

# HARIT KHABAR

October, 2022



Grassroots Comics redefining environmental education. Read more on Page 4.



An initiative of HCL Foundation and World Comics India



## Pollution – In and Out



Photo: iStock

The ever-increasing outdoor air pollution levels have played havoc with many Indian cities. The same is true indoors as well. According to a World Health Organization (WHO) report in 2014, over 145 million Indian households still rely on basic solid fuels such as wood, animal dung, charcoal, municipal and industrial waste and coal for cooking.

These solid fuels are burned in inefficient stoves that are not only harming the environment but pose a serious threat to the health of people who cook, which are mostly women. They produce high levels of house air pollution from health-damaging pollutants to small soot particles that penetrate deep into the lungs.

## Championing Clean Cooking Options

CARE India has initiated a project on clean cooking solutions with support from the HCL Foundation in Noida in order to tackle the rising levels of indoor pollution in Indian kitchens.



Till now, Care India's project has contributed to the successful adoption of improved cooking stoves by 703 slum/village dwellers households from four villages of Dadri Block in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Noida. Moreover, the organisation has reached around 13,000 community members and raised awareness about the harmful effects of traditional stoves and the benefits of adopting clean cooking solutions. In the year 2022-2023, Care India will distribute 2000 improved cooking stoves among slum dwellers and increase awareness among 10000 community members about clean cooking solutions. The project has also been able to tackle deep-rooted gender prejudices and strengthened the voice and the decision-making power of women to go in for different clean cooking options.



## Improved Cookstoves - a flaming solution

Traditional chulhas are inefficient and emit higher smoke because of incomplete combustion. This smoke has serious health consequences as it can cause lung diseases, cancer and pneumonia.

While Improved cookstoves (ICS) are effective and safer since they emit fewer pollutants due to improved combustion. ICS is priced between 1500 and 3,000 INR, and some extremely efficient cookstoves can cost up to 6,000 INR.

Further, ICS can reduce smoke emissions by up to 70 per cent and save fuel consumption by up to 60 – 70 per cent.



## Cleaner Energy, Better Health

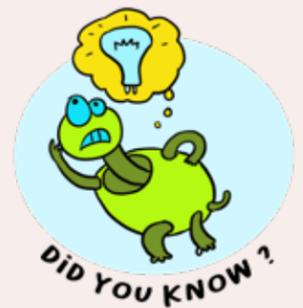


Rekha, a housewife cum beautician from village Luharlu, Dadri previously used traditional stoves to prepare all meals of the household. Due to regular cooking on traditional stoves, she was exposed to high smoke emissions due to which, she suffered from cough, eye irritation and breathing issues.

During a door-to-door visit, a community resource person from Care India visited Rekha's home and told her about various clean cooking options available in the market. After convincing her to switch to cleaner energy, improved cooking stoves have now replaced the traditional stoves in her kitchen. And as a result, her health has improved considerably. She has also cut down on her cooking duration by more than 90 minutes, and her fuel consumption has reduced by more than 60 per cent. Her cooking premises is clean and hygienic and indoor air pollution ceases to exist.

## Benefits of Clean cooking stove

Improved cooking stoves offer a variety of benefits, both for the health of the planet and the health of people. The use of cleaner and more efficient improved cooking stoves and fuels can dramatically reduce exposure to smoke from traditional stoves and can contribute to mitigating the risk of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It has huge implications for reducing gender inequalities as clean cooking stoves reduce the time women and girls spend collecting firewood. Access to clean cooking stoves is linked to achieving various sustainable development goals (SDGs) such as SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 3 – Good Health & Well-being and most importantly SDG 5 - Gender Equality and SDG 13 - Climate Action. Simply put, without a shift towards universal clean cooking solutions, the achievement of most SDGs will also be affected adversely.



Man-animal interactions are common these days, either positive or negative. We mostly hear stories of leopards roaming in cities, elephants coming in close proximity to human settlements. Keeping wild animals aside, these interactions are incomplete without domesticated animals like dogs and cats. With this year's World Animal Day theme of "Shared Planet", let us unravel the positive side of Man-Animal Interactions.

