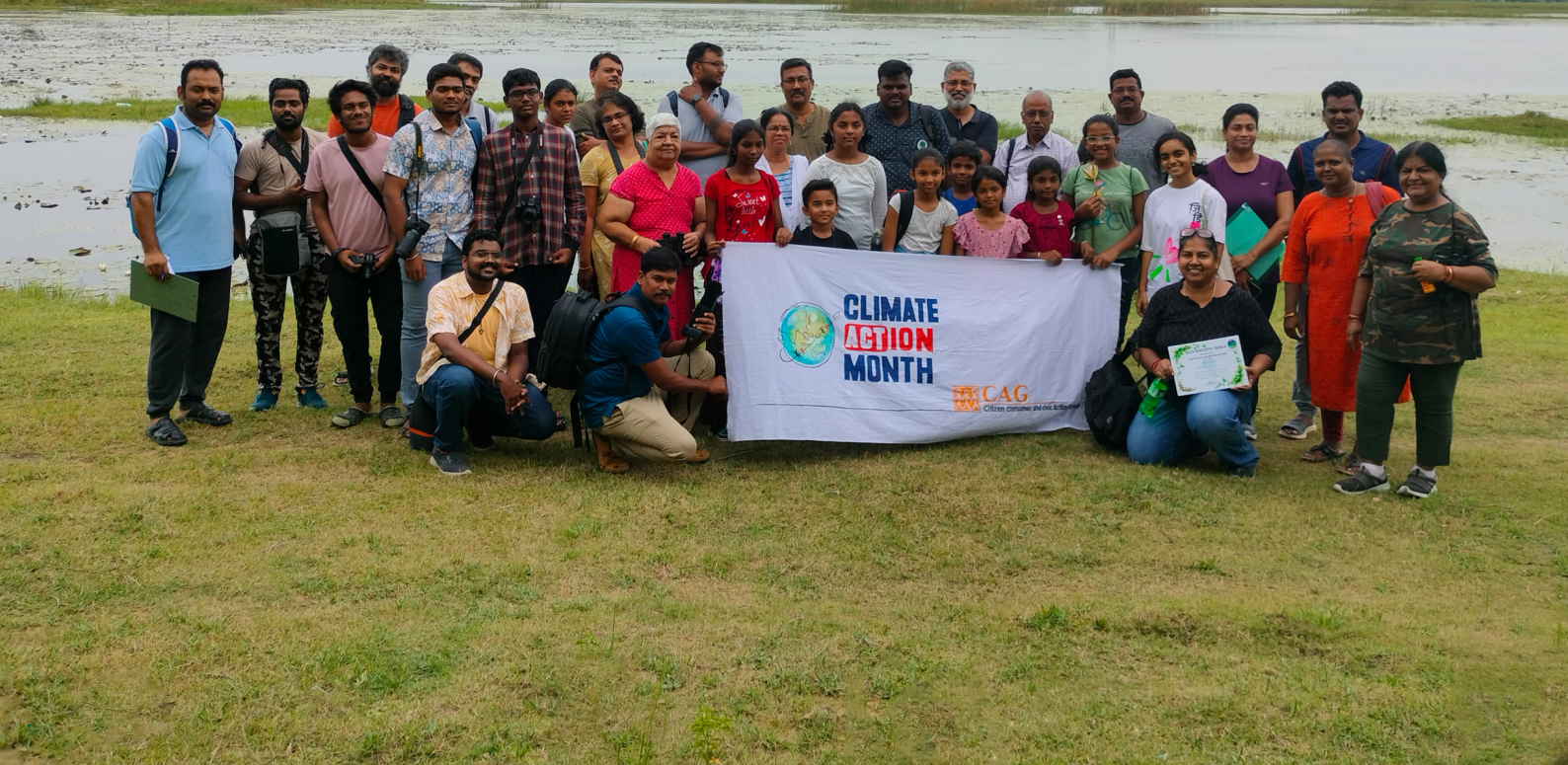


# Climate Action Month

July 2023



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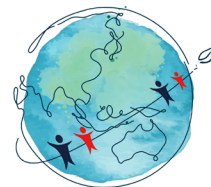
# Climate Action Month

July 2023



**CAG**

Citizen consumer and civic Action Group



**CLIMATE  
ACTION  
MONTH**  
A CAG INITIATIVE





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# Acknowledgements

**“No one who achieves success does so without acknowledging the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude.”  
– Alfred North Whitehead**

We are grateful to the many people who contributed their time, energy and expertise and made Climate Action Month (CAM) 2023 not only possible but also impactful. First and foremost, we would like to express our gratitude to Dr. J. Radhakrishnan I.A.S., Commissioner, Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), who supported us and inaugurated CAM 2023. We would also like to thank the various officials in GCC who permitted us to conduct events in public parks. We would like to thank Dr. V. Thiruppugazh I.A.S. and Mr. Deepak Bilgi I.F.S. for readily accepting our invitation to conclude and draw the curtain on CAM 2023. We also acknowledge the support provided by the Tamil Nadu police in granting permissions to conduct events in public spaces and for their interest in our campaign.

We are thankful to our host institutions for collaborating with us and conducting CAM events in their premises. In this regard, we acknowledge and appreciate the support and enthusiasm of - The Alt school, Grove school, Vels Vidyashram, AM Jain college, Stella Maris college, Ethiraj college, Patrician college, New college, Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University, ZF Motors, Hard n Soft Technologies, Trimble, JK Fenner, Theosophical Society, Nani Palkhivala Arbitration Centre, The Chennai Photowalk and Backyard Clan.

This massive campaign would not have been possible without the support of our brothers and sisters in arms. We truly appreciate the support of - Madras Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Poovulagin Nanbargal, Care Earth Trust, Chennai Climate Action Group, Eco Society of India, and Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our resource persons who promptly and enthusiastically agreed to be a part of this month-long campaign and empower citizens of Chennai in various ways and means to join the fight against climate change. In this regard, we sincerely appreciate and acknowledge the contributions of – Mr. Logan and The Black Boys band, Mr. Prakash, Ms. Sree Ponkothai, Mr. Geo Damin, Mr. Poochi Venkat, Mr. Jeya Kumar, Ms. Narayani, Ms. Geetha, Ms. Janani Venkitesh, Mr. Sudarsan Ramamurthy, Mr. Nikilesh, Mr. Raj Kamal, Ms. Kavitha Muralidharan, Ms. Keerthana PV, Laddoo Bhai, conservancy workers, Ms. Lakshmi, Mr. Gowtham, Ms. Kalai, GCC animators, Ms. Radha and Ms. Vidhya.



Participants during the Tree Appreciation Walk at the Theosophical Society  
The event was facilitated by Mr.Muthu Karthik from the Care Earth Trust



# Introduction

Climate change is an immensely complex challenge that demands our immediate attention. It encompasses a multitude of interconnected dimensions, spanning science, economics, society, politics, and moral and ethical considerations.

The Sixth Assessment Report released by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in March 2023 details the life-threatening dangers of rising greenhouse gas emissions and warns of the imminent consequences of extreme and frequent climate disasters such as destruction of homes, loss of livelihoods resulting in displacement of billions of people, food and water insecurity exacerbating poverty and hunger, energy crisis, etc. To effectively address climate change, we must adopt a dual approach: mitigating its causes and adapting to its unavoidable consequences.

The primary burden of mitigating and adapting to climate change falls on corporations that are the major emitters of greenhouse gases and on the governments that possess the power to enact legislations that regulate industries, ensuring compliance with emission limits and environmental protection standards. However, the cooperation of citizens is also of utmost importance in making behavioural changes to lead a sustainable lifestyle. And the first

step towards this is to educate the citizens about the phenomenon of climate change, which has now in fact evolved to be a climate emergency.

