

Report on World Wet Lands Day Conference, 09 for Ramsar site

One day Conference on "Students Participation in Clean Creek Movement" was organized by Enviro-Vigil Thane, India on the eve of "World Wetlands Day". Enviro-Vigil, Thane, India is an NGO working for more than ten (10) years in the area of Environment Development started "Clean Creek Movement" a year ago. As a part of this movement, it organized one day conference on "Students Participation in Clean Creek Movement" on 2nd Feb 09. Last year on the same date, we organized similar seminar at Thane in cooperation with Thane Municipal Corporation at the expanse of Thane Creek, encompassing Kalyan – Dombivali –Ulhasnagar. The aim of the conference was to educate & make aware the local governing bodies, students & society on the whole about the Current Scenario and to make them a partner in this movement. We organized this seminar 2009 at Dombivali in association with Kalyan Dombivali Municipal Corporation (KDMC).

Shri Narendra Pawar, Deputy Mayor of KDMC Formally inaugurated the Conference. The inaugural function was with novel concept of providing an *Ocimum* sapling with soil, manure & water. Dr. Sanjay Joshi, the Secretary, EnviroVigil welcomed the guest of honour and the audience. He summarized the on-going projects of Enviro vigil. Prof. Vidyadhar Walavalkar, the Secretary General of Enviro Vigil in his flowing language established a quick rapport with the student participants. He explained the theme of Clean Creek Movement (CCM) and appealed them to contribute in the project. Prof. Walavalkar emphasized that this creek should be owned by each & every citizen & neighbour of Thane and assured of the success of the movement with everyone's help. "Aaple Paryavaran", Enviro Vigil's periodical produced a special edition for the World Wetlands Day and the copy was released by Mr. Narendra Pawar, Honorable Deputy Mayor, KDMC. The release ceremony was typical of Enviro Vigil, their paper pulp workshop activists, Mr. Amol Chavan & Ms. Yogita Sawant had strived to make a beautiful pearl oyster out of paper mash & the release of special edition of "Aaple Paryavaran" was done by opening the bivalve to get the copy to be released within it! The design of this edition was done by Ms Darshana Rakesh Gawde as she does for the other editions, too. The Chairperson for the inauguration function was Mr. Narendra Pawar, Hon'ble Dy. Mayor, KDMC. He expressed his deep concern about the current status of creek & assured all the help to

Enviro Vigil for their efforts to save the creek. Executive engineer, KDMC, Mr. Ravindra Puranik was present for the inauguration & wished good luck to CCM.

The main highlight of the conference – “Students Participation in Clean Creek Movement” was the oral/power point presentations/poster presentation by students. First inaugurated Session was of oral PPP's. A documentary on "Jayakwadi A Bird's Paradise" was shown before the session started. 1st presentation was made by CHM College, Ulhasnagar. Mr. Swapneel Lokegaonkar presented the paper on "A case study of physico-bio-chemical factors in Waldhuni River (nallah)". This was followed by equally studied, short paper presentation by Mr. Nitin Walmiki from MD College, Parel. He gave an account of Avian & Reptilian fauna in and around Shiwadi creek. This was the last Presentation before lunch break. Post Lunch Seminar was started through a guest Power Point Presentation by Mr. Vinay Nikam, TMC Officer and Ph.D. Student at IITB.

The guest Presentation was followed by two power point presentations; the first by Jhunjhunwalla College, Ghatkopar. Mr. Rambahadur Subhedi [“Bio diversity in Panvel creek”] and second one was by Mr. Sanjay Durve & his team from SIES Management Institute, Nerul, New Mumbai [“Technical Details of Wetland”].

Poster presentations were made by the students from CHM College, Ulhasnagar [Saurabh Attarde & team]; National College, Bandra; Vighnesh Nair and Sarah Oommen and their teams.

The chief guest for the conference was Dr. Mohan Kodarkar, Secretary, Indian Association of Aquatic Biologist (IAAB), Hyderabad & renowned Aquatic Biologist, was the judge for the oral session in which he was assisted by Dr. Naresh Tekale, Botanist & Environmentalist. Dr. R. P. Athalye, Reader, Zoology Dept., BNB College, Thane and Dr. Ms. Suvarna Rawal from BNN College, Bhiwandi, were the judges for the poster presentation competition.

The conference was attended actively by more than 150 students from 11 different colleges. Eminent Scientists, Academicians, Administrators were there to interact with the students and provide valued inputs throughout the Seminar. The main significant fact was the enthusiastic participation of non science faculty students from commerce, arts & management faculties. Their enthusiasm and urge to undertake scientific projects was very commendable.

Valedictory function was chaired by Dr. Mohan Kodarkar & specially attended by KDMC Secretary, Mr. Shridhar Thalla. Mr. Thalla expressed his open and supportive thoughts to protect Nature.

Vote of thanks was offered by the co-conveyor of this conference, Mrs. Manasi Kale from KVPendharkar College, Dombivali in her lucid language. Dr. S. Rawal spoke on behalf of the juries, regarding organizing the conference. The epitome of the entire day was the presidential speech by Dr. Mohan Kodarkar. Dr. Kodarkar, using poetic quotes made valuable suggestions & tips to younger generation. He opined that the youth have to make use of modern technology, internet, blogs to develop movements like Clean Creek Movement & ultimately for entire environmental integrity and development. This speech was an ideal model for the superb elegance & wisdom. The valedictory function was also attended by KDMC executive engineer Mr. Ravindra Puranik.

The entire day proceedings were anchored and in valedictory function was summarised by the Convener of the Conference, Enviro Vigil Director & Clean Creek Movement Mentor Dr. Prasad Karnik. The summary concluded the Day-long Conference.

To make this program a great success, many dignitaries offered helping hands. The official sponsor and joint organizer KDMC was the pillar of it. Mr. Thalla (KDMC Secretary), Mr. Narendra Pawar, Hon'ble Dy. Mayor, KDMC took maximum efforts to organize the conference and sponsored food and stationary.

The prize of worth Rs.1000 /- , Rs. 750 /- , Rs.500 /- for three winners in oral & poster presentation were sponsored by KDMC. A special prize of Rs.750/- was sponsored by IAAB, Hyderabad .

The Entire function was organized successfully under the able guidance of Dr. Vikas Hajirnis (President, Enviro Vigil). Prof. Vidhyadhar Walavalkar (General Secretary, Enviro Vigil) coordinated and planned the event properly. Convener Dr. Prasad Karnik & Co-convener Mrs. Manasi Kale held their responsibility well. Dr. Pramod Salaskar, Joint Secretary of the conference specifically contributed in contacting the academic institutes. Dr. Sanjay Joshi, Shri. Ravindra Kadam & Shri. Prasad Date actively helped in the organizing the day. Miss Dipali Devale of Enviro Vigil, very ably worked as Secretary for the entire event from conception to concluding.

All in all the active participation of Students, Academicians, Administrators, Scientists and Responsible Members of the Society assured that the Creek and all other Wetlands are in safe and secure hands of next Generation.