the NGOs assessed the impact of their activities during their campaign in market places and schools.

The State Board provided substantial volume of banners of 6 ft. (W) X 4ft. (L) size and leaflets bearing the captions on said subject to all project winning NGOs. Each NGO fixed minimum one banner at each market place and at each school and distributed leaflets amongst the mass during their campaign. The State Board also provided a model copy of "Impact Assessment Sheet" and a model copy of "Final Report".

For organizing successful campaign on "Restriction of Using Plastic Carry Bags", the State Board issued request letters on behalf of the enlisted NGOs in favour of Headmaster/ Headmistress of concerned 290 schools and about concerned 300 market committees of different districts, Panchayet Pradhans of concerned 39 Gram Panchayets of different districts, Chairmen of concerned 15 Municipalities of different districts and Mayors of Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Howrah Municipal Corporation, asking their all kind possible cooperation to help control the volume of plastic waste, and improve the overall environmental condition of their area. The State Board also requested District Information & Cultural Officer of concerned districts to kindly endorse the final report of the NGOs of his/her district and to render all possible cooperation. All the Nodal Officers of the Police Administration of different districts engaged in environmental matters were also informed accordingly. This project was acclaimed by the different corners of the society. It encouraged general mass to restrict the using of banned plastic carry bags.

Awareness, Meeting & Training Programmes on noise and auto emission

Interactive programme with Nodal Officers of WBPCB and Police Authority for controlling noise pollution during festive season

Meetings were held with the senior officers of State Board and Kolkata and West Bengal Police on 27.07.2007 and 14.09.2007 at Paribesh Bhawan, Bidhannagar and also on 09.09.2007 at Paribesh Bhawan, Siliguri to strengthen inter-departmental coordination in effective enforcement of the important laws/orders under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 during the major festivals in the State and to chalk out plans and programmes to control noise pollution caused by indiscriminate use of

loudspeakers and firecrackers during the major festivals in the State of West Bengal.

Training programmes for controlling noise pollution and auto emission

For effective control of noise pollution, the Board conducted seven training programmes on air-noise pollution and control techniques during the year 2007-2008 (Table 19.2). A total of 233 participants attended the programme, which includes (a) Nodal officials of West Bengal Police and Kolkata Police; (b) Operators and managers of Auto Emission Testing Centres (AETCs) in Kolkata and adjoining areas.

Meetings with the NGOs

The Board organised meetings on a regular basis with the enlisted NGOs working at different district of West Bengal. These meetings were held at the Head Office and different Regional Offices to disseminate Board's orders environmental news and to discuss the campaign process on various issues such as noise pollution, problems of plastic wastes, efficient waste management etc. Especially during the time of celebration of World

Environment Day and Festive season plenty of campaign materials such as environmental posters and banners were distributed among the enlisted NGOs, industries and other organizations.

Financial Assistance

The State Board sanctioned financial assistance in favour of the Organising Committees of Kreta Suraksha Mela 2007, Krishi Mela 2008, Sundarban Kristi O Loko Sanskriti Utsab, Palta Book Fair, Thakurnagar Book Fair, Science & Technology Fair, Vidyasagar Mela etc. in the form of advertisement in their souvenir to encourage the environmental activities in their programmes. The State Board also sanctioned financial assistance in the form of advertisement in favour of some organisations like Bangiya Bijanan Parishad, Horticulture Association, Ghatal Vidyasagar High school, Bijnan Anweshan, Konnagar Public Library & Reading Room etc. for their environmental activities. The State Board sponsored by financial assistance to organise Silpa Baniya Mela, South 24 Parganas and North Bengal Industrial Trade Fair 2008.

Table 19.2: Training programme on air, water & noise pollution monitoring & control

Date	Venue	Participants	No. of participants
15.06.2007	Paribesh Bhawan Bidhannagar, Kolkata	Operators & Managers of AETCs in Kolkata and adjoining areas	23
20.06.2007	Paribesh Bhawan Bidhannagar, Kolkata	Nodal Officers of Kolkata Police & West Bengal Police	24
22.06.2007	Paribesh Bhawan Bidhannagar, Kolkata	Operators & Managers of AETCs in Kolkata and adjoining areas	22
29.06.2007	Paribesh Bhawan Bidhannagar, Kolkata	Operators & Managers of AETCs in Kolkata and adjoining areas	21
06.07.2007	Paribesh Bhawan Bidhannagar, Kolkata	Operators & Managers of AETCs in Kolkata and adjoining areas	22
13.07.2007	Paribesh Bhawan Bidhannagar, Kolkata	Operators & Managers of AETCs in Kolkata and adjoining areas	25
10.09.2007	Paribesh Bhawan Matigara, Siliguri	Operators & Managers of AETCs in Kolkata and adjoining areas	26