

January, 2023

# HARIT KHABAR

Monthly Newsletter featuring Environment Action by HCL Foundation



A special report on Nature Education Camp on Page 4-5



An initiative of HCL Foundation and World Comics India



## Sustainable Livelihood is the way forward!



To envision green, clean and empowered societies, it is of utmost importance that we advance towards sustainable livelihood opportunities. This is exactly what the **Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII)** is doing in partnership with the **HCL Foundation** in Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Madurai. Their project focuses on providing employment and livelihood opportunities to women that are in tandem with environmental sustainability.

By giving them training in four areas - artificial jewellery, jute and cloth bag making, preparing millet products and making designer face masks that instill the principles of preserving our ecology, sourcing green raw materials and ensuring that we do not deplete the green cover, EDII ensures that women join the mainstream society with skills, knowledge and financial independence. Till now, EDII has trained a total of 295 women, out of which 200 are actively working in various businesses in Hyderabad.

These women have registered their businesses under Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and also have E-Shram and Artisan cards. They have also established offline sales channels. You can also buy their products on platforms such as Amazon, My E-haat and Aleizone.



## A small step can change many lives - M.A. Rahuff

Green livelihood and sustainable entrepreneurship hold the power to change the future says M.A. Rahuff of the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India based in Hyderabad. A participant at the Grassroots Comics Workshop on Environmental Education organised by World Comics India in partnership with the HCL Foundation in Hyderabad in November 2022, Rahuff talks about green livelihood and the comics he made.

### 1.) Can you please tell us the work you are involved in?

We at the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) are training women from below poverty line from Asif Nagar Mandali in Hyderabad on jute bag-making, artificial jewellery, and producing millets and face masks. Currently, we are concentrating on artificial jewellery and jute bags. Our main aim is to support women entrepreneurs with sustainable livelihood, statutory compliances and market linkages.

### 2.) In all the trainings that you do, it seems that you are concentrating on environmental sustainability, is that correct?

Yeah, we are working for the livelihood of women along with preserving the environment by concentrating on eco-friendly products like jute bags. Artificial jewellery, on the other hand, is also eco-friendly as it is made with very less chemicals and other less harmful materials.

Many people are using too many chemicals even in agriculture, for example, fertilizers. Further, our generation has seen a variety of plants and birds which today's generation is not aware. So, at least from our side, we can promote environmental consciousness. It's a small step, but it can change many lives.

### 3.) Can you please talk about the comics that you made in the workshop because that also touched upon aspects of the training you provide?

We are also into tailoring and jute bag-making. Once passing out from our training program, these women start their own shops or set up their own home-based enterprises. So in my comics, I focused on solar panels which enables women entrepreneurs to keep working even during power cuts.

### 4.) Have you been able to share the comics that you made with people in the community or with your colleagues?

Yes, I shared it with our beneficiaries and they were really impressed. But they also had the same doubt that I had before joining the workshop which was whether they can make comics or not. Nevertheless, they tried their best.

### 5.) So what are the issues that you're focusing on in the comics?

One topic was water and sanitation, because water is precious, and stagnant water is also very bad for the environment. Another topic was solar energy and then plastic bags.

### 6.) These days people talk about environmental sciences and green career options. Can you please talk a little bit about it?

Yes, nowadays we have many courses related to the environment such as Environmental Sciences and M.Sc. Environment. Promoting such courses is the need of the hour as we need people who are interested to safeguard the environment.



M.A. Rahuff with his comics.

## STITCHING UNDER THE SUN

M.A. RAHUFF  
EDII - HYDRABAD



## Millets – The Future of Food

The United Nations has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets. In his message to the opening ceremony of the ‘International Year of Millets 2023’, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, “Millets have a glorious history of being among the earliest crops grown by humans. They have been an important food source in the past. But the need of the hour is to make them a food choice for the future.”

### Stepping up Food Security

When humans started to domesticate plants for agriculture, millets were the first. They are high in nutritional content and are considered ‘Nutri-cereals’. Millets hold a key to fighting climate change and food security because they can grow in relatively poor soils and under adverse and arid conditions where other cereals cannot grow. Despite all such qualities, their cultivation is declining all over the globe which is a glaring cause for concern.



