

# Echoes of Eco



May, 2014

Vivekananda Kendra- **nardep** Newsletter

Vol:6 No:3

## Green Rameshwaram: Takes off - 2



Last month we saw how the 'Green Rameshwaram' project has taken off and the way deliverables had been fixed for Archeology and culture sub-group as well as landscaping and beautification.

The sub-committee on the marine biodiversity of the Gulf of Mannar – Flora and fauna of Rameswaram and Greening of Rameswaram, had discussions on the following aspects:

- Algae cultivation for improving livelihood opportunities for the benefit of coastal communities through the women self-help groups etc.
- Creation of Mangrove forest.
- Re-forestation by identifying species which are best suited for Rameshwaram island.
- Value added algae products like health drinks can be developed.
- Special care to be taken not to affect the livelihood of the people who now depend on charred fuel-wood trade based on Juliflora: however this is a scenario true for outside Rameshwaram island.

The deliverables for this group were decided to be the publication of booklets related to the bio-diversity should be started and at least one booklet brought out.

Another one deliverable fixed for this group is the identification and execution of the effective steps that need to be taken to eradicate Juliflora menace. It was decided that a pilot plot of land would be given and this menace should be countered and removed holistically.

Then the sub-committee on the 'water harvesting – inside the temple and in the island' made their presentation. An interesting discussion followed the presentation.

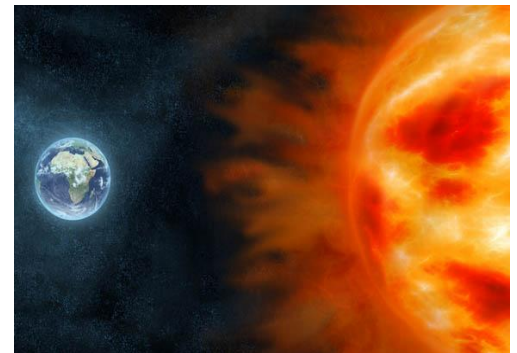
- District Collector pointed out that this sub-committee has already done work in renovation which formed the basis of the entire project.
- There was a divided opinion with reference rain-water harvesting due to the nature of soil. The views of CGWB may be obtained.
- Installation of Rainwater harvesting systems in Individual houses
- Awareness creation Installation in Public places
- The fodder cultivation to be linked with sewage treatment group

Then the deliverables for this group were fixed.

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## Earth, Atmosphere, Sky...



***In Indra the worlds consist; in Indra Creative Fervor and Order have their ground. You I have known, O Indra, face to face, in the Support wholly established.***

***Homage to him of whom the earth is the model, the atmosphere his belly, who created the sky from his head. Homage to this supreme Brahman! Homage to him whose eye is the sun and the moon which is ever renewed, whose mouth is the Fire. Homage to this supreme Brahman!***

**-Atharva Veda**





*One need not leave the earth to find the Truth, one need not leave the life to find his soul, one need not abandon the world or have only limited beliefs to enter into relation with the Divine. The Divine is everywhere, in everything and if He is hidden, it is because we do not take the trouble to discover Him. – The Mother*



[Above] Exploring new and innovative ideas in the Brain-Storming session on 'Green Rameshwaram' conducted at Ramnad District Collector's building.

[Below] Meeting of minds extraordinary: Terracotta artisan, Entrepreneurial expert, expert on ancient irrigation systems and epigraphist having an informal discussion of their ideas during the visit to Teerthams.