It is in this context that Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG) conceived and launched a month-long campaign, 'Climate Action Month' (CAM).

**CAM is an initiative of Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG) aimed at raising citizen awareness on the urgency of the climate crisis and the need for collective action at governmental, institutional and individual levels.**

CAM engaged and informed citizens from all walks of life about what climate change means, its causes, impacts and how one can contribute to its mitigation at an individual level. Apart from raising awareness, CAM was also envisioned to create a platform which stimulates discussions, facilitates knowledge sharing, and creates a sense of community and solidarity among people to unite against the deadliest threat facing our planet irrespective of the very many differences which divide us.

The first edition of Climate Action Month (CAM) was launched in 2020 and observed throughout the month of February.



**We were successful in conducting over 70+ events across Chennai bringing together schools, colleges, restaurants, cafes, environmentalists, civil society organisations, the general public, etc.**

One of the highlights of CAM 2020 was the installation of a billboard in collaboration with Apollo Hospitals which featured 3D lungs. The white 3D lungs which turned black by the 19th day, highlighted the impact of air pollution on human health. CAM 2020 raised awareness on a wide range of topics interconnected with climate change, such as - importance of biodiversity, waste segregation, state of rivers, sustainable menstruation and impact of single-use plastics, fossil fuels, corporate accountability, greenwashing, mismanagement of waste, etc.

The second edition of CAM was observed throughout the month of July 2023. We successfully conducted about 40 events across Chennai bringing together schools, colleges, companies, hobby clubs, civil society organisations, environmentalists and the general public. The second edition of CAM surpassed the jurisdictional limits of Chennai city and carried the message of climate action to peri-urban areas as well.

An array of subjects interconnected with the climate crisis such as - fast fashion, false solutions to plastic waste management, mass species extinction, importance of mindful use of resources and appreciating nature, policy discussions, ecofeminism, sustainable mobility, renewable energy, etc were discussed.

**40  
Events**

**Events in schools, colleges, companies, hobby clubs, public spaces – bringing together civil society organisations, environmentalists and general public.**

# CAM 2023

## *Design & Approach*

Tamil Nadu is playing the role of a flag bearer in climate action in India with the state government launching dedicated missions, policies, action plans, etc focussed on climate change mitigation and adaptation. However, for these policy actions to translate into effective implementation, support and participation of the citizens become imperative.

**Therefore, the primary objective of the CAM campaign was to aid the Government of Tamil Nadu in its existing climate action efforts by empowering the people with information.**

Although climate change has been known to have a disproportionate impact on marginalised communities, no citizen irrespective of class, caste or gender is exempt from the devastating consequences of this phenomenon in the long run. Therefore, while designing CAM, we were deliberate in ensuring that our campaign targeted people from all walks of life - young, old, rich, poor, natural, juridical, etc.

Another important consideration in the design of our campaign was that conventional awareness sessions usually encompass academic and scientific lectures

and presentations by experts where the technicality of the subject may overwhelm the audience and the key messages may not penetrate sufficiently into their minds. So in order to break free from the conventional structure of awareness-building sessions, CAM was meticulously designed to employ elements of performance art as the primary medium of disseminating information. The key messages of the urgency of the climate crisis and the need for collective action were conveyed to the people through traditional and contemporary genres of Tamil songs composed exclusively for CAM, mime, storytelling, documentary screening, group discussions, nature walks, stand-up comedy, games, art & craft, field trips, photowalk and interactive talks. The activities for each target group was carefully designed keeping in mind their existing level of knowledge, awareness, ability to grasp new subjects, decision-making capacity, etc.

**The key messages were conveyed through traditional and contemporary genres of Tamil songs, mime, storytelling, documentary screening, group discussions, nature walks, stand-up comedy, games, art & craft, field trips, photowalk and interactive talks.**



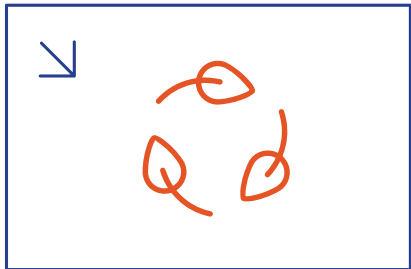
Dr. J. Radhakrishnan I.A.S., addressing the students at the inaugural event of CAM 2023 at AM Jain College

# *Events & Stakeholders*

**Climate Action Month 2023 was inaugurated on 1 July 2023 at AM Jain College by Dr. J. Radhakrishnan I.A.S., Commissioner, Greater Chennai Corporation.**

In addition, Ms. L. Sowmya, Deputy Director, Department of Environment and Climate Change, TN and Mr. G. Sundarrajan, Coordinator, Poovulagin Nanbargal were guests of honour for the inaugural event. Dr. Radhakrishnan talked about the urgency of the climate crisis and its impact, particularly local impacts such as changes in rainfall patterns, erratic cyclones, floods, etc. experienced by the people of Tamil Nadu. He urged the students to make effective use of CAG's Climate Action Month, learn about climate change, and educate themselves and those around them. Ms. Soumya enumerated the initiatives taken by the

Department of Environment and Climate Change, TN in mitigating climate change and the need for citizens' support for its effective implementation. Mr. Sundarrajan explained the scientific and sociological dimensions of the climate crisis in simple terms. He added that each institution, entity or section of the population has different roles to play and appealed to the students to take responsibility in educating themselves and joining the fight against climate change. In keeping with the ambition of the event to reach as wide a circle of stakeholders as possible, events over the month were planned to engage with: schools, colleges, companies, civil society organisations and general public.



3 Rs—Refuse, Reduce, Reuse



I will not use single-use plastic bags and always carry a reusable cloth bag



I will not buy single-use water bottles and always carry a reusable water bottle



# Events & Stakeholders

## a. Schools

**We identified school students as an important target group as they are likely to bear the brunt of climate change. Imparting climate literacy will pave the way to the growth of climate-conscious adults who will be equipped to meet these challenges.**

We engaged with classes 6, 7 and 8 in Alt school, Grove school and Vels Vidyashram. We conducted informative yet entertaining activities to understand their level of awareness and to educate them about the various tips for sustainable living. We conducted a storytelling session which easily connected with the children and conveyed our underlying message that climate change is a universal problem faced by humankind and one shouldn't be apathetic as he/she has not yet faced its impacts.

We conducted a workshop on upcycling old newspapers to make paper bin liners, paper bags, desk organisers, etc. to inculcate the

3Rs - Refuse, Reduce and Reuse - and help them understand why they need to move away from the 'use and throw' culture. We played short animated videos on tips to lead a sustainable life which were produced by CAG. Other activities include a talk on fast fashion and a documentary screening on rivers which elicited a lot of interesting questions from them.

**The key message delivered to the school students was that we need to move away from the linear model of take, make and waste and move towards a zero-waste model where no material is thrown away as waste but instead encouraging reuse through repair and refurbishment.**

Students took a pledge to observe the following in their daily lives :

**3 Rs—Refuse, Reduce, Reuse  
No to single-use plastic bags  
No to single-use water bottle**



Homeschoolers from Alt School participating in a session on plastics, fast fashion and climate change





(Top and Bottom) A workshop for students from classes 6-8 on how to upcycle old newspapers into valuable items such as paper bin liners, desk organisers, paper bags, etc.





Students of Stella Maris College interacting with the fisherfolk in Pazhaverkaadu

# Events & Stakeholders

## b. Colleges

College students were identified to be an important target group for this campaign as they have relatively more autonomy in decision-making and the ability to influence their peers and family members.

