Earth Day – 2003 : Awareness Camp for Children on Conservation of Bats

Jessie Jeyakaran*

A one-day awareness camp for 50 children from Madurai and Dindigul on protecting animals such as bats was conducted on 22nd May 2003 at Dindigul, jointly by the CSI Diaconal Ministry with the Chiroptera Conservation Information Network of South Asia (CCINSA), the Zoo Outreach Organisation of Coimbatore and the CEDA Trust, Dindigul at Dudley school campus, Dindigul. The children were from villages where the CEDA Trust and the ECO project of the Madurai Diocese operate.

The children arrived at the Dudley School campus in the morning and went to Ayyalur, a village 30 kilometres north of Dindigul to see a large group of fruit-eating bats, which are living in the biggest Banyan tree nearby. The children watched the thousands of bats with awe and were provided information on the ecological importance of such animals from resource persons, Mrs. Jessie Jeyakaran of the CSI Ecological Committee and Mrs. Rathna who accompanied the children as guides.

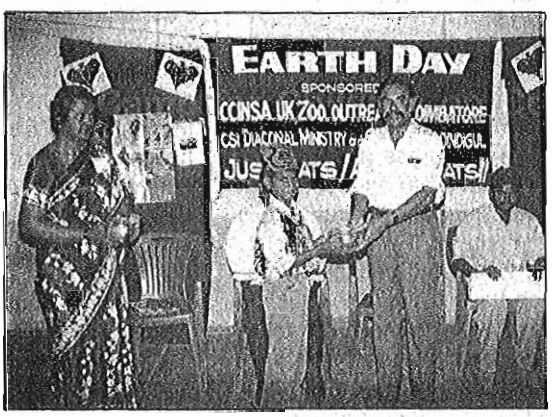
The children returned with the exciting experience and with the determination of conserving nature and animals. They were further provided with valuable information by Mr. Bharadidasan, Founder of the Dindigul Nature Conservation Society, Prof. Dr. Prabhakaran Victor from the Heber College, Trichy and Mrs. Jessie Jeyakaran, Board Member of CSI-DM herself the member of IUCN Commission of Education and Communication, guided the children and encouraged them to learn more.

The children also participated in competitions and prizes were distributed to them. The occasion was felicitated by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Soundara Pandian, the Chairperson of the North Local Council of the Diocese of Madurai and the Rev. Chandra Mohan from the Diaconal Ministry.

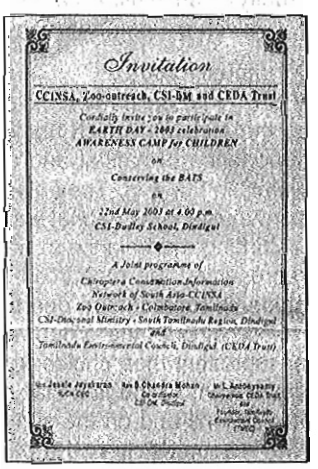
It was decided that such informative awareness programmes on protecting the nature and useful animals like bats should be given priority in trainings to be conducted to the congregations and school leaders for

Activity session holding mini-placards.

Cultural programme. Dancing bats.



Prize distribution by Dr. Samuel Soundarapandian



O.C.P.M. Girls' Hr. Sec. School, Madurai 625 002, T.N.

their networking with those who are already in the ministry of environmental protection.

Programme:

Session I
Welcome and Introductory talk, Mrs. Jessie Jeyakaran, IUCN-CEC

Session II
Observation and Recording, Mrs. Jessie Jeyakaran and Miss. Ratna, DM

Session III
Discussion and Sharing by guide teachers

Session IV
Listening

Session V
Competition – Quiz

Session VI
Distribution of the materials

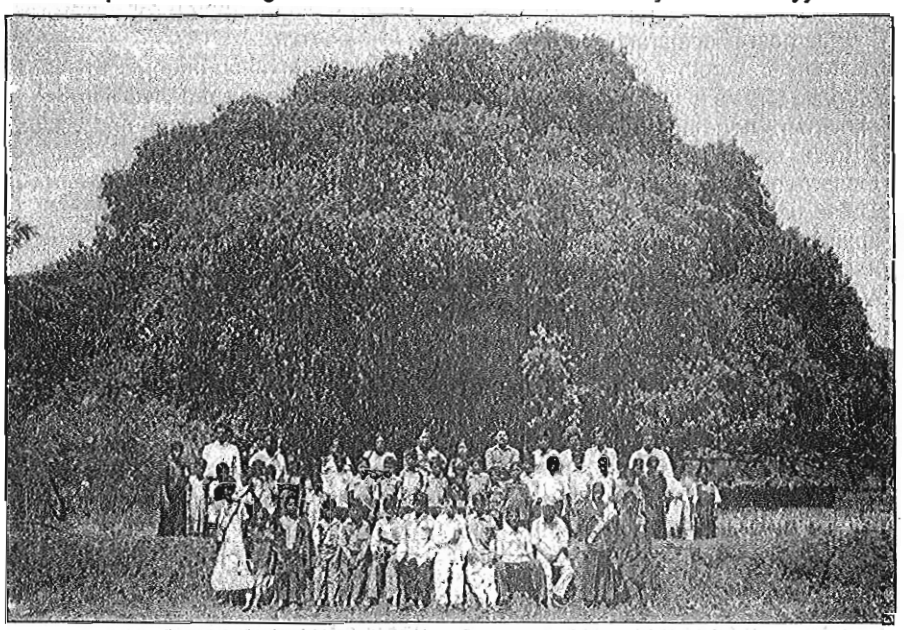
Session VII
Drawing

Session VIII
The role of the bats in eco-balance, Dr. Prabhakaran Victor.

Session X
Felicitations
Dr. Samuel Soundarapandian, DMR
Mr. L. Antonysamy, CEDA
Rev. S. Chandra Mohan
Co-ordinator- DM

Prize distribution and departure.

Participants observing thousands of fruit bats in the Banyan tree at Ayyalur.

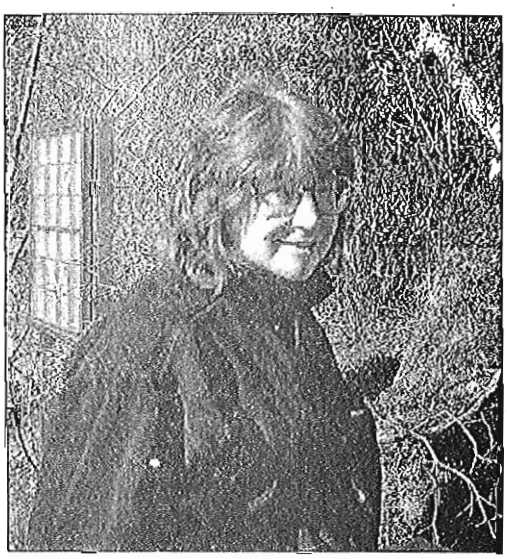


Group photo in front of the Banyan bat tree at Ayyalur.

British Zoo Fed gets a New Director

The Council of the Federation of Zoological Gardens of Great Britain and Ireland is pleased to announce that Dr. Miranda Stevenson will take the position of Director from 1st July 2003.

Miranda is a highly experienced and respected figure, both nationally and internationally, and the important work of the British Zoo Federation will be carried forward in her capable and enthusiastic hands.

Miranda is a friend of Zoo Outreach Organisation and the South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation (SAZARC). Last year, Miranda was lead trainer at the Annual SAZARC meeting in Dhaka Zoo, Bangladesh.

Miranda is pictured left in front a stork enclosure at the famous Zurich Zoo, Switzerland.