Media Coverage - Kovai Green League

The Kovai Green League's Greenest Campus Awards showed that Coimbatore's schoolchildren are taking the cause of the environment very seriously indeed

The central atrium at Brookfields Mall was buzzing with excitement. Whispers and excited giggles rose above the regular hum of a busy mall. Curious shoppers peered over the railings of the various floors wondering why so many school children were seated patiently in the atrium. It was the evening of the Kovai Green League's Greenest Campus Awards.

Launched in July 2016, the Kovai Green League (an initiative of Brookfields, Bosch, Rotary Club of Coimbatore, WWF-India, Suryan FM and Lotus TV) aimed to increase the city's green cover by involving schoolkids. The members conducted awareness programmes in various city schools. In December 2016, they launched the Greenest Campus Awards. Nominations were invited from schools and the criteria included number of trees on the campus, number of birds spotted, water recycling programmes, and use of solar energy among others. Student involvement and awareness was also a factor.

The awards were announced on January 25 in the presence of the Chief Guest K. Vijaykarthikeyan, Commissioner Coimbatore Municipal Corporation, and Guest of Honour Dr. P. Pramod Nair, Senior Scientist, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History. Apart from the awards, the league also felicitated M. Yoganathan, Chitra Krishnaswamy and Krishnan P. Pillai for their contributions to the cause of conservation.

Yoganathan, a conductor with the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation, is well known for having planted 120,000 saplings across the state and for having created awareness of the need for afforestation in more than 3000 educational institutions. "When planting saplings, choose the ones best suited for the soil and climate of the region. Don't go for fast-growing varieties," he said. "At a time when the state is facing a drought situation, we must all plant trees and care for them so that the future generations don't suffer like this."

Chitra Krishnaswamy, a terrace gardening expert, spoke of how everyone should be part of the urban gardening movement. "Just because one lives in an apartment, it does not mean you cannot garden," she said. "Create a compost pit and use the green waste

to make manure."

Krishnan P. Pillai spoke of the importance of water conservation and his cycling trips to Delhi to present a petition to the President for interlinking of rivers. K. Vijarkarthikeyan presented mementoes to the three green champions.

Once this was done, it was time to announce the Greenest Campus Awards. There were two segments in this: Corporation Schools and Private Schools. In the first category were Corporation Middle School, Ramasamy Nagar; Corporation Higher Secondary School, Peelamedu; and Corporation High School, Puliakulam.

In the second category came The Western Ghats International School, Yuvabharati Public School and Ksirs International School. Camford International School and SNS Academy received Special Recognition Awards. Children from these schools received their awards from Dr. P. Pramod Nair.

While students and teachers from the private schools gave PowerPoint presentations while speaking abut their work, the young girls from Corporation High School, Puliakulam, told the audience why trees were important through a Tamil song. It was an eye-opener for members of the audience to see how much the youngsters knew.

K. Vijaykarthikeyan and Dr. Pramod congratulated the league on its work and hoped that the children would take the message of conservation to society at large. "Development is not just about bulldozers and buildings," said Vijaykarthikeyan. "It is also about being eco-friendly." He exhorted people to see what they could do to change themselves even as they worked to keep the city green and clean.

"The venue of this green awards ceremony is a mall," said Dr. Pramod wryly, eliciting laughter from the audience. "In the next five-10 years, 50 per cent of people will be living in an urban setting. So we need to start thinking and working together to make our cities green."

Links —

1. http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/For-a-green-cause/article17097605.ece
2. http://www.covaipost.com/coimbatore/greenest-campus-awards-given-to-city-schools/
3. http://simpli-city.in/web/coimbatore-news/10102/kovai-green-league-awards-schools-and-individuals-for-their-exemplary-contribution-towards-conserving-greenery