In India, millets were traditionally consumed, but due to the push given to food security through the Green Revolution in the 1960s, consumption of millets dropped significantly. According to a press release by the Press Information Bureau, prior to the Green Revolution, millets accounted for around 40 per cent of all cultivated grains. This number has dropped to around 20 per cent over the years.

Against such a backdrop, the International Year of Millets will step up awareness of the contribution of millets to food security and nutrition, provide an opportunity to increase global production and promote the consumption of millets.

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### What are Millets?

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), millets are a collective group of small-seeded annual grasses that are grown as grain crops, primarily on marginal land in dry areas of temperate, subtropical and tropical regions.

Millets are grown in 131 countries and serve as a traditional food for 59 crore people in Asia and Africa.

The earliest evidence of millets was found in the Indus Valley Civilisation, dating back to 3000 BC.

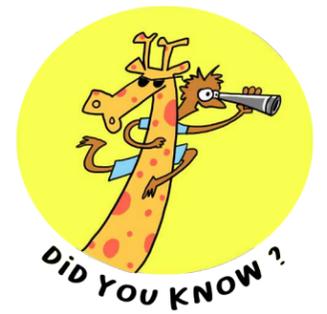


Photo (Above and top left) : Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

### Top 5 States

- Rajasthan -----
- Karnataka -----
- Maharashtra -----
- Uttar Pradesh -----
- Haryana -----

### Millet Crops

- Bajra/Sorghum
- Jowar/Ragi
- Ragi/Jowar
- Bajra
- Bajra

Source: Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

## Millets, the way forward for Nutrition

Considering the high nutritional value of millets, the Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shri Narendra Singh Tomar has said that “The time has come for the Public Distribution System to shift the focus of distribution programs from basic calories to provide a more diverse food basket that includes millets to improve the nutritional status of pre-school children and women of reproductive age.”

## Livelihood through Millets



Millets are not just ‘Nutri-cereals’ that can help us tackle climate change or food insecurity, but are also a source of livelihood for budding women entrepreneurs. Take the case of Bolra Yellamma. Before joining the Women Skillpreneurship Development Program (WSDP) of the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) in partnership with the HCL Foundation, Bolra Yellamma from Hyderabad was involved in tailoring and washing bikes.

The WSDP program trained Bolra Yellamma to make millet products and add an additional source of income. Bolra expressed that she learnt a variety of things during the program including the importance of self-employment. Now, she runs her own enterprise that sells millet products like Boondi Laddu, Masala Murkullu, Masala Applau, Gavallu, and Boondi mixture (local names in Telugu). She has managed to earn an additional income of 4000 INR per month from the sale of millet products. She also plans to increase her sales and focus on small grocery shops and identify schools and offices for raising awareness about millet products.



# NATURE EDUCATION CAMP



## Instilling empathy and understanding of nature and wildlife

HCL Harit team kick-started this new year with a 4-day residential **Nature Education Camp** in Aiyur Forest house, Denkanikottai, Tamil Nadu. A total of 25 students (20 from government schools in Bengaluru and 5 students from the local community) gathered on January 5 2023. The purpose of this camp was to help instil among students empathy and understanding of nature and wildlife, and to help them learn, and experience the importance of co-existence for a better future.

### Day 1

On the first day, students received a kit that contained publications such as -  
 Birds of Karnataka guidebook (in Kannada)  
 Common trees of India (created by NCF)  
 Home of the blue Lilly (created by Care Earth Trust)

Students were then given a detailed introduction of the local landscape and the Do's and Don'ts in the forest. Students relished good south Indian snacks (served on banana leaves) which were followed by the screening of a documentary movie on Asian elephants. Students thoroughly enjoyed their first experience of staying in a forest camp.



The objective of the camp was to learn, and experience the importance of co-existence for a better future

### Day 2

The second day started early morning when students were taken for bird watching and they learnt the basic bird identification techniques through body appearance, calls, habits, habitats, etc. They all encountered several residential birds like White-Cheeked barbet, Purple and Purple rumped sunbird, Pied Kingfisher.

They were also told about the birds living near the human settlements and inside the forest and other habitats. After the bird session, all the students were taken for an interesting plant walk. They experienced several wild vegetation inside the campus. Hands on training for different parts of plants, their identification based on shape size was given to all. Students were briefed about distribution of plants, difference between native, non-native and invasive species.