**Spend just 9 minutes watching these documentaries and see for yourself how you can make the pilgrimage to Rameshwaram cleaner and greener!**

- English: <http://youtu.be/B-2omYexqDY>
- Tamil: <http://youtu.be/XAX0fbPxdbA>

The deliverables for the **water harvesting sub-committee group** were fixed as the following:

- Rain water harvesting mechanisms should be developed based on CGWB recommendations.
- Booklets and awareness campaign on water conservation
- Identification of Rainwater harvesting systems Inside the temple
- Installation of Green pilgrimage oaths in other teerthams

The next sub-committee '**Sewage Treatment and underground drainage**' made a presentation on sewage treatment with Vettiver. A detailed discussion was made taking into account the following points:

- 'Vettiver' herbal cultivation as a means of both resource creation as well as sewage treatment. Its commercial value makes it ideal for waste to wealth creation.
- An input was provided for horse-waste based treatment of sewage water along with Kalvazhai (*Canna indica*)
- Municipal commissioner Thiru.Kannan also made a presentation of the efforts that have been taken so far in the same area by the Rameshwaram municipality.

The major deliverables set for this group are as follows:

- 'Namma Toilet' scheme is ready to be implemented shortly. Project should take an active role in making that successful.
- Advisor of the group will provide initial inputs and assistance for two technicians to assist municipal administration in sewage treatment.

The advisor for this group is Smt. Jayashree Balachander (IAS ret'd.) and the Coordinator is the Municipal Commissioner of Rameshwaram Sri.Kannan.

**[The deliverables set for the other sub-committees shall be continued in the next month newsletter]**

**To know more about 'Green Rameshwaram Pilgrimage' Project contact:**  
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*Feel, my children, feel; feel for the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden; feel till the heart stops and the brain reels and you think you will go mad; then pour the soul out at the feet of the Lord, and then will come power, help and indomitable energy. ... Even the least work done for others awakens the power within; even thinking the least good of others gradually instills into the heart the strength of a lion. - Swami Vivekananda*



- **Rameshwaram: Reviving**
- **the Sacred Water Teerthams**

The Teerthams renovation work is progressing. Meanwhile as part of the Green Rameshwaram project epigraphists Ramachandran and Rajendran studied the archeological aspects of the water bodies. At the preliminary study itself some very interesting forgotten aspects of history come to life...



Epigraphist S. Ramachandran who visited the Mangala Teertham identified a stone inscription by its side. The inscription provides the year of construction of the tank. From the inscription it is clear that the tank was either created or renovated by the famous early rebel ruler against the British, Muthuramalinga Sethupathi. Mangala Teertham is one of the prominent Teerthams renovated by VK-nardep and is on the way to Rameshwaram temple at the very outset of the entry road inside the island.

Who was Muthuramalinga Sethupathi? He was crowned when he was only 72 days old and his mother had become regent. The Nawab of Arcot and the British attacked the palace and took as prisoners then 12 years old Sethupathi, his mother and sisters and imprisoned them in Tiruchi. In 1782, he was released in the wake of upsurges and revolts in Ramanathapuram. After the release Sethupathi manufactured cannons. He resisted the efforts of the British to have absolute rights over purchase of textile goods, besides rejecting their demand for exempting their ships from paying duty. Once again the British attacked the palace in 1795. Sethupathi was arrested and lodged in Fort St George. He died in the jail in 1809. He was only 49 years old.



To know more about 'Renovation of Rameshwaram Teerthams' Project contact:  
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*Honor the sacred. Honor the Earth, our Mother. Honor the Elders.  
Honor all with whom we share the Earth:  
Four-legged ones, two-legged ones, winged ones,  
Swimmers, crawlers, plant and rock people.  
Walk in balance and beauty. – Native American Prayer*



### Happenings this month: **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**



### Happenings this month: **NETWORKING**

**VK-nardep activities done  
with DST core support**



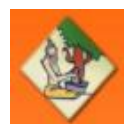
### Happenings this month: **Water Management**

**Workshop on agriculture with DST  
core support was held on 24<sup>th</sup> of this  
month at Kalluvillai. Smt. Premalatha  
was the resource person.**



On 22<sup>nd</sup> of this month Solar Electrification was inaugurated at Dhanuskodi by Brahmos Aerospace, New Delhi. The venue was the Govt. Primary School, Dhanuskodi. 200 people attended. Shri.K.Nanthakumar, IAS, Dist. Collector inaugurated the unit. Cmde.S.K.Iyer and Cmde.A.C.Anand, attended the function on behalf of Brahmos Aerospace, New Delhi.