## Mitigating Man-Animal Conflicts



A steady increase in the stray dog population has escalated man-animal interactions, especially over the past few years. And to tackle this, Friendicoes: SECA, in partnership with the HCL Foundation, is conducting a Man-Animal Conflict Mitigation Program in Noida, Uttar Pradesh through population management, disease control and outreach.

**Since 2019, Friendicoes has sterilised more than 7800 dogs.**

The project involves the implementation of a sterilisation drive in Noida to control the rising population of stray dogs and create a disease barrier against rabies through anti-rabies vaccination and tetanus care. Friendicoes is also conducting community awareness outreach programs on how the health of stray animals may impact public health.



## UNFRIENDED



## Reducing Dog Fights on Streets

Did you know that spaying one female dog can prevent 67,000 births in six years?

The increasing stray dog population poses a threat to the peaceful coexistence between humans and animals. And an easy way out is sterilisation and vaccination for animals. Under an effective sterilisation programme, stray dogs are surgically neutered, vaccinated against rabies, and then placed back in their area. Since territories are not left vacant, new dogs cannot enter. Mating and breeding also cease to exist. With no mating or crossing of territories, dog fights reduce dramatically. Since fighting reduces, bites on humans also become rare which results in reduced man-animal conflicts. And over time, as the dogs die natural deaths, their numbers dwindle.

## Rabies cases rising?



No place except Antarctica is free from rabies. However, its severity in India is unparalleled. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), India is endemic for rabies and accounts for 36 per cent of the world's rabies deaths. According to estimates from WHO, rabies causes 18-20,000 deaths annually and about 30-60 per cent of reported rabies cases and death occur in children under the age of 15 years. These statistics are appalling despite rabies deaths in humans being 100 per cent preventable through prompt and appropriate medical care. Vaccinating dogs is the most cost-effective strategy for preventing rabies in people.

## Feed, but Responsibly

We live in an ecosystem in which stray animals have their own part to play. And the idea of not wanting to 'co-exist' with another species is alarming. The first step to peacefully coexist is to stop cruelty towards animals since dogs are most often at the receiving end of human cruelty.

Another easy way to peacefully coexist with stray animals is by feeding them. However, just feeding them does not make one a responsible animal lover. The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) rules stresses that dogs should not be herded into one place for feeding, as they are deeply territorial by nature and would end up fighting and biting each other to get the food. This could endanger the nearby humans as well. This means dogs should not be fed on public footpaths and roads, or in playgrounds frequented by children. Feeding of dogs can take place at areas designated by AWBI such as a person's private entrance.



