

## Pollinators conservation awareness programme at Tirunelveli



Posters used to explain pollinator types

On 7 July 2018, a social awareness seminar was conducted at Lakshimpuram organized by YMCA Tirunelveli. About 41 students and teachers participated.

The Secretary, Daniel Jeyaseelan, welcomed the gathering and Paul Peter Manickam, President of YMCA gave the presidential address. Various technical sessions were conducted on various topics by Asir Charles Neil, PG Asst Govt HSS, Munneerpallam; Effective Communication by V. Manickam, Former HOD of Tamil Department, St. John's College; Role of Bank in Social Development – Edwin Kandasamy, Former Manager – SBI; Nature Conservation-communication science for conservation by Rani Kirubairaj, Retd. PG Botany Asst. (NGC – Coordinator).

Ms. Kirubairaj handled the session through activities on 'Pollinators'. She asked the students sit in a circle and she explained about the pollinators using education kit produced by Zoo Outreach Organization. She also interacted with the students and lead them through a discussion to make them understand the need for pollinators and its role. The teachers also participated in this discussion and explained the different kinds of flowers, types of pollination and pollinators. They also learned the terms Entomophily (insect) pollinators and other vertebrate pollinators such as Myrmecophily, Chiropterophily, Ornithophily, Zoophily and Malacophily.

She explained and listed out both invertebrates and vertebrates that help in pollination. She also spoke about the primary pollinators, the bees. She described the scope of bee



keeping for pollination in India. Total bee dependent crops in India are around 50 million hectares. One hundred and fifty million colonies of bees are needed to meet this that rate of 3 bee colonies per hectare of crops. At present only 1.2 million colonies exist. Because bees forage usually within the radius of about 12 km to harvest their nectar and pollen loads, and then return to their own lives (TNAU, 2018).

### Self made masks and headbands in use

Pollinators decline is a worsening, worrying message to human beings.

The main threats are habitat loss, invasive plant species, broad-spectrum pesticide use, disease, climate change, and removal of native wild plants, shrubs and herbs that are the specific food & egg-laying place for specific butterflies. Pollinators need a healthy environment to sustain healthy ecosystem for us all.

At the end of the programme, the students understood the connection between plants and gardening, pollinators and food. So students pledged to grow more flowering plants & fruits yielding trees to keep bee lives along side. They shouted slogans related to pollination and took a pledge to conserve them. Then poem recital on pollinators and a pollinator game were played.



### ZOO's Pollinator education kit in display

The days programmes concluded with talk by chief guest Mr. S. Esakkimuthaiah, HR Trainer, Tirunelveli and remarks made by Dr. Selvin Samuel, Former HOD of Botany St. John's College.

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