**We engaged with students from various departments in AM Jain college, Stella Maris college, Ethiraj college, Patrician college, New college and Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University.**

We organised talks on various subjects such as fast fashion and waste segregation to help the students understand how their day-to-day actions as simple as what clothes they buy, and how they dispose of their trash could impact and contribute to emissions.

We screened documentaries to explain how plastics are polluting not only at the downstream stage but also starting right from the sourcing of fossil fuels and throughout its lifecycle.

We also organised fun and informative competitions such as adzap and photo storytelling, minority opinion justification of

environmental law judgments to lighten the grimness of the subject which helped them engage better with us.

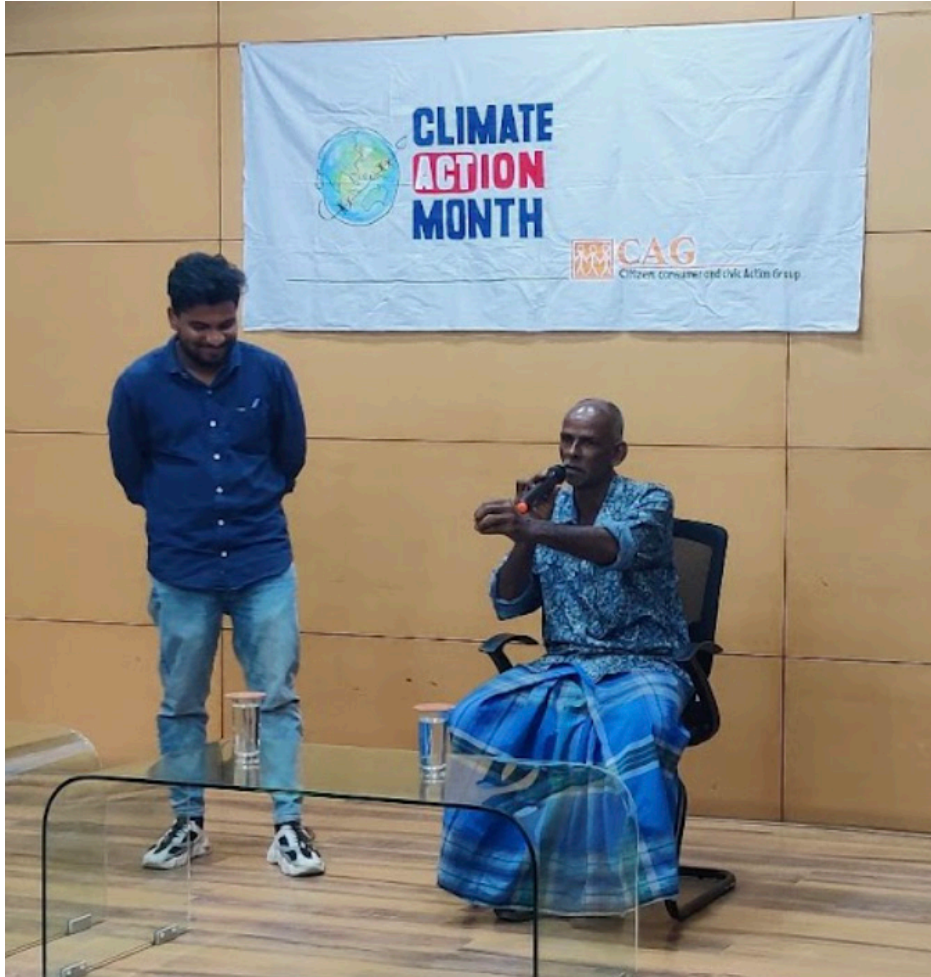
These competitions focussed on familiarising the students with cross-cutting causes and impacts of climate change and exposure to how environmental disputes are decided in courts of law.

We arranged a field visit for students of Stella Maris College to Pazhaverkaadu, to help them understand the impacts of climate change on the livelihoods of local coastal communities.

The talk on fast fashion helped students understand the role of the fashion industry, textile waste and its contribution to climate change. We screened a documentary produced by CAG on the informal market of waste clothes collection and repurposing in Chennai.

We invited one such informal clothes collector to narrate his perspective of the impacts of the omnipresent polyester clothes and the use-and-throw culture. This first-hand account was well received by the students.





Laddoo, an old clothes collector from Otteri, engaging with the students of AM Jain college  
He talked engagingly about how the informal sector operates



Students of sociology from Stella Maris College participated in a session on the importance of biodiversity  
The session was facilitated by experts from Care Earth Trust





Conservancy workers explaining the need for source segregation to students of AM Jain College (Top) and Patrician College (Bottom)





The talk on the importance of waste segregation was facilitated by members and volunteers of various resident welfare associations in Chennai who explained the need for segregation at source and the do's and don'ts of segregation.

**Additionally, we invited conservancy workers and animators from the Greater Chennai Corporation who recounted the harsh realities they face on the ground while doing their jobs.**

Documentaries explaining the hazards of plastics throughout their lifecycle and the story of the Adyar river and impacts of plastic pollution in water bodies, illegal discharge of industrial effluents, etc were screened followed by a critical discussion.

(Top) Conservancy workers explaining the need for source segregation to students of Ethiraj College

(Right) Screening of a documentary, on the impacts of pollution on the Adyar river, at Patrician College

