



World Water Day 2012



RCE Srinagar, together with the *Paryavaran Mitra* network of Centre for Environment Education, celebrated World Water Day 2012 in the Himalayan states of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Children, youth and adults from urban and rural spheres participated in the different activities organized on this occasion to commemorate the day. Local issues pertaining to water availability, pollution, related health issues, requirements for the agricultural sector and conservation needs were addressed.

In Jammu & Kashmir, the day was celebrated at Middle School, Kralpora, in Budgam district and Monarch School, Handwara, in district Kupwara. Children were introduced to the theme 'Water and Food Security', and the interconnectedness and dependency of water resources and food security. Issues like growing menace of pollution and its ill effects upon human beings, fishes and other water species were also discussed.

A hundred and ten students and 10 teachers participated in RCE Srinagar's programme at the school in Kralpora. Students gave short messages about the importance of water and protecting fresh water bodies from pollution. Shahid, a student of sixth grade, spoke about the importance of water in our daily lives. "Water is an essential and an important part of our life. We drink, bathe and irrigate our fields with water, we should not waste water", said Shahid. Yaseen, a student of Eighth grade spoke about using water judiciously. "We should thank God for providing us such a precious resource, and we should not waste water", she said. Shabnam, a student of VII grade, in her message mentioned the need for protecting water resources from pollution. "We should not throw garbage into the water bodies as it pollutes water resources", said Shabnum. The students also participated in activities like scrabble and drawing competition on the theme of the day. The day culminated with children taking out a rally through the nearby areas. Interns from Kashmir University facilitated the programme.

At Monarch School in Handwara, over a hundred students from fifth to tenth standards were made aware of the importance of water, and its relationship with food through a question and answer session. In addition, students also learnt interesting water-related facts and figures, water cycle, linkages between water, irrigation and food, water pollution, acid rain and its impacts and so on. Students participated in simple experiments, 'A Drop of Water' that would demonstrate the distribution of water on earth and 'Every Drop Counts' to measure the unnoticed wastage of water through our day-to-day activities. They also participated in extempore speeches on the subject 'Water for Food' and a drawing competition. Interns from Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) Mumbai, facilitated the designing and implementation of the events.

In another event, students from six schools in Doda district participated in a day-long programme to commemorate World Water Day where they tried to establish linkages between water and food through colorful drawings.

The day was celebrated in Sirmour and Manali districts of Himachal Pradesh in collaboration with local NGO partners YUMDHA (Yuva Mahamandal Dhartidhar) and HWS (Human Welfare Society).

Awareness programmes held at two different locations - Paonta Saheb and Nahan in Sirmour district involved students in activities like rally, debate and declamation competitions. Around 400 students and teachers gathered at these locations and discussed the importance of water availability, managing drinking water by saving it from pollution and protection of water bodies. Students were also told about rain water harvesting and rooftop water harvesting as important measures to improve ground water levels.

In Manali, nearly 150 students and 10 teachers from two schools took out a rally to adjacent villages to communicate the importance of water for human life. The rally stressed upon the need for behavioural change in order to ensure judicious use & conservation of water.

Children, teachers and villagers together participated in World Water Day celebrations at Tehri Garhwal in Uttarakhand organized with support from NGO partner LPSS (Lok Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan). Over 150 participants together discussed local water issues, related problems and possible solutions. Major points discussed can be summarized as:

Problem	Solution
Lowering ground water table	Check dams to check run-off
Pollution of water bodies due to agricultural run-off from mountains	Minimize the use of chemical fertilizers
Climate change and Glacier Melt	Afforestation with local indigenous species
Impact of tourism on water bodies	Ecotourism
Freezing of water distribution pipes	Use of plastic pipes, and covering them with insulating material

These celebrations by RCE Srinagar have been important in drawing the attention of students, teachers, communities, NGOs and Government representatives towards the relevance of water for life and food in particular. Most of these locations were quite remote and many participants learnt about WWD for the very first time. They understood how people around the globe are joining hands to learn and think about the importance of water by observing World Water Day.

RCE Srinagar regularly organizes events to involve communities in observing important environmental day. Some other events organized RCE Srinagar are 'International Mountain Day, World Wetlands Day, Safe Festival Campaign-Holi and School Safety Programme in Sikkim'.



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