

Children Movement for Climate Justice
International Environment Day Celebraion

On June 7th 2015

Mini Marathon – Envi-THON 2015



Venue : Chennai Marina Beach

Distance : 3 km- Labour Statue to Light House (Service Lane)

Timing : 6.30a.m to 9.00a.m

Envi-THON

Children **M**ovement for **C**limate **J**ustice is a children led network for ensuring ecological rights of children as part of overall child rights as specified in UNCRC. This initiative is an offshoot of the global vision of Development partners of Kindernothilfe in India, Which was extensively discussed in one of the partners forum with children to make it a reality that natural resources are used judiciously and conserved to ensure our present and coming children community enjoy and adapt. This whole process is seen from Rights Perspectives which calls for not only mitigation and adaptation but also lobby and advocacy to influence the policy processes by building appropriate public awareness. Children Movement started its mission in 2008 in Tamilnadu and gradually spread across many environment protection NGOs and children from Seven States of India. Since then CMCJ children were involved in various environment protection activities to address climate change from Ecological Rights Perspective and carried out various mitigation and advocacy activities. Efforts of children have been greatly appreciated by many development oriented organization both National and International.

Members of CMCJ have been involved in conducting participatory studies across various food security issues, revival of traditional herbal and organic farming knowledge and study of endangered species due to climate change.

Since then the children adopted various strategies to address the issue of climate justice like role plays, street theatre, communication programs, public meetings, Exhibitions/ seed festivals, and awareness camps. Also the consultative meetings provide space for building leadership skills and sharpening children perspective on saving mother earth.

During 2012 CMCJ organized a National Yatra from Kanyakumari to Chennai – similarly children from the North travelled from Koraput, Odisha to Chennai vial Andrapradesh and Karnataka. A concluding meeting and pledge was taken at Chennai in which Honorable Central Minister Shri Mallikarjuna Karge presided over the event as special guest.

On this year 2015 May our children raised 180,000 signatures to make an appeal to Government of India to ratify Optional Protocol 3 to UNCRC in Delhi at the Constitution Club. The appeal along with signatures has been submitted to Government through the Chairperson of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).

CMCJ Tamilnadu chapter is active since the emergence of the Movement in 2008. To highlight some of the interventions....

- During 2009 an environment awareness human chain campaign with 4000 children was organized at 8 Blocks in Virudhunagar, at the end of which the representatives of the movement handed over a petition to the District Collector, Virudhunagar.
- More than 1000 children representatives participated in the “Voices of Children for Climate Justice” conference held in Chennai
- 2012 members of CMCJ Tamilnadu undertook a study of tribal eco system by spending one week at Nilgiri District. This initiative gave insight to most of the children who are from coastal and plains to understand the life styles of tribals with forest, forest eco system and bio diversity jointly with Forest Department, Government of Tamilnadu.
- Children led Ecological Farming Learning Centre established in Tiruchuli provide hands on experience to children by children themselves on food security, organic farming, eco friendly practices, no conventional energy, herbal plants and its uses, soil and water conservation measures etc. This is a on going program which attracts many children from nearby schools every year to spend time and learning eco farming system.

As part of our strategy, Tamilnadu CMCJ chapter proposed to generate broad base awareness among the general public by organizing a mini marathon in Chennai to observe International Environment Day on the 05th June 2015 on Chennai Marina Beach, Service Lane, starting from the Labor Statue to Lighthouse. We expected about 600 children (members of CMCJ from different districts of Tamilnadu) and general public including children to participate in the marathon. Since June 5th fell on a weekday, we decided to celebrate it on 7th June at Chennai marina by organizing Mini Marathon. This event was jointly organised by CMCJ in collaboration with Rotaract of Spectrum and News7 Tamil as Media Partner. We titled the Mini Marathon as Envi-THON 2015 where “Envi” stands for Environment and “THON” stands for Marathon. Its focus was to bring awareness among the general public about Global Warming, create visibility CMCJ and to enlighten the general Public about importance of Environment.