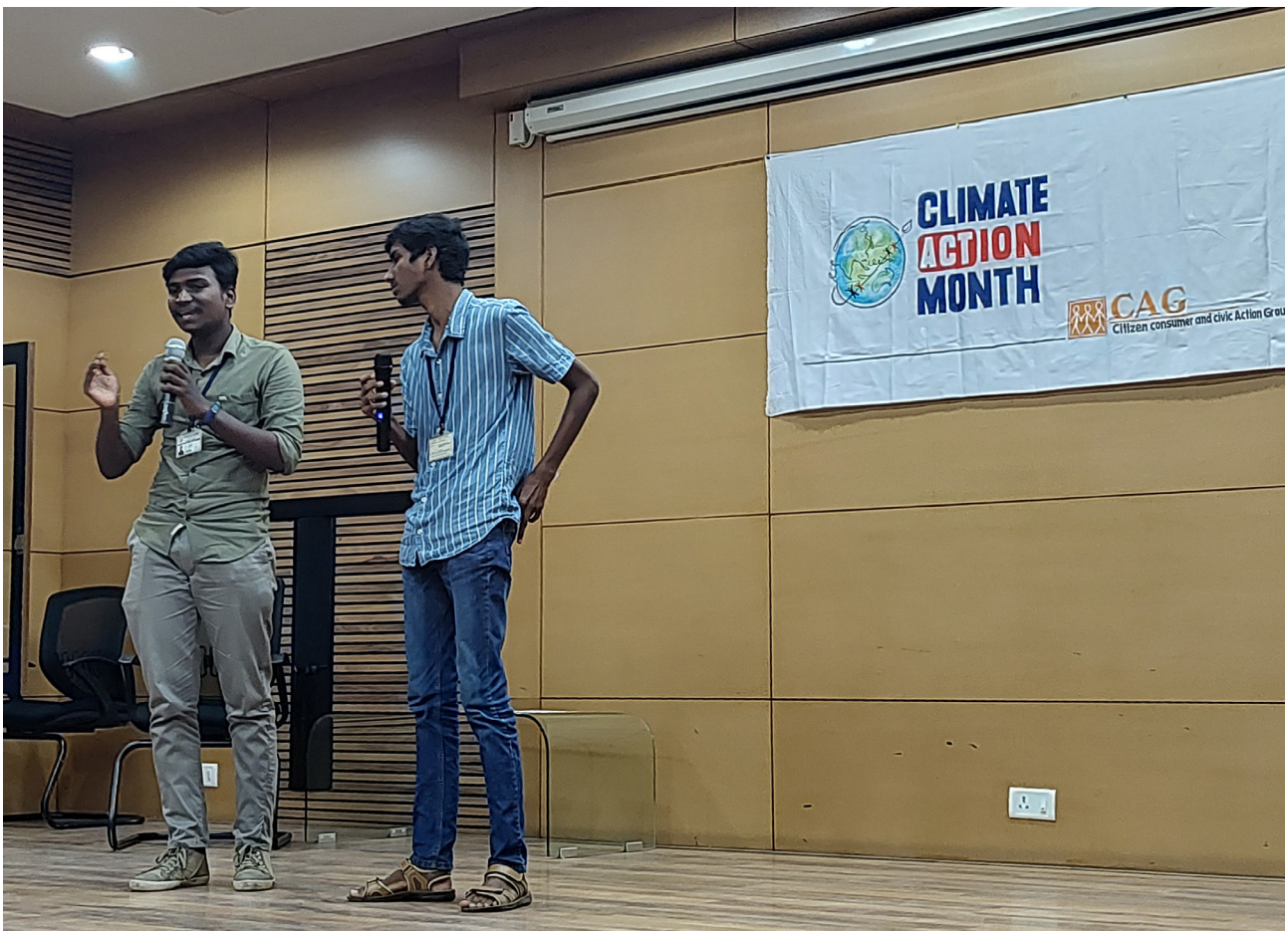




Competitions testing students' creativity and awareness on environmental issues were conducted. For the adzap competition, students were given a product which is an alternative to single-use plastic and they were required to prepare a script on the spot to enact an advertisement for the product. For the photo storytelling competition, students were shown 20 photos relating to the climate crisis on the spot and they were

required to present a story using these pictures.

For law students, an activity called 'Minority opinion justification' of environmental disputes was conducted. Judgments of the Union Carbide case (1991) and the ICJ case of Costa Rica v. Nicaragua (2018) were chosen and the students were required to defend the dissenting opinion in each judgement.

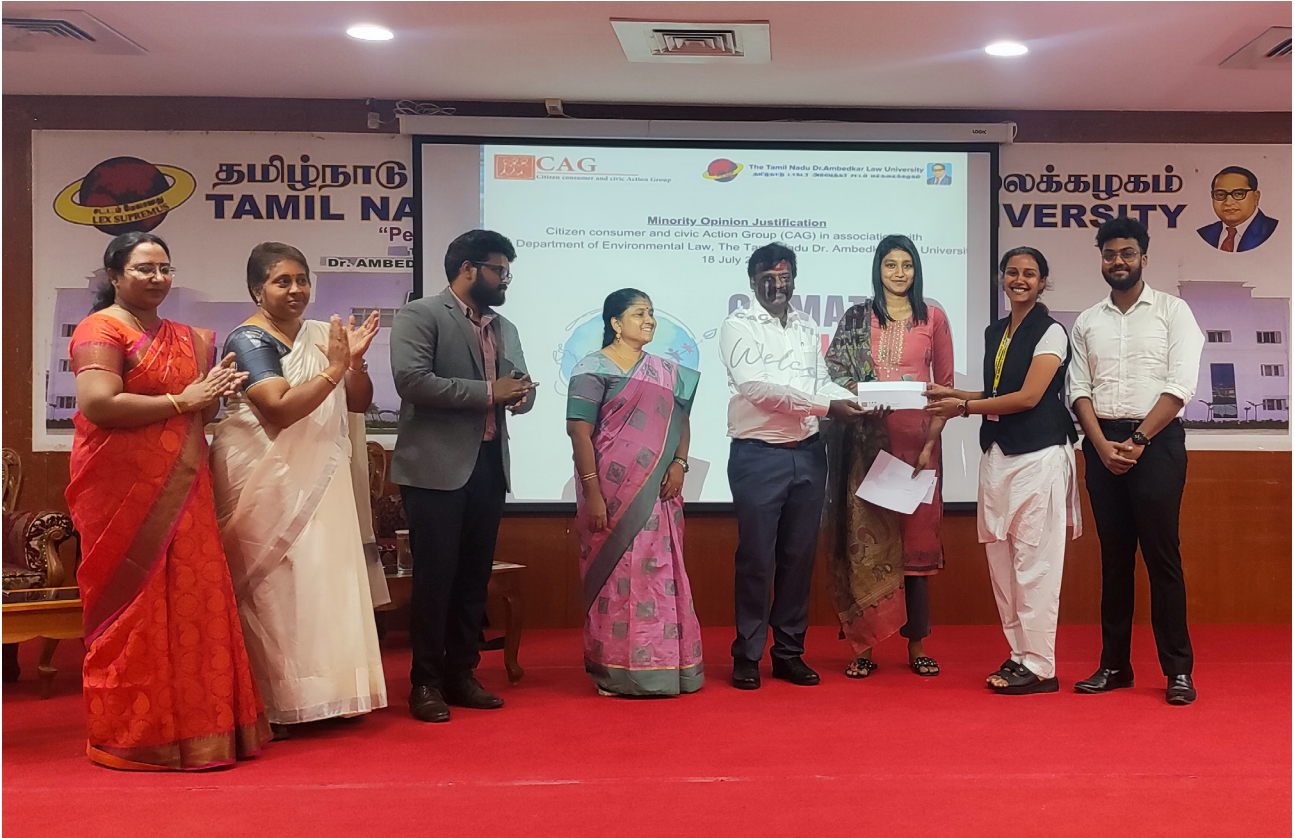


Students of AM Jain College enacting an impromptu advertisement as part of the adzap competition





Winners of the adzap competition receiving their prize money



Winners of the 'minority opinion justification' competition receiving their prize money  
These events were held at (Top) Patrician College and (Bottom) Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University



We arranged a field visit to Pazhaverkaadu for the students of the sociology department from Stella Maris College. We made a decision to involve students of sociology in our campaign as we believe that integration of the social sciences in environmental decision-making and in our efforts to combat climate change is of ultimate importance.

Our aim was to expose the students to the landscape of an ecologically sensitive area and help them understand how climate change and industrialisation have impacted the coastal landscape and the livelihoods of the communities living there.

(Below) Students and faculty from Stella Maris college on a field visit to Pazhaverkaadu



Rajkamal, a resident of Pazhaverkaadu coastal community, explaining the impacts of climate change on fisherfolk's livelihoods, social welfare and health





(Above) Divya, CAG, explaining the importance of sustainable mobility in mitigating climate change

(Next page) Sumana, CAG, addressing employees at ZF Motors on the role of vehicular emissions and how these contributed to the climate crisis

# Events & Stakeholders c. Companies

Corporate employees were an important target group as they are a rapidly growing section of the population, particularly, in Chennai.

Given their high purchasing power, easy access to resources and a lavish corporate culture/lifestyle, we felt it necessary to raise awareness on the importance of sustainable consumption among this group.

We planned our session in a way to draw their attention to the issue by organising a standup comedy show which highlighted day-to-day unsustainable practices through light-hearted humour.

This was followed by a talk on how unsustainable transportation, particularly private vehicles running on fossil fuels, is a contributing factor to climate change. We felt this was an important topic to address at companies as many employees use private vehicles to commute to work either for convenience or in the absence of common transportation arranged by the companies.

**We also arranged a talk on sustainable energy consumption as corporate offices, especially large companies, consume significant energy resulting in increased contribution to carbon emissions.**

Following the talks on the importance of sustainable transportation and energy consumption, a documentary explaining the need to transition to clean sources of energy was screened.







