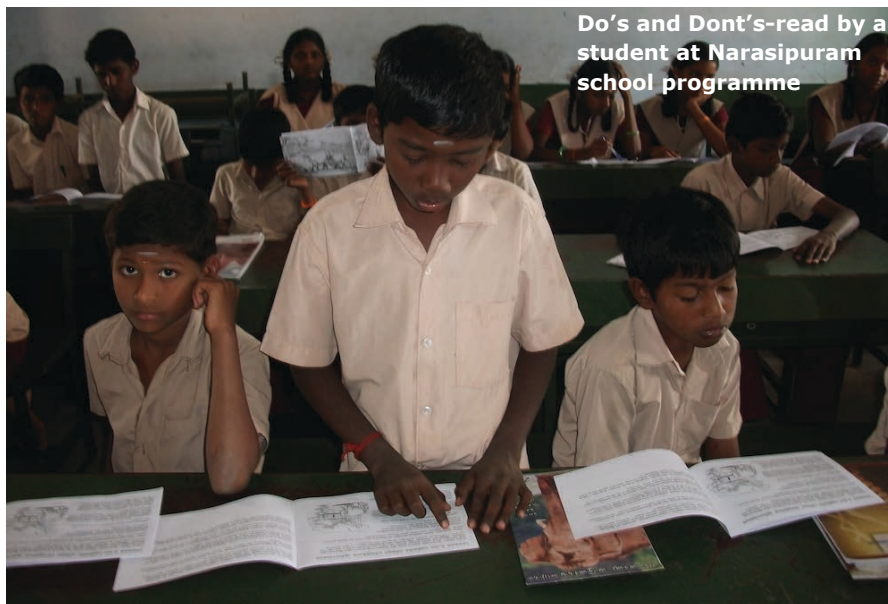


## **ZOO observes Golden Jubilee of Animal Welfare Fortnightly with Coimbatore schools and their students**

**R. Marimuthu\***

The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) celebrates Animal Welfare Fortnightly every year from 14-30 January for two weeks and this is the 50th year of celebration. The objective of the event is to highlight and address animal welfare issues and motivate more people to be kind to animals and join the animal welfare movement. AWBI suggest many activities, which could be implemented during these two weeks, such as arrange animal birth control, anti-rabies programme, rescue sick animals, found an animal shelter for stray animals, supply grain and water to the birds, plant many fruit trees for birds, start anti-plastic campaign, advise schools to stop killing animals for dissection and misuse of oxytocin injection drawing more milk from cows etc.

Zoo Outreach Organisation being an animal welfare organization as well as a conservation organisation has been celebrating this event for many years by developing educational materials on animal welfare and supplying these at no cost to animal welfare organizations and others that wish to create awareness of practising compassion for wild animals as well as domestic and pet animals. Also ZOO organizes its own education outreach programmes for the benefit of the local Corporation and Governmental institutions' students as well as teachers as they often lack this kind of opportunity. This year ZOO arranged four animal welfare awareness programmes with two being held at respective schools, and two at the local zoo. Also the writer made a presentation on animal welfare and biodiversity conservation for about 170 National Green Corps teachers at Gobichettipalayam, Erode district. In all the programmes the main objectives of AWBI as well as the five freedoms of animal welfare were taught to the students. The five freedoms have to adhere by animal farms, captive facilities, circuses and individual pet owners and they are freedom from thirst,



**Do's and Dont's-read by a student at Narasipuram school programme**



**HECx programme at Narasipuram Govt. School**



**Students with Elephant headband**

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hunger, malnutrition; freedom from discomfort; freedom from pain, injury and diseases; freedom to express most normal behaviour and freedom from fear and distress.