As planned, around 600 children and adults participated in this mini marathon. Our Chennai based fellow facilitating organisations - CCRD and Mariyalaya, mobilised around 250

children and 150 plus children from SPEECH, RCPDS, WWTC, SANDS, Marialaya Tirupur, SASY and AROGYAAGAM joined the event. This really encouraged the strength of CMCJ district level units as broad base participation. In addition other collaborating organisations like Rotract of Spectrum and individual partners as well general public joined the event. There had been overwhelming enquires from many environment activists and children through face book where we have created an event page. Except the Chennai based partners, children from other Partners from different area/districts reached Chennai the previous night. Local logistical arrangements, accommodation and other facilities have been arranged by the National Co-ordinator and CCRD.

As part of preliminary planning and to sort out logistical arrangements, police permission, budgetary responsibility sharing two rounds of meetings were held at Chennai involving all partner representatives such as News 7 channel, Rotract Spectrum, local volunteers and CMCJ TN and National representatives. The meetings discussed every details elaborately to ensure good co-ordination and execution



All participants were given T-shirts, Caps and Certificates with logos of sponsoring organisations. CMCJ Tamilnadu chapter managed to raise donations from many local individuals and business centres to the tune of 1,50,000/- by way of cash and materials. (detailed list and source is given at the end of this report). In order to ensure child safety two refreshing stalls setup every one kilometre along the marathon route with water, banana and glucose. In addition we involved the Government emergency medical 108 services with their mobile van with full equipments and medical service staff. All children were given warm up exercises led by volunteers from Rotaract Spectrum for about 30 minutes just before the start of EnviTHON.

Objectives of the Envi-THON

- To raise awareness among the general public, as a children led event, highlighting the issue of climate change, need for environment protection and its implication to child rights.
- To highlight the need for working closely with government initiatives and to demonstrate the personal commitment of children to reduce pollution, preserving environment, bio-diversity, protecting water supplies and water bodies and increasing access to proper sanitation and its linkage to Child Rights and Child Protection.

On 07.06.2015, children woke up very early (05.00 a.m.) to get ready for the event enthusiastically masked their face with white and green colour paints and drawings of trees, plants etc. When they all assembled at the starting point, the place as so colourful and every one passing by as well those who go for morning walk on the beach line turned their attention to the children. There was very good response from the press and television channels to cover the event. Mr.ThomasJayaraj from CCRD addressed the public about the marathon which was followed by the special address delivered by the National Convenor Dr.JohnDevavaram about the event. At 6.30a.m., Special invitee Mr.Sanath Reddy, the lead actor of D'Monti Colony and Mr.Sathish Samuel, KNH India Co-ordinator started the event by flagging off the EnviTHON.



All the Participant were running with great enthusiasm, spreading awareness with the faces painted green and white. Alongside the running children volunteers distributed handbills with message on CMCJ, its activities, call for solidarity to ensure childrights and protection of Ecological Rights for children.



Several standees and banners were arranged at the starting point and the finishing line focussing the general public, trying to highlight the issue of climatic change, need for environmental protection and its implication to child rights. A mobile public addressing system fitted to a open van continued to make announcements, slogan related to environment protection, etc.

Conclusion:

Special invitee of Mr.Sathish Samuel KNH country co-ordinator, Mr Ananth, Associate District Governor of Rotray Club and Mr.Sananth Reddy jointly with appreciated all the participants / runners who finished the 4km run and reached the Lighthouse. KNH co-

coordinator, in his concluding remarks mentioned that The EnviTHON fulfilled its expected outcome as it reached more than 10,000 general public with message on environment protection and Ecological Child Rights as integral part of overall CHILD RIGHTS. Many news channels and newspaper covered the event and they have positively published the news with great appreciation for children and CMCJ. The event gave good visibility for children led initiative and CMCJ. He also suggested that CMCJ Tamil Nadu and other State chapters too can continue such marathon events in the future since this event proved as good as intensions. Towards the end special invitees and National Convenor distributed the participation Certificates to appreciate the participants. Mr Nirmal Raja, CMCJ Tamilnadu Convener concluded the event with vote of thanks.



Press Clippings

City PAGE 5
MONDAY | 8 JUNE 2015 | CHENNAI DECCAN CHRONICLE

Event was organised to mark World Environment Day 500 students join eco run

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI JUNE 7

About 500 school and college students from different districts of Tamil Nadu participated in 'Envi-Thon' a run of 4-kilometre at Marina beach.

The run was organised by Children's Movement for Climate Justice (CMCJ), in association with Rotaract Club of Spectrum on Sunday to create awareness about environmental issues to mark World Environment Day among students.