- Tested water from 14 wells in Kanyakumari Dist. as a part of the programme of Central Ground Water Board, Chennai.



### Happenings this month: **Green Health Camp @ Rameshwaram**

Green Health Camp sponsored by UNICEF, Chennai was held at the Panchayat Union School, Udiruppu, Rameshwaram on 27<sup>th</sup> of this month. 73 persons benefitted from the camp. The resource persons were Dr.V.Ganapathy and his team.



### Happenings this month: **NETWORKING**

Nardep's staff have been interviewed by the programme Co-ordinator Shri.Shanmugaih, AIR, Nagercoil. VK-Nardep's activities in the field of Sustainable Agriculture. This was made as a direct broadcast on 29<sup>th</sup> of this month.



On 22<sup>nd</sup> of this month Dr.Satish Kumar, Chief, Tamilnadu & Kerala, UNICEF inaugurated the programme on 'Eco Awareness Camp for staff of Rameshwaram Municipality' at the Satsang Bhawan, Rameshwaram. Shri.Arun Dobhal, WASH specialist, Unicef, Chennai attended the function as chief guest. 83 persons attended the programme.



**As a part of studying the flora bio-diversity for 'Green Rameshwaram' Dr.Kamalasanan Pillai made a preliminary survey of various plants in the island. Some species are shown above.**



**Green Health Camp at  
Rameshwaram: part of Green  
Rameshwaram**

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**Green Health Home of VK-  
nardep functioned for 6 days  
and treated 166 patients.**





*We stand now where two roads diverge. But unlike the roads in Robert Frost's familiar poem, they are not equally fair. The road we have long been travelling is deceptively easy, a smooth super-highway on which we progress with great speed, but at its end lies disaster. The other fork of the road - the one 'less travelled by' - offers our last, our only chance to reach a destination that assures the preservation of our earth. – Rachel Carson*



## Bio-Methanation Plants installed



## Happenings this month: BIO-METHANATION PLANT & RENEWABLE ENERGY



## Happenings this month: Networking

### Shakthi-Surabhi Installed this month:



Training programme on “Bio-methanation plant” was held at TRC, Kalluvilai on 24<sup>th</sup> of May (under DST core support). Shri.V.Ramakrishnan as resource person. 4 persons benefitted from training.

Every month biogas/bio-methanation plant training provides those who attend it a complete idea of the technology as well as a hands-on-training experience of the plant.



### Camp for the creation of scientific temper in the minds of school children

This camp was organized at TRC, Kalluvillai. The camp was held from 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> of this month and 63 students attended the camp. The resource persons were: Dr.Usha Raja Nandini, Dr.Umaiyoor Bhagan, Shri.V.Ramakrishnan and Sis.V.saraswathi etc.



Portable 1 cum - 9  
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“We do not come ‘into’ this world; we come *out* of it, like leaves from a tree.”

Alan Watts



Happy moments in the family camp.



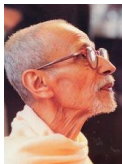
Unless we are willing to encourage our children to reconnect with and appreciate the natural world, we can't expect them to help protect and care for it.- David Suzuki

### Refresher course for Family Members

The camp for the family members was held at the TRC, Kalluvilai from 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of this month. 37 family members and staff attended the camp. The resource persons were:

- Shri.V.Ramakrishnan
- Sis.V.Saraswathi and
- Dr.Umaiyoor Bhagan.