They depicted their learnings through leaf tracing and bird shading through resources available in the forest. Later they were introduced to the web of life through outdoor activity followed by the screening of the Wild Karnataka documentary. The day ended with students leading the campfire where songs, and poetry on nature, wildlife and biodiversity were recited.

### Day 3

The first half of the third day was spent trekking in the Kodakarai forest to understand and experience forest ecosystems first-hand.

Students then learnt about habitat ecology and the identification of different animal signs in the forest. After the bird session, all the students were taken for an interesting plant walk. They experienced several wild vegetation inside the campus. Hands on training for different parts of plants, their identification based on shape size was given to all. Students were briefed about distribution of plants, difference between native, non-native and invasive species. Students were absolutely thrilled to experience forests and life there. In the second half of the day, Mr Rajamaraippan, Assistant Conservator of Forests, Hosur, Tamil Nadu Forest Department interacted with the students about indigenous medicinal plants and their use in today's world. This was followed by a session on ecosystem services.

Students were also given a glimpse into HCLF and Harit's work.



### Day 4

After learning about different ecosystems and experiencing life in the forest, on the last day of the camp students were taught how to take positive action for future sustainability through a session on conscious living.

Students created a vision for their school, their city and their neighbourhood. The 4-day residential nature education camp successfully ended with supremely positive feedback from students.



## Weather woes continue



Photo: iStock

From coping with continuous heatwaves this year, the northern part of India is now being swept by cold waves. Temperatures in many areas hit sub-zero during December and January. The cold wave was accompanied by a thick layer of fog over parts of the Indo-Gangetic Plain.

The most striking feature this time round was that Delhi recorded lower minimum temperatures than the hill city of Nainital and Dharamshala and the valley of Dehradun. On 26th December, Delhi's minimum temperature dropped to 5 degrees Celcius while that of Dharamshala and Dehradun were 5.4 and 7.8 degrees Celcius respectively according to data from the Indian Meteorological Department(IMD). On the following day, Delhi was colder than Nainital. The cold wave intensified in the first fortnight of January with sub-zero temperatures in a few places. Other than Delhi, Churu, a city in Rajasthan has also been in the news for plummeting temperatures. The city's minimum temperature on 27th December was recorded to be at just 0.5 degrees Celcius, just half a degree above the freezing point. With this, Churu was also the coldest place in the plains of North India. The story does not end here as the cold waves and chilly weather continued into the new year and beyond.

**The IMD declares a cold wave when the minimum temperature recorded over a station falls 5 degrees, or more, below normal.**

## India Welcomes Migratory Birds

Winters are generally full of surprises. For humans, it brings celebrations in the form of Christmas and the new year, for some reptiles it leads to dormancy and hibernation, and for some birds, it results in long travel and migration. Seeking food and shelter and escaping the freezing cold in various parts of the world, India welcomes millions of migratory birds in the winter season. Nearly five lakh migratory birds have arrived in the beautiful valley of Kashmir in India till mid December. According to the Department of Wildlife, birds including Mallard, Greylag goose and Bar headed goose have already arrived at Hokersar wetland which is on the outskirts of Srinagar. On the eastern side, Kolkata's Satragachi Jheel welcomed around 7000 avian visitors, at least 15 per cent more than last year. In Noida, **Give Me Trees Trust** and **HCL Foundation's** urban forest - Harit Upvan Sorkha too witnessed visitors this winter. Black Redstart *Phoenicurus Ochruros*, Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus Trochiloides* and White Wagtail *Motacilla Alba* were among the bird species spotted at the site.



Green Warbler



White Browed Wagtail

Black Redstart  
Phoenicurus Ochruros

## High tempered Winter

Photo: iStock



Europe generally welcomes the new year with low temperatures. However, this was not the case when 2023 knocked on their door. According to the UN News, new year temperatures soared above 20 degrees Celsius in many European countries, including countries in Central Europe.

Climatologist Maximiliano Herrera has collated data from around Europe and he found that countries like Poland, Denmark, Netherlands, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus and the Czech Republic experienced record-breaking high temperatures. Poland recorded a temperature of 19 degrees Celcius, 18 degrees higher than the annual average for January. Czech Republic, which usually is around 3 degrees, recorded a temperature of 19.6 degrees Celcius. Southern France and Northern Spain too were not spared as mercury touched almost 25 degrees. Some researchers are linking this with the warming of the Arctic which is in close proximity. The Arctic is experiencing global warming at four times the worldwide average.