The staff of ZF Motors participating in a CAM awareness session



Sudarsan, a comic, performing a well-received stand-up comedy show on sustainability for the staff of Trimble





The staff of Hard n Soft Technologies learning about the causes and impacts of the climate crisis



Staff of JK Fenner participating in a CAM awareness session





Participants admiring the natural surroundings as they walk through the greenery at Adyar eco-park



# Events & Stakeholders

## d. Public Events

One of our most important target groups was the general public. We conducted events such as music and dance shows, mime shows, and games for kids and adults to attract the audience who visit public parks during the weekends.

We conducted these activities in My Lady's park, Ayapakkam Arignar Anna park and Anna Nagar Tower park.

The main event in the parks was the music show where 4 songs on the themes of sustainability, environmental pollution and climate change were written and composed exclusively for CAM 2023.

The Black Boys band used contemporary Tamil music genres such as gaana, folk, rap, beatboxing etc. to perform these songs.



Ms.Narayani, a writer, addressing the general public on gendered impacts of climate change





The Black Boys band performing their song and dance routines, built around the themes of environment and climate change. The event was held for the general public at the Arignar Anna Park, Ayapakkam



The Black Boys band performing their dance routine at Anna Nagar Tower park





Madhuvanathi, CAG, conducting a game of 'Climate Bingo' for kids at Arignar Anna park, Ayapakkam





Children and adults in the Arignar Anna park enthusiastically participating in the music and dance shows



Members of Team CAG kickstarting a CAM public event at My Lady's park



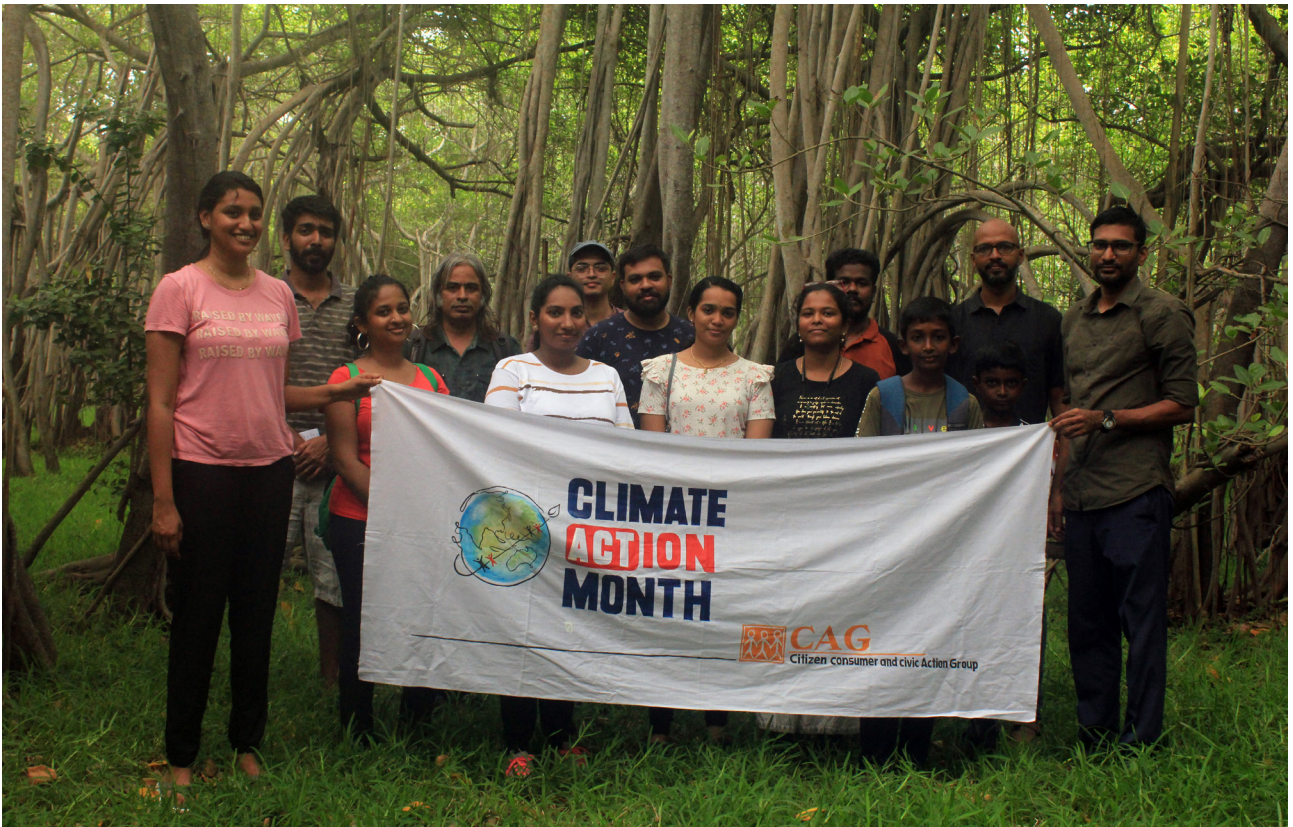


**Another type of event organised to engage with the public was walks reconnecting people with nature led by a subject expert.**

The Biodiversity walk conducted in the Theosophical Society helped the audience experience the serenity and calmness of nature amidst the noise, bustle and traffic in the city. Mr. Geo Damin, a volunteer at Poovulagin Nanbargal explained the importance of biodiversity and how human actions have disturbed nature's cycles, leading to us currently living through the 6th mass species extinction event.

The Nature walk conducted in Tholkappiar Poonga (Adyar Eco-Park) saw the enthusiastic participation of people from different backgrounds - school teachers, conservationists, families, PhD scholars, doctors, etc.

Mr. Poochi Venkat, led the walk and explained the history of the park and migratory patterns of birds that used to frequent the area before it became urbanised. The audience stopped to observe the different kinds of insects, trees and birds within the park and expressed their enjoyment and appreciation of nature.



A biodiversity walk organised at the Theosophical society and facilitated by Geo Damin, volunteer from Poovulagin Nanbargal, opened the eyes of city dwellers to the beauty of nature