Photo: iStock

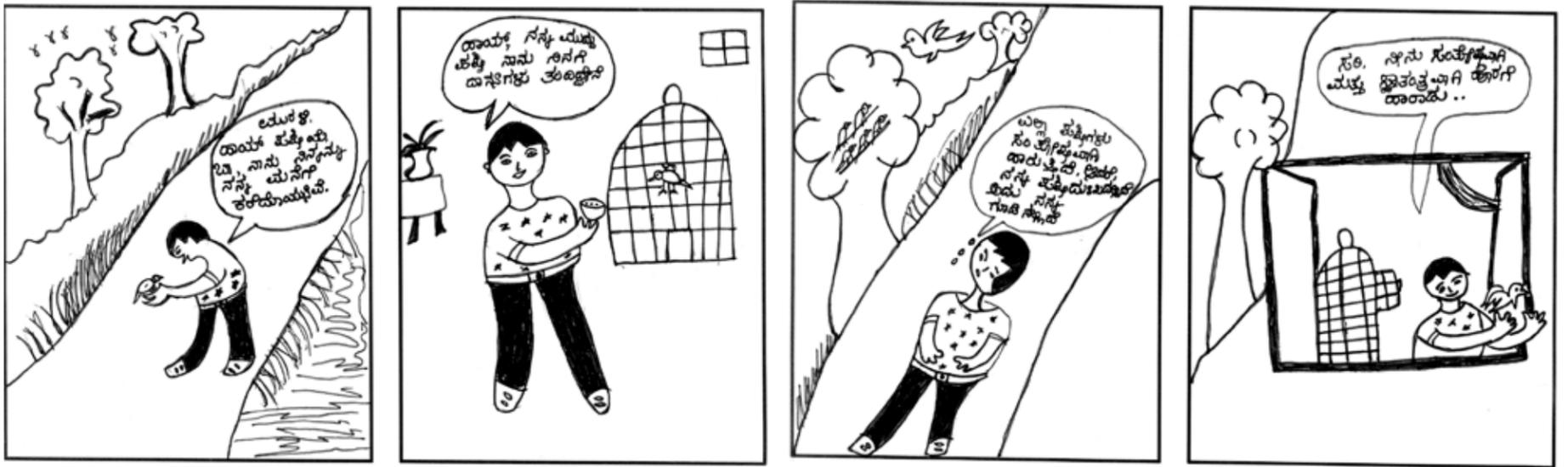


When we talk about our environment, we usually talk about nature, trees and water. But this conventional way of referring to our environment hardly reflects its true meaning and diversity. When we go beyond the limited definition of what constitutes our environment and start reflecting on the breadth of issues, a rich tapestry of stories can be woven. This is what exactly happened in the three-day grassroots comics workshop on environmental education that was organized by **World Comics India** in partnership with the HCL Foundation from 20-22 September 2022 in Bengaluru.

Participants from 17 different HCL Foundation partner organisations, sat together for a three-day workshop and discussed critical environmental issues like vanishing bird species, how manjha is emerging as a threat to birds, gender issues in agriculture, land and sanitation, informed choice in terms of access to menstrual pads, caste and environment, organic farming, etc. These discussions soon transformed into comics and by the end of the workshop, we did not only have in front of us 35 comics but 35 proud creators as well.



## ನನ್ನ ಸ್ನೇಹಾಪರಮ ಬಿಡಿ Mary Clara mamta H.cmc



**Let me fly:** Muruli was walking on the road and saw a bird. He took it home and put it in a cage and used to feed seeds daily. One day he saw that all the birds were happy in the tree near the house. They all are happy but he wondered why only his bird is sad. At last, he let his bird fly out of the cage saying that only freedom gives them happiness. Comics by Mary Clara

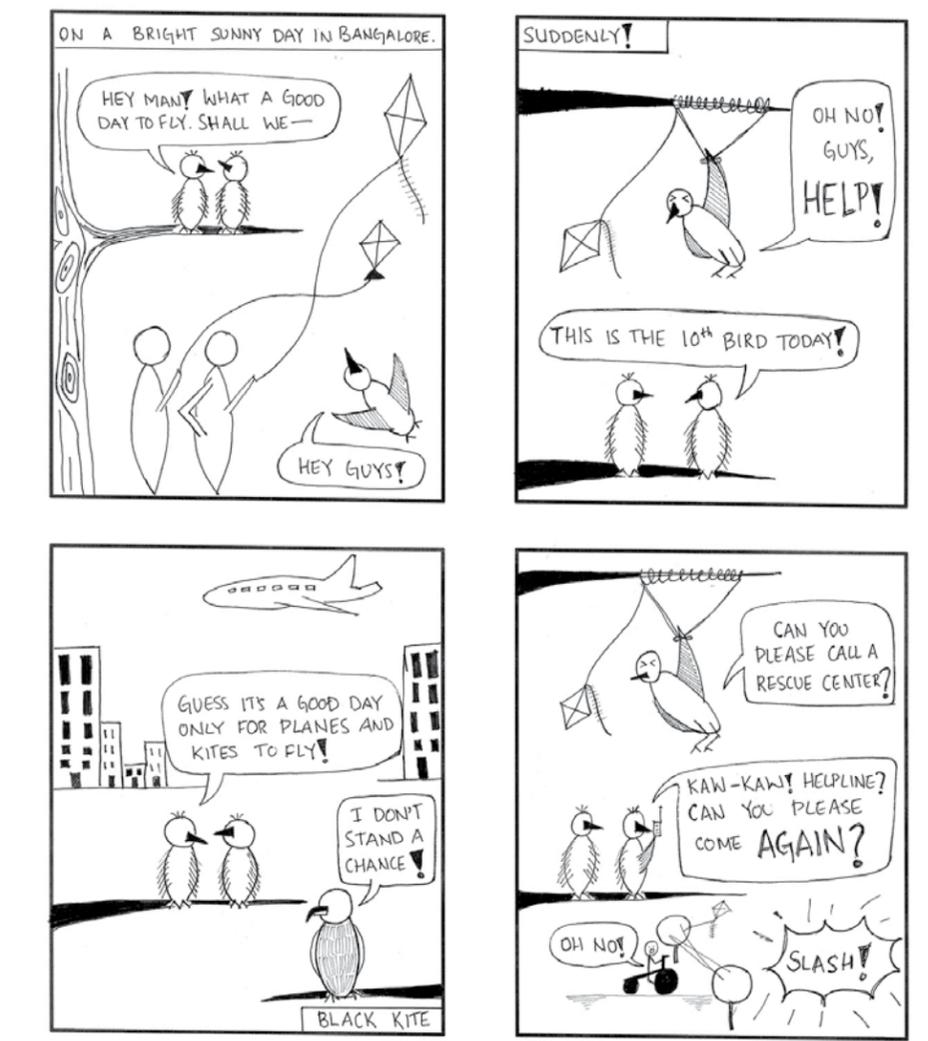
As World Comics India promotes the creation of user-generated content in the language that the local people read and talk, comics were made in several languages like Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, English & Telugu.