## Around the World

### It's raining plastics in New Zealand



Photo: iStock

You must have heard of acid rain at some point in your life. But, have you ever wondered that there could also be something like 'plastic rain'? A new study published on 12 December 2022 in the journal Environmental Science & Technology found that 74 tonnes of microplastics fell from the air in Auckland, New Zealand in 2020. The volume of plastics that fell is so high that it is equivalent to three million plastic bottles, added the study.

### Bomb Cyclone in North America



Photo: Hellenic Daily News

North America was strongly hit by a storm named Elliot which took the lives of as many as 30 people and affected over 250 million people around Christmas. Elliot is an unusual storm and has been classified as a bomb cyclone. Spanning over 3,000 kilometres from the Canadian border to the Mexican border, Elliot's effects have resulted in record amounts of snowfall, rain, and winds in several areas of the United States.

### Unkind Winter in Japan



Photo: Japan Forward

From North America to Japan, it seems that the winter has been unkind. A strong winter storm in Japan killed at least 17 people in December. Due to the storm, hundreds of vehicles were stranded on highways. Heavy snow in northern Japan knocked down an electric power transmission tower leaving around 20 thousand homes without power on Christmas morning.

## Creating Awareness about Soil

Celebrating 'World Soil Day' on December 5, **CARE India** organized a community event in Khandera Village of Dadri Block in Gautam Buddha Nagar District. The event witnessed the participation of around 50 women from the community.

The event raised awareness about the importance of soil and how the usage of chemical fertilizers like urea and Di-ammonium Phosphate (DAP) causes soil degradation. Long-term usage of such chemical fertilizers may even cause problems for food security and sustainability.

CARE India also encouraged the participants to use organic fertilizers such as vermicompost which increases soil fertility, decreases the occurrence of disease, reduces the usage of water for irrigation and brings down input costs. Women were also trained to make vermicompost at home from cow dung cake, neem leaves, and worms. Participants agreed to make vermicompost and use it as manure in the field. Some women even decided to sell organic fertilizers to add to their household incomes.



## Flood of Comics at Scouts and Guides Jamboree



**World Comics India** conducted a five-day comics orientation for scouts and guides at the 'International Cultural Jamboree' which was organized by the Bharat Scouts and Guides, Karnataka at Mudbidri from December 21 to 27, 2022. More than 1200 participants were given an orientation on how to talk about environmental issues through the medium of comics.

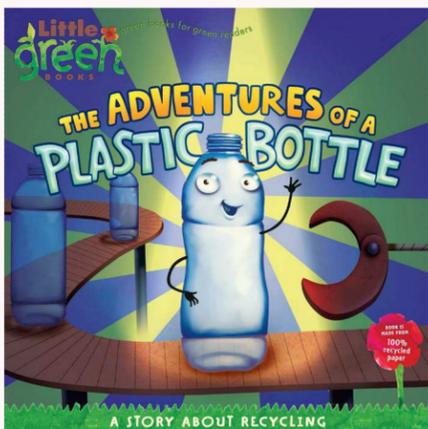
They were first asked to go through an exhibition of comics on various environmental issues made by participants from the workshops organized by World Comics India and the HCL Foundation in various parts of the country.



After going through the exhibition, the students were then given a four-frame format in which they were asked to draw their own stories. Many of them were able to identify some good local issues and transform them into comics in the limited time that was available to them. The entire program was held as part of the SDG village organized by the Bharat Scouts and Guides, Karnataka.

## Books & Movies

### The Journey of a plastic bottle



Have you ever wondered how does the life cycle of a plastic bottle looks like? How and where it is created and where it is dumped? Can something new be created from it?

If such questions bother you then the book *The Adventures Of A Plastic Bottle: A Story About Recycling* by Alison Inches (2009) is a perfect pick for you.

The book takes you through the life of a plastic bottle while taking into account the ecological significance behind the resources used to make it. Grab this book for a fun and informative reading session!

### Eyes of the Orangutan

Orangutans are believed to be human's closest living relatives, but is the human race treating them right? 'Eyes of the Orangutan' by the internationally acclaimed environmental photojournalist Aaron Gekoski was screened at the prestigious Royal Geographical Society in Lonon on 19 January 2023.



