

## Zoo Education Master Plan Workshop, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

N. Baskar\*

The Central Zoo Authority with commendable effort organized the Zoo Education Master Plan workshop for large, medium, and small zoos in order to improve the standard of zoo education programmes on scientific line to the large section of visiting public. The workshop was held at Ahmadabad, from 27–30 July 2015. The venue was situated at historical place of just in front of Mahatma Gandhiji Ashram who has great interest and passion on wildlife conservation and holy perennial river bank of Sabarmati. The participants represented different zoos of the country. Dr. Bitapi Sinha, workshop resource person, W.I.I – Dehradun gave the welcome address and provided opportunity to interact with other colleagues of the workshop.

Honorable Mayor Mrs. Meenakhshiben Patel of Ahmadabad Corporation inaugurated the workshop at Hotel Silver Cloud. The Mayor chaired the session and highlighted the role of zoos in wildlife conservation awareness across the country. Followed by C.N. Pandey, IFS, PCCF and CCF, Gujarat Forest Department gave a keynote address on "Role of the Protected Areas in Conservation Education", and focused the effective part of Indian Zoos in the cause of wildlife conservation education.

P.C .Tyagi, IFS., W.I.I. Nodal Officer of CZA Project led the workshop and delivered a lecture on Modern Scenario of the Indian Zoos in Wildlife Awareness Programme. He handled the session on different aspects of zoo education, viz discussion on zoo education plan format, setting-up interpretation centre, developing animal signage, visitor facilities, nature trails, preparing education materials and setting of goals and objectives of the plan, critical review of interpretation of signage in Indian zoos. In addition, he assisted participants during the field visit to Gandhi Park and Ahmadabad zoo and actively

encouraged the participants for the preparation of Zoo Education Master Plan for their zoos during the workshop.

B.C. Choudhury, Herpetologist, Dehradun presented important note on elements of zoo education handling the vandalism in the zoos and crowd control management practice for the *ex-situ* center. Meena Nareshwar, resource person from CEE, Ahmedabad spoke on range of effective communication techniques in conservation education and interpretation including use of online media.

During the last day session, the participants were given enough time to incorporate the zoo education format to include in the existing zoo education master plan in the relevant column of the format with support of the description of systematic documentation viz- model of enclosure, zoo map, route map, electricity map, water line map, etc., The incorporated soft copy of the master plan was submitted to the resource persons for their comments, critical input and necessary correction.

Moreover, the workshop was an eye opener to the zoo managers and educators like us to organize systematic wildlife awareness programmes to different target groups from younger to older generations so as to get their active support for biodiversity conservation. The author would like to thank K.S.S.V.P. Reddy, IFS, APCCF & Director, Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur, Chennai and K. Geethanjali, IFS, Wildlife Warden, Chennai for their continuous encouragement and for nominating him to attend the workshop.

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**Biologist, Children's Park, Guindy, Chennai, Tamil Nadu**  
Email: [nbrzoo@yahoo.com](mailto:nbrzoo@yahoo.com)



Workshop participants