The workshop was followed by two exhibitions, one at Government School in Hennagra and the other at the HCL campus in Jigani. The exhibitions were successful in taking the nuanced discussions that happened during the workshop outside the workshop hall to the general public. And through these exhibitions, the broader definition of the environment continued to resonate with more and more people.

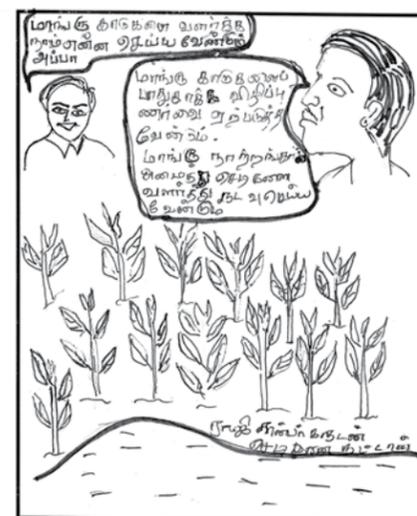


## NO FLY ZONE - RANJANA.H (ARRC)



## கடல் கரை வளம் காப்பீடு

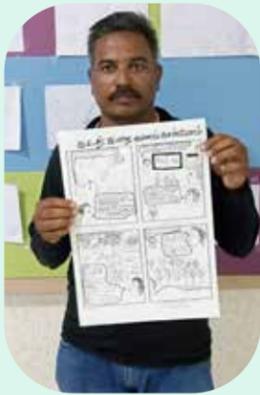
Dr. சிதிராங்குபதி MSSRF N. SITHRANGABOOPATHY



**Let us preserve our coastal resources** – A son asks his father why the city of Chennai is plagued by natural disasters like cyclones and tsunami. The father replies that this is because we have destroyed our coastal resources like mangroves for our selfish needs. The son is now curious to know why we are doing so and how this is counter-productive! The father replies that we have destroyed mangroves to establish factories and prawn farms. Besides protecting us from natural disasters, mangroves help to keep the environment clean and also provide us the much-needed bio-diversity in terms of food and other needs. Finally, the son learns that we need to create awareness about mangroves and also set up nurseries!

### Mangrove- not just a Tree but an Ecosystem

Interview with Natarajan Boopathy,  
MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF)



#### 1. What made you take up the issue of mangroves through comics?

The comics I made at the workshop was on the conservation of our coastal resources through mangroves. These days mangroves are degrading due to aquaculture and other human activities. Mangrove is an ecosystem, a group of living systems and a source of all living organisms. If we conserve this ecosystem, we can provide life to other species, we can benefit from it through livelihood as well. It also offers protection from tsunamis and helps to protect the coastal areas. It is not a single species, but a whole ecosystem, providing life to both humans and others.