Students from many districts, including Tirupur, Tiruchengode, Thoothukudi, Cuddalore, Tirupur, Virudhunagar and Chennai, participated in the run which commenced at 6.45 am from Labour statue and ended at Lighthouse on Marina Beach around 8 am.

S. Subhalakshmi, a college student from Sivakasi district, said she often participates in environmental events as she strongly supports the cause. "We need to create awareness among the future generation. Usually, I advise people to switch off unnecessary lights, not waste water and not to pollute the environment," she added.

Dr John Devarajan, national convener of CMCJ, said following zero emission is actually not possible. He said, "But we are trying to make children aware of global warming and other environmental issues, as the impact will be on children and the future generation."

The issue should be addressed in three ways, he said.

The first step is adaptation - by which children need to be trained and made aware of various issues. The second step is mitigation - people need to be motivated to stop usage of plastics and other materials which are hazardous for the environment. The third step is advocacy - Policies framed by the government for industrial projects may have adverse effect on the environment. This, in turn, would affect child rights. Therefore, children can stop the policymakers.

Students get set for the Envi-Thon a run of 4-kilometre at Marina beach. — DC



29 tonnes of garbage picked up from coast

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI JUNE 7

In an initiative to create awareness for environmental impact of the increasing garbage footprint and health hazards of plastics, 5,600 volunteers cleaned up 29 tonnes of garbage from the beaches between Marina and Paduvaiyaru as part of the 6th edition of Chennai coastal clean up on Sunday.

Landmark Housing Project joined hands with Chennai Trekking Club for cleaning up the coastal region. The team was provided with all necessary materials like reusable gloves, reusable bags for garbage collection, transport and refreshment.

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ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN SUCH EVENTS

Landmark Housing Project
Rotaract Club of Spectrum
Lighthouse Chennai of U
Environ International
Dobotic Consulting India

They will hand pick visible garbage that mat the beaches. In the initiative of Chennai corporation, 120 major corporates, NGOs, schools and other groups participated from 6 am to 9 am.

The volunteers segregated garbage into three major categories which included 15 per cent glass, 38 per cent recyclable waste (plastics, sandals, cardboard, fishing nets) and 47 per cent non-recyclable waste. About 85 per cent of the total volume of the garbage collected, is recycled by Earth recycler.

CMCJ has been organising the initiative for the past two months around the city to create awareness about the negative impact of plastics. These include flash mobs, street plays and mimes at beaches, IT Parks and malls. Volunteers also created wall paintings at Marina, Tiruvanniyur.

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CITY EXPRESS
The New Indian Express | Chennai, Monday, 8 June, 2015

Running to Make a 'Little' Difference

Chennai: In light of World Environment day, members of the Children's Movement for Climate Justice (CMCJ) took to the Marina beach stretch on Sunday as they ran a marathon from Labour Statue up to the Lighthouse to raise awareness on climate change.

The Envi-Thon which was jointly organised by the Rotaract Club of Spectrum, had almost 300 kids from all across the state participating - Madurai, Cuddalore, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin.

Seeking to convey the core beliefs of climate change, the volunteers whose ages range between 13 to 23 take active part by conducting live awareness shows and mimes, talking to schools that have instituted the National Green Corps (NGC) and have even appealed to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). Started in 2008 in Virudhunagar, the organisation now is run extensively by children volunteers who have grown up working for CMCJ. "You'd be surprised. The kids know all about climate change. We help out a village Tiruchull near Madurai, and they do everything from solar power collection, to eco-friendly irrigation. The kids pitch in a lot," says Deepika, the National coordinator.

"We need to focus on reducing emission. 0% is the ideal, but its impossible in an industry-driven society. So what we can do is help scale-down on emitting, disposing waste by segregation and encouraging people to acquaint themselves with recycling methods," says John Pevavaram, National Convener of CMCJ. With a presence in seven states, the marathon that followed a rally and human chain is but another step toward conserving climate.

The kids know all about climate change and handle everything from solar power to irrigation

Deepika, CMCJ coordinator



Participants of the Envi-Thon organised by Children Movement for Climate Justice and Rotaract Club of Spectrum, on the Marina Beach on Sunday | R SATISH BABU

