

Environmental Education

A

major focus of Pitchandikulam Forest's work is environmental education. Currently we provide programs at the Nadukuppam Environmental Education Centre (NEEC), the Coastal Environmental Education Centre (CEEC), and at the Auroville Botanical Gardens

Our largest program occurs at NEEC where we are helping to bring up the academic standard of the local school while simultaneously providing environmental education and ensuring sustainable development for the area's sensitive TDEF region. So

far twenty young teachers have been trained in innovative teaching methods and are taking their environmental education teaching skills to fifteen schools in the Kaliveli bioregion. Building

on the first pilot project 'My Pond', a second curriculum package on 'Trees' was developed incorporating educational material from C.P

Ramaswamy, Centre for Environment Education, Auroville School as well as resources developed onsite at NEEC. The packages have as one of their main focuses TDEF vegetation and its history, uses, and need for conservation. Nine Schools around Nadukuppam are taking part including one high school, two middle schools and six primary schools with 150 students receiving direct contact with NEEC staff and a further 2000 students gaining environmental awareness indirectly. This curriculum is aimed at middle level to make it as accessible as possible to all age groups. The response from headmasters, teachers, parents, the community and students has been extremely positive. The

program has incorporated the use of exposure visits by the schools to the local remnant forest at Kurumpuram and visits to the ethnomedicinal forest at Pitchandikulam, as well as the NEEC demonstration garden. Each

school has received a minimum of 18 to 24 intensive classes that have included topics such as 'Water Cycle', 'Traditional history of TDEF' and 'Importance of Conservation'.