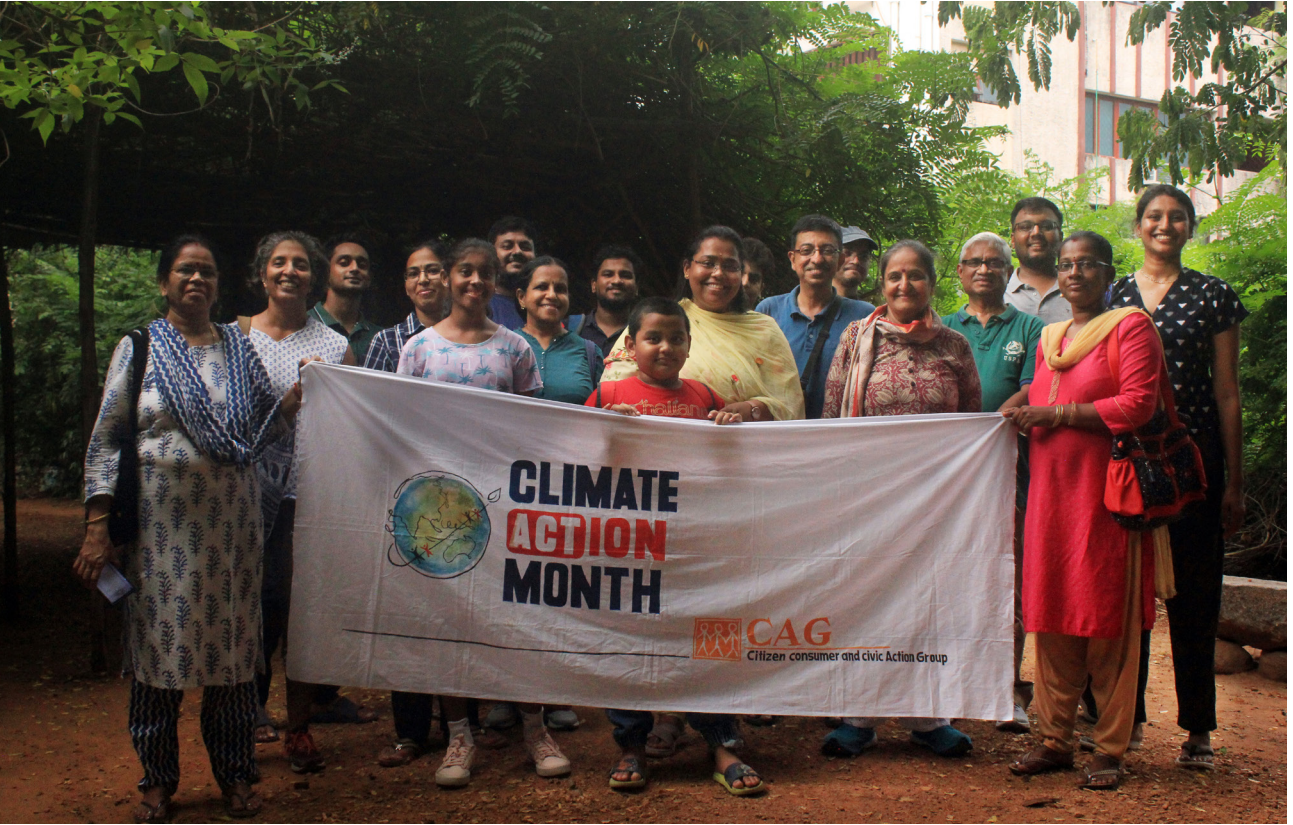


Participants engrossed in bird watching during the nature walk at Adyar eco-park



A scenic view of the Adyar Creek as it flows through the Adyar eco-park





After a long and engrossing nature walk through the Adyar Eco-park. The event was facilitated by Poochi Venkat



Photography enthusiasts participating in a photowalk at Agaramthen wetlands. The event was facilitated by The Chennai Photowalk and Darwin from Eco-Society India



We organised a photowalk at Agaramthen wetlands, in collaboration with The Chennai Photowalk, a hobby club consisting of photography enthusiasts. Mr. Darwin from Eco-Society India led the walk.

He explained how deification of the trees (sacred groves) by the local villagers helped protect the biodiversity in that area. It is pertinent to note that many children actively participated in the walk.



Participants capturing different aspects of the wetlands on the photowalk in Agaramthen





(Top and Bottom) Students from various matriculation schools in Chennai attending the climate awareness programme through storytelling session conducted at the TN Police Museum



During our interactions with the Greater Chennai Police for obtaining permissions for CAM, Ms. B. Shamoondeswari, Joint Commissioner, Headquarters, Greater Chennai Police, requested us to conduct an awareness session at the TN Police Museum for school students in an attempt to augment police-public relationship, in addition to sensitising them on climate action.

About 80 students from three different private schools ranging from 5th to 8th standard and about 30 police personnel were in the audience for this session. After orienting them on what climate change is, its causes and impacts, we organised engaging activities, such as storytelling and mime shows.



Prakash and team performing a mime show highlighting the importance of trees in mitigating climate change





We organised an informal awareness session at the Vandalur Zoo for families who were visiting with their children. We explained the importance of conservation of wildlife and their fast-paced extinction and endangerment as a result of human activities.

The Govt. of Tamil Nadu and the United Nations Environment Programme collaboratively launched several green initiatives on 27 July 2023 as part of the G20 Summit.

They expressed their commitment to work together on a range of issues such as sustainable cooling, plastic waste management, environmental education, etc.

**As part of the G20 side event, CAG was invited to conduct a climate literacy awareness session for about 500 students from government schools from various districts.**





Madhuvanathi, CAG, addressing school students from various districts of Tamil Nadu during a G20 side event

(Previous Page Top ) Members of team CAG addressing the general public at Vandalur Zoo on the impacts of climate change on wildlife

(Previous Page Bottom) Keerthana, a professional storyteller, narrating a story on why we must care about the climate crisis





One of CAG's flagship initiatives is the Kuppai Thiruvizha (zero waste carnival), an event that aims to bring together entrepreneurs and experts to promote zero-waste and plastic-free lifestyles.

We have conducted 6 Kuppai Thiruvizhas since 2016. We conducted the 7th Kuppai Thiruvizha as part of CAM 2023 at AM Jain College.

The event featured about 25 stalls by zero-waste vendors who showcased products made from alternatives to single-use plastics. We had a footfall of about 5,000 individuals throughout the day of Kuppai Thiruvizha.

In addition, we also organised engaging workshops, informative talks, and various cultural activities.



(Above and Next Page) Zero waste vendors displaying various plastic free alternatives and plastic packaging free products in their stalls during the 7th Kuppai Thiruvizha (Zero waste carnival)



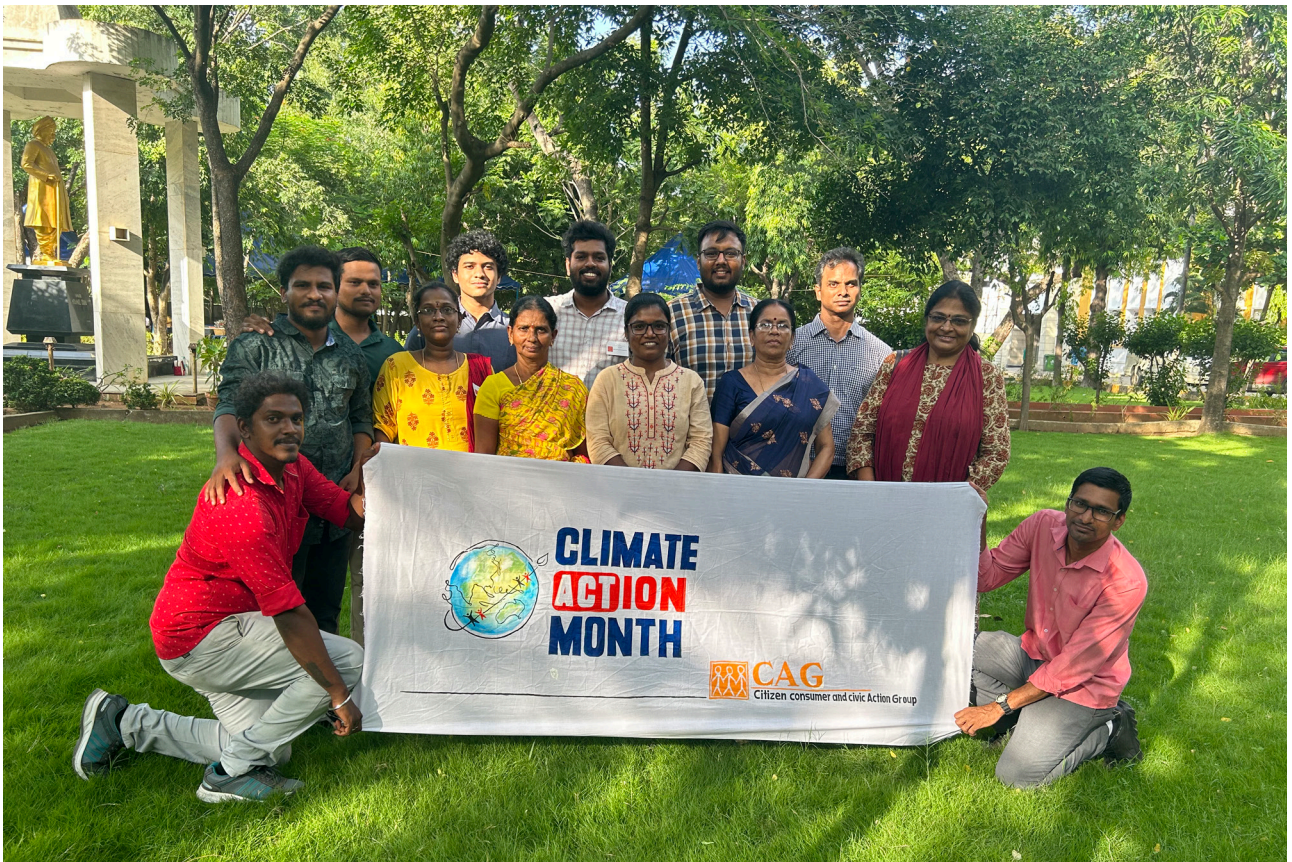






(Top and Bottom) Zero waste vendors displaying various plastic free alternatives and plastic packaging free products in their stalls during the 7th Kuppai Thiruvizha (Zero waste carnival)