#### 2. What are you/your organization doing about it?

We are doing a lot of conservation activities from Andhra Pradesh to Kanyakumari through different projects led by MSSRF. Thousands of saplings have been planted in Cuddalore near Pondicherry and other areas, especially along the East Coast.

#### 3. What kind of support do you receive from HCL?

We receive CSR support along with technical inputs for smooth running of project from HCL Foundation. Their volunteers are also actively engaged in our programs. The intellectual discussions we have with them enrich the content of our interventions.

#### 4. What is the impact your work has had?

In the last year alone, we have planted nearly 10000 saplings in Machlipatnam, Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. We are now taking this drive to Ramanathapuram in Tamil Nadu.

#### 5. What is the work you do with communities?

We conduct awareness sessions for school students and local village communities on mangroves and tell them about the important role that mangroves play in preserving our coastal areas.

#### 6. Did you share the comic story you created at the workshop with others? What was the response?

I showed my comics to my boss, friends and family. They really liked it. My wife and family members were happy. Further, I also showed my comics to the community in my village and the response was great.

### Local Language comics are good awareness material

If we create more comics then we can use them in the awareness sessions. The community doesn't know about mangroves and what they can do. We have published books but people are afraid to see books. If we give them books they say – Oh we have to go through so many pages. Through comics, we can easily expose our ideas and people can easily understand through pictures and little information. Books are generally more complex than comics while comics are easily reachable.

Some of the issues we can tackle through comics are -

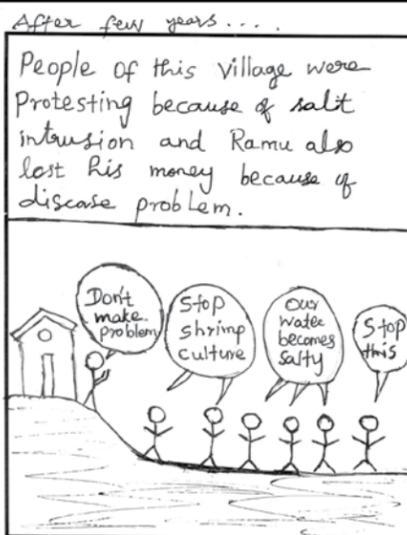
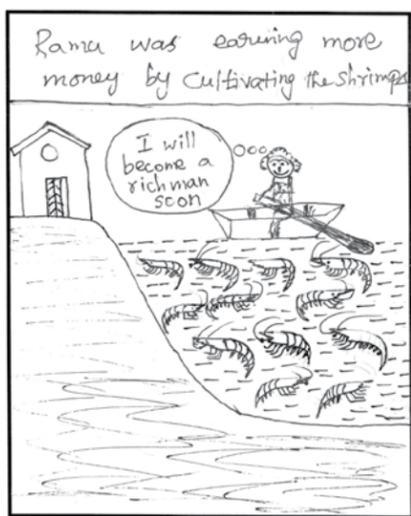
1. Social and economic value of mangroves
2. Benefits of mangroves
3. How all other things are dependent on mangroves
4. Important duties of mangroves

Instead of doing it in English, we can make awareness content in Tamil and comics offer that scope to all of us to work in Tamil.



## SHRIMP VS MANGROVE

Masilamani Selvam Sathyabama University



The above comics is based on my field of research and personal experiences. As we know that mangroves are coastal woody plants that are supporting various living creatures such as crabs, shrimp, shellfish, and finfish. They have many benefits apart from protecting people from natural calamities and this is what I have tried to convey through my comics. In my comics, mangrove forests have been converted into a shrimp farm which has made the soil saline. Because of saline soil, agriculture production has also been adversely affected. Villagers and activists have come together to protest because of the high salt content in their drinking and groundwater. And now the coastal community is realizing the fact that mangrove forests are not only protecting the people from natural calamities but also preserve soil, water, and biodiversity. – Masilamani Selvam, Associate Professor of Bio-technology, Sathyabama University, Chennai.