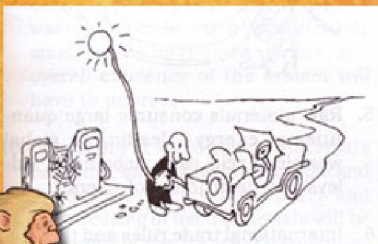
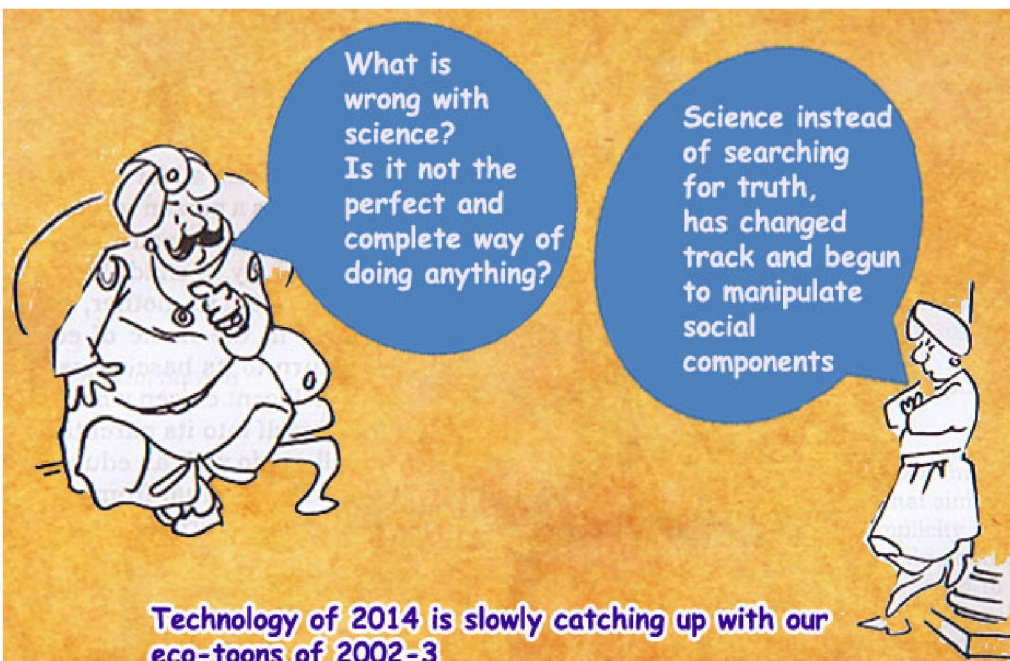
*Human being is the master of his destiny. He is the architect of his fate. He has nothing to fear in this universe, nothing except his own wrong actions and thoughts. He has to say: 'Who has the power to give me any experience that I do not choose to select for myself? No one on earth has the power to injure me, to bring sorrow upon me, to inflict destruction or evil upon me!' – Swami Chidananda*



## From our Publications



In continuation of giving eco-toons from 'Samagraha Vikas' – Development with a human face, in this newsletter we give eco-cartoons that speak about the fundamental problem that the direction of science is facing. We also proudly present the curious green technological development of solar panels for car parking. A decade ago our publication has presented a solar power based fuelling for cars. It seems quite closer next green-technological step : Electric cars getting charged by solar panels? Read on...



### Winning by Letting Go

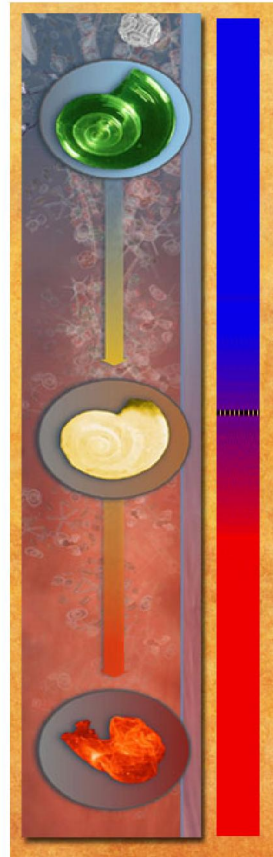
In India, people are said to have caught monkeys by setting out a small box with a tasty nut in it. There is an opening in the box large enough for the monkey to thrust his hand in, but too small to withdraw it once he's clutched the nut. When the monkey has grabbed the price, he must either let go and regain his freedom or keep hold and stay trapped. Most monkeys hold on to the nut, making it easy for the hunters to pick them up. People have been known to get caught in the same kind of trap. The person who puts the goodie in the box controls the person who grabs it, but if we are willing to let go of the goodies, we are free of control.