(Top) Students of AM Jain college enjoying the music and dance show during Kuppai Thiruvizha  
(Bottom) Team CAG kickstarting the 7th Kuppai Thiruvizha





**One of our most important events in CAM 2023 was the discussion amongst environmental groups on the Chennai Climate Action Plan (CCAP).**

We invited various NGOs in Chennai such as Poovulagin Nanbargal, Care Earth, Pasumai Thayagam, Chennai Climate Action Group, Extinction Rebellion, Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities, etc. The discussion delved into a critical analysis of the proposed Chennai Climate Action Plan's 6 major categories - Decarbonising electric grid and increasing usage of renewable energy, energy efficient buildings, transport, sustainable waste

management, managing urban floods and water scarcity, vulnerable population and health. Some of the points of discussion were that while some CSOs were consulted during the drafting process of the action plan, participants highlighted the need to hold a public consultation with welfare associations for the vulnerable communities.

**Another important takeaway was that while the action plan has been backed by research from Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) institutions, the lack of consultation and integration of the social sciences academia could result in challenges in implementing the plan.**



Discussion amongst CSOs on the Chennai Climate Action Plan. The event was held at the CAG office



We organised a documentary screening on the story of the river Adyar for the general public at The Backyard Clan.

The audience was mixed ranging from ages 10 to 50. The discussion which followed the screening was very interactive and revolved around whether decentralisation of developmental activities could help reduce pollution of water bodies in Chennai. Many people in the audience also expressed their appreciation for CAG's efforts in environmental protection and other civic issues.

(Left) Shankar, CAG, addressing the public on the impact of pollution and the importance of preserving rivers



Participants at a documentary screening on the Story of Adyar. The event was held at Backyard Clan.





**Dr. Thiruppugazh IAS, Head, Advisory Committee for Flood Mitigation in Chennai and Mr. Deepak Bilgi IFS, Director, Department of Environment and Climate Change were the guests of honour for our concluding event.**

Our final public event was a 'tree appreciation walk' in the Theosophical Society led by Mr. Muthu Karthik, Care Earth. He explained the origin of various tree species in Theosophical Society and highlighted the importance of proliferation of native species. He also explained the important role of trees in mitigating climate change and their benefits including medicinal uses which each species has to offer to other living beings.

We concluded the CAM campaign with a closing meeting at Stella Maris College in association with the gender centre on 31st July 2023. Dr. Thiruppugazh aptly spoke about the importance of changing our patterns of consumption to sustainable ways and being mindful of all the resources that we use. He also added that sustainable development should be inclusive to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on marginalised communities. Mr. Deepak Bilgi urged for the citizens' support in the government's efforts to combat climate change. He highlighted the need for climate literacy among the general public and appreciated CAG's efforts in organising CAM.



Concluding event of CAM 2023 held at Stella Maris College  
Dr. V. Thiruppugazh I.A.S and Mr. Deepak Bilgi I.F.S were the chief guests for the event

# Testimonials




**Kirushnapriya  
Ethiraj College**

“The CAM session was very informative and interesting. It gave us a whole new outlook on what sustainability means. I learned about how there is an informal market where old clothes are recycled and reused and people earn their living through this. I also got to know how much damage fast fashion is causing the planet”

“Through this programme, I got to know how to use different buckets to segregate waste and it allowed me to grasp the situation of the sanitation personnel when we don’t segregate waste. After the programme, I have decided to buy only cotton clothes and reuse old items.”

**Suncy  
Ethiraj College**

**Anika  
Stella Maris  
College**

“CAG’s awareness programme on climate change was an eye opener for me. The interactive sessions they conducted, such as documentary screening on ‘vanishing water bodies’, talk on ecofeminism, field visit to Pulicat revealed many of the environmental concerns we have been missing so far. It has also given me hope that as students and future generations, we can do so much better for the environment.”

“We were impressed by the professionalism and enthusiasm demonstrated by each member of your Team. Your patience, kindness, and ability to connect with the students on a personal level were remarkable. You created awareness and instilled a sense of responsibility and self-awareness in our students regarding climate action. Thank you once again.”

**Geethapriya  
Vels Vidyashram**







**Varshini  
Stella Maris  
College**

“We have all been learning environmental science since school but what came in as a breakthrough to me is CAG’s Climate Action Month. One of the key takeaways for me is the necessity of social sciences and sociological perspectives in environmental conservation. Another takeaway is that even as individual citizens there are many micro steps we can take to create a huge impact.”

“Our journey with CAG’s Climate Action Month has been thought-provoking and enjoyable. We learned not only to conserve and preserve the environment but also to have a wide-angle perspective on the issues that are prevailing around us. As a sociology student, I find CAG’s collaboration with us to be a much-needed one since the interplay of sociology in our environment could help us infer better interventions.”

**Bhavadharani  
Stella Maris  
College**



**Sharmila  
AM Jain  
college**

“I thank CAG and our management for conducting Climate Action Month 2023 in our campus. The programme was really useful as I was not aware of the waste management issues in the perspectives explained by the team. Thank you CAG team for giving awareness about waste segregation and also for providing solutions and alternatives for the problem of increasing plastic use.”

“As part of the Climate Action Month (CAM) initiative, the Alt School partnered with CAG to conduct a series of events to sensitise children on the urgent need for creating a sustainable present. The sessions were mind blowingly amazing. The team engaged the children so beautifully. Our homeschoolers are now so mindful about sustainability and are going all out to do whatever it takes to make our planet better. Thank you CAG :)”

**Deepa  
Alt school**



# In the Press

## Media coverage



India World Opinion Sports e-Paper



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## Civic group launches climate change awareness campaign in Chennai

The public will be engaged through an array of events such as performing arts, talks, workshops, stand-up comedy and music. Biodiversity walk to be held on July 2 at the Theosophical Society

July 01, 2023 06:33 pm | Updated 06:33 pm IST - CHENNAI

THE HINDU BUREAU

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The Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG) on Saturday launched the “Climate Action Month 2023”, a campaign to raise awareness on climate change and sustainability.

Activities as part of the Climate Action Month (CAM) 2023, kicked off by J. Radhakrishnan, Greater Chennai Corporation Commissioner, L. Sowmya, Deputy Director of Department of Environment and Climate Change, and G. Sundarajan, Coordinator, Poovulagin Nanbargal, will involve sensitising multiple stakeholders, encouraging exchange of ideas, and collective action over climatic issues.

Inaugurating the event at A.M. Jain College, Mr. Radhakrishnan spoke about the urgency of the climate crisis and the resultant change in rainfall pattern, periodic cyclones and floods in Chennai.