## Monsoon Above Normal, But Disproportionate

As India gets ready to receive the Northeast Monsoon, we can take consolation in the fact that the southwest monsoon was above normal. The rainfall from June to September for the country has been 106 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA) according to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD). As far as regions are concerned, this year's southwest monsoon has been disproportionate. The Southern Peninsula of India and Central India received an above-normal monsoon of 122 and 119 per cent of LPA respectively. While East and Northeast India witnessed a below-normal monsoon with only 82 per cent of LPA. Monsoon in Northwest India was normal with 101 per cent of LPA. According to IMD data, seven states have received deficient rainfall this season. Manipur tops this list with a deficit of 48 per cent.

Photo: iStock



## Roller Coaster Ride

This year's Southwest Monsoon has not been less than a roller coaster journey. It kickstarted a bit early and arrived two days earlier than the normal date of June 1. Then things went turbulent when floods and landslides hit the northeastern parts of the country. A massive flood hit Assam in June that affected almost 30 lakh people and a major landslide disrupted Manipur that caused around 80 casualties. After initial distress, northeastern states went through a dry phase in July and August.



Photo: iStock

Further in July, areas of Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra suffered from floods. According to data from the disaster management division of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, almost 2,000 people have died due to extreme weather events such as floods, landslides and lightning across 396 districts of the country.

## Bye Bye Monsoon

After lasting for around 114 days and wreaking havoc throughout the nation, the southwest monsoon season started withdrawing from northwest India in September. The withdrawal started on September 20, three days later than the normal date of September 17.

According to IMD, the withdrawal of monsoon is declared when after the 1st of September the following criteria are met –

- i) Cessation of rainfall activity over the area for continuous 5 days.
- ii) Establishment of anticyclone in the lower troposphere
- iii) Considerable reduction in moisture content as inferred from satellite water vapour imageries and tephigrams.

Another important factor is that the withdrawal of Southwest Monsoon from the entire country is declared only after the 1st of October when the circulation pattern indicates a change over from the southwesterly wind regime.

## Erratic Rains

While Delhi and Gurugram were put to a standstill because of heavy showers in mid-September, farmers in several parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh bore the brunt of erratic rains and reported damage to their maize, soybean, and urad crops.



Photo: iStock

## Around the World

### Florida Cyclone



Photo: iStock

As Hurricane "Ian" wreaks havoc, a state of emergency has been declared in a number of US states. According to reports, Hurricane "Ian" was among the fiercest hurricanes to ever hit the United States and the fifth-strongest to ever hit the nation in terms of wind speed. The National Hurricane Center (NHC) reported that the storm was strengthening into an "extremely dangerous Category 4 storm" as it approached the Florida shore.

### New Zealand Missing Snow



Photo: iStock

A beautiful landscape which is generally fully covered with snow in winter looks like a barren moonscape with small patches of snow now. We are talking about New Zealand's Tūroa ski area which attracts tourists from all over the world. Climate change is believed to be one of the major factors in the disappearance of snow as New Zealand experienced its warmest winter on record — for the third year in a row.

### Sydney Floods



Photo: iStock

The city famous for the Opera House is in the news for all the wrong reasons as Sydney recorded its wettest year. According to Australia's weather agency, the city has received more than 2,200mm of rainfall since January. The La Niña weather pattern has caused widespread flooding across Australia and as a result, more than 20 people have died this year.

# HIGH TIME TO THINK BEYOND FOSSIL FUELS



Fossil fuels comprise 80% of current global primary energy demand which is the source of approx. two thirds of global CO2 emissions.

## One Health Zero Death



On the occasion of World Rabies Day (28 September 2022), **HCL Foundation** spread awareness about dog-mediated rabies. Awareness activities were held in Noida in community areas and schools through street play by **Tree India**. Close to 100 community representatives and over 300 school children participated in this two-day event.

The Global Alliance for Rabies Control put forward this year's theme as One Health, Zero death which aims to end human mortality due to dog-mediated rabies by 2030. HCL Foundation is celebrating this as part of its long-term campaign to improve the positive human-animal relationship in its communities.