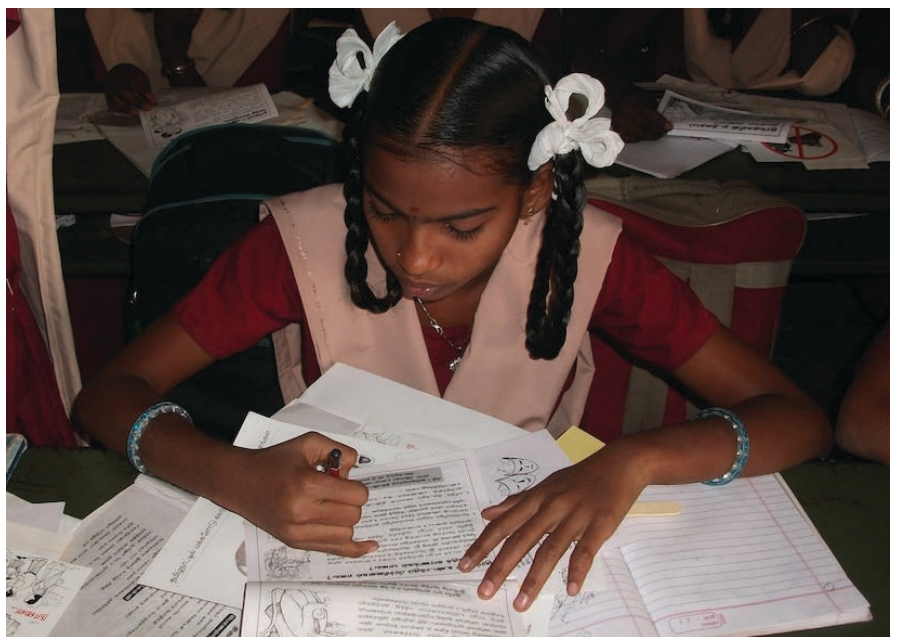
The audience was urged to be kind to animals ... they should not throw stones or beat animals, stop their friends being to cruel to animals, do not tie a thread to the tails of animals such as calotes and dragon fly, etc. If they keep pets asked them follow the five freedoms, when the students visit to the zoo they should not tease or feed the animals, report circuses which mistreat their animals, avoid articles using things made up of animal body parts. They should not disturb the animal habitat in and around their surroundings ... for example taking bird nest, spider web, ant nest, termite mounds, wasp mud nests, etc. unless they are abandoned. If they see the injured animal, report to SPCA or other animal welfare related organisations. They were also taught about the laws on animal welfare, Prevention on Cruelty Act 1960 and Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

On 21 January, a programme was arranged at Corporation Higher Secondary School, Peelamedu in which 35 students of 9 Std (14 years old) took part. They were taught about how they should be compassionate with domestic as well as wild animals. At the end, our education packet Monkey Manners was explained. This packet contains set of education materials which suggests to the students how to behave with straying monkeys to avoid conflict with them and, most importantly, stop feeding them. They should also insure that their garbage is sealed so monkeys will not learn to visit houses for these treats. Mr. Balusamy, Headmaster coordinated this programme.

On 24 January we arranged another programme at Narasipuram Government High School. Fifty students of class VI-IX participated in the programme. They were also taught about animal welfare and laws pertaining to it. ZOO's Human Elephant



**Monkey Manners programme at Peelamedu CHSS**



**Peelamedu: Reading information about how to mitigate monkey menace**



**Amphibian programme at VOC Park Zoo, Coimbatore**



Coexistence education packets were used. Because this is one of the human elephant conflict areas and located at the foothills of Western Ghats. Students were given detailed information about elephant facts and tips of do's and don'ts in elephant areas in order to save their lives. Mrs. Suganthi, Headmistress and Mr. Thiyagarajan of Tulsi Trust coordinated.

On 27 January, a talk was given to 170 National Green Corps School Coordinator teachers of Erode District about animal welfare as well as Biodiversity Conservation. The programme, part of a one day workshop, held at Palaniammal GHS School, arranged by NGC, Distt Coordinator Mr. Prabhakaran.

VOC Park Mini Zoo with help from ZOO arranged two animal welfare programmes on 29-30 January. On 29 January 45 girl students of XI std Corporation HSS Siddhapudur was invited to the zoo to learn about animal welfare and bat conservation. On 30, Jan 47 girls of IX std, Corporation Girls HSS Renganathapuram attended a programme on amphibian conservation. During the education program ZOO's Education kits on bats and amphibians were used to teach about species diversity and their role in ecosystem. The myths about bats, their role in pollination and insect control were also explained.

The students were taken around the zoo and taught "do's and don'ts" at the zoo when they visit in order to prohibit visitor misbehaviour. Sometimes visitors hurt or annoy captive animals unknowingly and they promised to be better hereafter. The teachers accompanying the students are: Mr. N.J.R. Krishnamoorthy, Mrs. P.N. Renukadevi & Mrs. A. Gowri from Siddhapudur and Mrs. R.K. Shanmugasundari from Renganathapuram.

R.Marimuthu, Senior Education Officer of Zoo Outreach Organization and Dr. K. Asokan Director of VOC Zoo were the resource persons.



**Renganathapuram Corporation Girls HS School students with amphibian kits**



**Bat awareness programme at VOC Park Mini zoo with Siddapudur School students**



**Bat Girl poses showing her mask at VOC Zoo**