-Elizabeth Brenner

THE GOODIES OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY...

## Marine Life affected by CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

As more CO<sub>2</sub> is released in the atmosphere, the sea becomes more acidified with CO<sub>2</sub> reacting with water forming carbonates: This impedes calcification and formation of shells;



## SAMAGRA VIKAS

DEVELOPMENT WITH A HUMAN FACE



Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan





*Human consciousness arose but a minute before midnight on the geological clock. Yet we mayflies try to bend an ancient world to our purposes, ignorant perhaps of the messages buried in its long history. Let us hope that we are still in the early morning of our April day.*

– Stephen Jay Gould



## The Eco-Symbolism

Sacrifice does not just mean ritual worship—it means an act that protects life. Personal health depends on eyes, ears, and other sense organs working together in harmony; human prosperity and happiness depend on a well-ordered society and nature; the universe is sustained by the cosmic powers such as the sun and moon working together in unison. Sacrifice reinvigorates the powers that sustain the world by securing cosmic stability and social order. It activates the positive forces of the universe, and protects the Earth from degeneration. Humans have to realize the interconnectedness of living entities and emphasize the idea of moral responsibility to oneself, one's society, and the world as a whole. In our cosmic journey, we are involved in countless cycles of births and deaths. The life progresses into higher forms of life or regresses into lower forms based on our good or bad karma. Kinship exists between all forms of life. Reincarnation warns us against treating lower forms of life with cruelty. Man has evolved from lower forms of life. We are, therefore, related to the whole creation. The principle of cow protection symbolizes human responsibility to the subhuman world.

– Dr. Sheshagiri  
Rao  
Indologist



## Becoming Eco-Literate

To me the key to an operational definition of sustainability, which is what we need I believe, the key is to realise that we do not need to start from scratch but can take nature as a model. Nature's eco-systems are models of sustainable communities. They are communities of plants, animals and micro-organisms that have evolved over billions of years so as to maximize their long term survival or sustainability. In fact when you study the biosphere from the point of view of biology and ecology you find that one of its outstanding characteristics is that nature has sustained life for billions and billions of years. So a sustainable human society should be one that is designed in such a way that it does not interfere with nature's inherent ability to sustain life. So our technologies, our business organizations, our economies, our physical structures, all that, our lifestyles should be designed in such a way that they do not interfere with nature's ability to sustain life. Now this definition is operational because the first step naturally must then be to understand, how nature sustains life ... We need to become ecologically literate to understand the basic principles of organization that eco-systems have evolved to sustain life. Principles like the fact that matter is being constantly recycled, that energy flows from the sun, that diversity assures resilience, that the basic pattern of organization is a network pattern.

–Fritjof Capra  
Physicist-Deep  
Ecologist



## No Life is Inferior

There is no life that is inferior. All lives enjoy the same importance in the Universe and all play their fixed roles. They are to function together and no link in the chain is to be lost. If some link is lost, the whole ecological balance would be disturbed. All kinds of life—insects, birds, and animals—contribute toward the maintenance of ecological balance, but what is humanity's contribution toward this? Humans are intelligent animals. Therefore our contribution should be the biggest. But it is not. We are nullifying the benefits of the contributions made by other species of life. We are disturbing the balance because of our greed for material enjoyment and our craze for power. We do not allow earthworms and bacteria to maintain the fertility of the soil by using chemical manures and insecticides that kill them. We destroy plants and forests indiscriminately and come in the way of plants providing oxygen essential for the very existence of life. ... the language of the heart only can sustain us—when we start speaking through the language of the mind our destruction becomes inevitable. Therefore, a thinking animal has to be very careful while it uses its mental abilities.

Swami  
Vibudhesha  
Teertha  
Monk