## Inculcating Green Skills



With the support of the HCL Foundation, Green Skills Academy and the **Centre for Sustainable Development** successfully organised a 12-day Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) training program at Bellandur.

## Engaging Citizens in Effective Waste Management

**HCL Foundation** in collaboration with Gautam Buddha Nagar Forest Division organised a 'Waste Management and Environment Conservation event' on October 2nd. To educate and engage citizens in effective waste management, a 3-kilometer plogging drive in Okhla Bird Sanctuary was conducted. It was followed by a tree plantation.



With 100 enthusiastic participants from the **Clean NOIDA Volunteer Club**, the event helped remove 80 Kgs of dry waste from the bird sanctuary. Shri Pramod Kumar (Divisional Forest Officer, Gautam Buddha Nagar Forest Division), Shri Amit Gupta (Forest Range Officer, Okhla Bird Sanctuary), Shri Luv Kaushik (Van Daroga, Okhla Bird Sanctuary) were present on the occasion.

## Communicating For Impact

**World Comics India** in collaboration with the HCL Foundation conducted a Communication and Documentation Workshop with several HCLF partners based out of Bengaluru in September. The objective of this initiative is to teach the participants the art of effective communication and storytelling. Participants found the workshop useful as they picked up useful techniques to communicate their message effectively and to the point. This workshop was the first one in the series.



## Mass Afforestation Drive

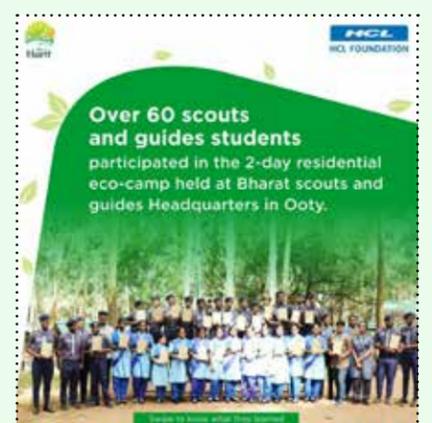
HCL Foundation & **Thuvakkam** recently entered into a formal partnership with the Kundrathur Municipality, Government of Tamil Nadu by signing its first MoU in Chennai CMDA region for mass afforestation under CSR. The objective of this partnership is to carry out mass plantation and maintenance of native species and habitat restoration of the land assigned by the Municipality for the next 3 years.



## Conscious Living Campaign

**HCL Foundation** team launched the 'Conscious living' campaign with over 60 scouts and guides students. The campaign took place as a part of the Bharat scouts and guides annual camp in Ooty. During this campaign, students understood the basics of plastics and learnt to track their daily plastic usage at home and school. They also assessed their needs and wants and how plastic impacts the environment. And finally, they were also introduced to the principles of the circular economy.

Students also conducted a waste audit within the camp. Students and scouts masters actively participated in the workshop and shared their experiences and real-life stories. At the campfire, students performed a skit on the importance of managing plastic waste and leading a conscious life based on their learnings from the workshop. They also took a pledge to take this learning and practice beyond the workshop and to engage their friends and families.



### About the publication

HCL Foundation and World Comics India's collaborative initiative 'Harit Khabar' is a monthly newspaper that aims to educate people on environmental issues and challenges and raise community participation towards the cause of the environment. This publication has been launched to provide a platform to various partner organizations working in collaboration with the HCL Foundation's distinct flagship programme HCL Harit - The Green Initiative to showcase their work and accomplishments and also to create a network between them. Through Harit Khabar we aim to stir meaningful debates on critical issues concerning our environment and ecosystem, accessibility to environmental education and public participation in decision-making processes in the country.

### About HCL Foundation

HCL Technologies implements its Corporate Social Responsibility agenda through its CSR arm, the HCL Foundation. Various flagship programs and special initiatives of the Foundation endeavor to contribute toward national and international development goals, bringing about lasting positive impact on people and the planet through long-term sustainable programs.

### About World Comics India

Advancing Grassroots Comics as an alternate tool of communication to local communities, World Comics India has been continuously working for the past 20 years. Many successful mass campaigns have also been organized using this medium of communication.

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