The documentary unravels the abuse that orangutans are facing in the tourism industry. Showing how orangutans and other wildlife animals are abused for the wildlife tourism industry, which generates a revenue of 250 billion USD annually, demonstrates the ugly reality.

The documentary also raises pertinent questions such as whether tourists are also as complicit in the abuse and ill-treatment of wildlife for entertainment as poachers.

## Environment Quiz



1) What are terricolous animals?

- A. Animals that live in a particular territory
- B. Animals that live on high mountains
- C. Animals that live in the soil
- D. Animals that live in water

2) Which of the following is not a greenhouse gas?

- A. Nitrogen
- B. Methane
- C. Nitrous oxide
- D. Carbon dioxide

3) Name the atmospheric layer closest to the ground

- A. Mesosphere
- B. Troposphere
- C. Thermosphere
- D. Stratosphere

4) The Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) is located in which state?

- A. Jharkhand
- B. West Bengal
- C. Andhra Pradesh
- D. Manipur

5) Which country is popularly knowns as the 'land of the windmills'?

- A. Japan
- B. Poland
- C. Norway
- D. Netherlands

## Joining Hands for a Clean Life Below Water

HCL Foundation join hands with the Tamil Nadu Forest Department (TNFD) for marine and coastal conservation. This bold step is aligned with the 14th Sustainable Development Goal – Life Below Water and will address the grave issue of ghost nets and marine debris. Under this initiative, the HCL Foundation will be supporting TNFD to take up a 3-year action plan for the removal of ghost nets from the Gulf of Mannar region. Together, the HCL Foundation and TNFD will also work on a mass awareness campaign for the coastal communities.



## Developing Forest Corridors in Meghalaya



Appreciating the tremendous work towards securing the right of passage for elephants and other wildlife by developing forest corridors in the degrading forest of the South Garo Hill region, the Garo Hills Autonomous Development Council (GHADC), Tura, Meghalaya conferred the HCL Foundation with a 'Certification of Appreciation' on 21 December 2022. The HCL Foundation in partnership with the HCL Grant recipient under the environment category - **Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)** is currently developing 1000 hectares of Village Reserve Forest between Bagmara and Balpakram National Park.

## Community feedback for Improved Cooking Stove



**CARE India** with the support of the HCL Foundation organized a local stakeholder consultation in Greater Noida on 19 December 2022. A total of 40 participants from 5 NGOs and 15 community members participated in this event. During the event, major discussions were held on the process of gold standard certification of the project and the negative impacts of using biomass fuel and fuelwood for cooking. Women members from the community gave feedback for further improvement in Improved Cook Stove (ICS).

## Green Yatra continues



**Green Yatra** on 21 December 2022 organized a plantation drive at Amarpur Harit Upvan in the National Capital Region. More than 120 HCL Tech volunteers participated in the event and planted over 250 saplings in the 60,000-plus-strong Harit Upvan Amarpur.

## Plantation Drive



**Thuvakkam** carried out a plantation drive in Kundrathur, Chennai on 17 December 2022. The plantation drive was successful with over 80 volunteers including Scouts and guides, HCL volunteers, the local residential association, and the general public planting over a thousand saplings.

The event was also attended by Mr Dhamodharan, Commissioner, Kundrathur Municipality, Government of TN. The 1.5-acre urban forest now has over 14,000 saplings.

## Training to protect Marine Ecosystem



**Tree Foundation**, in collaboration with the HCL Foundation, organised a training program on marine ecosystem conservation involving artisanal fishermen (Wikipedia describes artisanal fishing as fishing consisting of various small-scale, low-technology, low-capital, fishing practices undertaken by individual fishing households) in the ghost nets retrieval program at Mugaiyur, Tamil Nadu on 26 December 2022. The training included 104 participants consisting of 82 fishermen and 22 Sea Turtle Protection Force (STPF) members and focused on releasing endangered species and retrieving ghost nets along the Chennai and Chelgalpattu coast.

## Promoting Nature-based learning



**TREE Craze Foundation** in collaboration with the HCL Foundation conducted a baseline survey for their project "Developing 5 government schools into Harit Schools" at Noida. This project will work towards developing environmental education resource materials and storybooks in collaboration with school students, helping teachers integrate environmental education in their pedagogy to teach other subjects through experiential and location-based environmental teaching in classrooms (nature-based learning), and empowering students and teachers to solve their local environmental challenges.

### 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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