An article by The Hindu covering the launch of CAM 2023





## CAM second edition in July

TNN / Jun 30, 2023, 08:15 IST



### You're Reading



CAM second edition in July



Chennai: The second edition of the Climate Action Month (CAM) will be observed throughout July and the inaugural session will be held at Jain College on Saturday in presence of Chennai corporation commissioner Dr J Radhakrishnan and G Sundarrajan, coordinator of Poovulagin Nanbargal.

CAM has been envisioned as an arena for bringing together multiple stakeholders to initiate discussions, exchange of ideas, and collective action over climate issues of global importance. Several events will be held in July to in relation to CAM. TNN

An article by Times of India covering the inaugural event of CAM 2023

DTNEXT Daily Thanthi Pukaar Petti Thanthi TV



Home > News > Chennai

## Month-long climate action events commence in Chennai

The first edition of CAM was conducted in February 2020 with more than 70 events and reached over 10,000 people.

DTNEXT Bureau | 2 July 2023 8:20 PM ( Updated: 2 July 2023 8:20 PM )

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The inaugural event of CAM covered by DT Next

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## Lifestyle change can be the first step to stop climate change, says official

Being one of the most urbanised States in the country, Tamil Nadu is vulnerable to the effects of extreme weather events, says Deepak Bilgi, Director, Department of Environment and Climate Change, at the valedictory of "Climate Action Month" in Chennai

July 31, 2023 08:36 pm | Updated 08:36 pm IST - CHENNAI

THE HINDU BUREAU

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Being one of the most urbanised States in the country, Tamil Nadu is vulnerable to the effects of extreme weather events, said Deepak Bilgi, Director, Department of Environment and Climate Change, at an event by the Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG) on Monday.

The CAG concluded "Climate Action Month", a four-week-long campaign to accelerate awareness on the need for climate action, with a valedictory event at Stella Maris College along with the institution's sociology department. Throughout the month, schools, colleges, and private companies were engaged in biodiversity walks, visits to areas vulnerable to climate change such as Pulicat and Agaramthen wetland, music events, and stand up comedy sessions at public parks.

An article by The Hindu covering the concluding event of CAM 2023



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## Civil society organisation to make representation on Chennai Climate Action Plan

Questions remain on the practicalities of the initiative, say civil society groups

July 08, 2023 09:03 pm | Updated July 09, 2023 02:32 pm IST - CHENNAI

GEETHA SRIMATHI

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The Climate Action Plan (CAP) for Chennai is a positive sign that the government acknowledges the need to tackle climate change, but questions remain on the practicalities of the initiative, said city-based civil society groups on Thursday.

In a discussion held by Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG), the 300-page action plan released a month ago, was analysed by representatives of Care Earth Trust, Poovulagin Nanbargal, IRCUDC, Chennai Climate Action Group. The CAP essentially focusses on six areas - electrical grid and renewable energy, building energy, sustainable transport, solid waste management, urban flooding and water scarcity and vulnerable populations and health.

The Hindu's coverage of the CSO led discussion on Chennai Climate Action Plan.



# Op-Eds

## CITIZEN MATTERS சென்னை

Cities ▾ Current Civic Commute Governance Economy Education Environment Health Infrastructure Waste Water Society

HOME > ENVIRONMENT > Sustainability as a solution for climate change in Chennai and beyond

### Sustainability as a solution for climate change in Chennai and beyond

August 31, 2023 Mala Balaji

NEED FOR ACTION BY STAKEHOLDERS



Community effort has brought about significant changes in waste management and created a green space in Kasturba Nagar, serving as an example of sustainability. Pic: ROKA

An article on sustainability as a solution for climate change by Mala Balaji, Researcher, CAG

# Climate action plan is ready, let's back it up with science

**GARBAGE DAMAGE :**  
In Chennai, the waste sector contributes 13% of emissions, with solid waste constituting 94.1% and wastewater 5.9%



Shankar Prakash

Cities occupy only two per cent of the world's land area, yet consume more than two-thirds of the world's energy and are responsible for more than 70% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, according to a 2021 World Bank report.

Coastal cities are at the forefront of the global climate crisis. The Chennai Climate Action Plan (CCAP) was recently unveiled by chief minister M K Stalin. The plan was prepared by the Greater Chennai corporation and the TN department of environment and climate change with support from C40 Cities and the Urban Management Centre. It aims to align with the Paris Agreement and focuses on six sectors: electrical grid and renewable energy; building energy; sustainable transport; solid waste management; urban flooding and water scarcity; and vulnerable populations and health. The plan serves as a roadmap by adhering to the intergovernmental panel on climate change target of net zero by 2050 against India's national goal of net zero by 2070.

Any climate action plan is fundamentally based on data. Scientific processes need to be followed rigorously for CCAP to be seen as a strategic document. According to the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories (GPC)—the 2018 emissions data from here have been used as the baseline for CCAP—Chennai's total annual emissions were 14.38 MtCO<sub>2e</sub> (or 1.9 tonnes of CO<sub>2e</sub> emissions per capita), with the majority coming from stationary energy use (71%), followed by transport (16%), and solid and liquid waste sectors (13%).

With the business-as-usual sce-

*Chennai gets proactive against climate change, aiming for carbon neutrality by 2050. However, rethinking baseline emissions is crucial for implementation*



nario, emissions are projected to increase almost fourfold by 2050 to 55.08 MtCO<sub>2e</sub>. Managing these anticipated increases and recording outcomes is likely to need better data handling. For example, the GPC includes the following emission categories: stationary emissions, transportation, waste, industrial processes, and agriculture, forestry, and land use. However, the CCAP uses only three of these categories for its baseline, but adds industrial processes, and agriculture, forestry and land use for future GHG emissions. The GPC also has sub-categories to

identify specific emission sources which the CCAP does not use in its data. These differences between baseline data and how future GHG emissions are projected or outcomes are calculated can hinder concerted efforts to address actions under sectors identified in the CCAP. Within stationary energy use, residential and commercial buildings constitute 8.27 MtCO<sub>2e</sub>. Although it is acknowledged in CCAP that these emissions result from electricity generating thermal power plants, public and private sector energy generators are not held accountable. Instead, those emissions are offset on individuals, which increases their

**PRIVATE VEHICLES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS RESPONSIBLE FOR 84% OF GHG EMISSIONS, BUT NO CLEAR MEASURES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED TO DISCOURAGE THIS**



**DISASTER ZONE:** According to the Climate Vulnerability Index, Chennai is highly susceptible to floods and cyclones

per capita emission.

In transportation, private vehicles have been identified as responsible for 84% of GHG emissions, but no clear measures have been identified to discourage this. Merely classifying vehicles as private and commercial for the baseline does not offer enough data for future actions to mitigate vehicular emissions.

The CCAP also fails to draw inferences from the non-motorised transport policy developed for the GCC in 2014, which could have provided actionable insights for reducing emissions. The waste sector contributes 13% of emissions, with solid waste constituting 94.1% and wastewater 5.9%. The CCAP acknowledges that only 20% of solid waste is processed while the remaining 80% is dumped across the city's dumpsites. Suggestions were made to address the issue, such as allocating storage space for solid waste

generated in buildings, but the plan lacks a blueprint on how to achieve the goals.

Despite wastewater, including sewage, being discharged into the Adyar, Cooum and Kosasthalayar, the action plan claims all wastewater is treated using aerobic technology-based sewage treatment plants (STPs) that do not produce methane as a by-product. Biological treatment methods are considered economical and effective for treating wastewater, but the CCAP neither talks about measures to stop wastewater discharge into the rivers nor about biological treatment methods. The plan does not consider circularity in managing wastewater discharge in rivers. This approach, which aims to recover and reuse elements of wastewater for beneficial purposes based on circular economy principles, can help to protect waterways from pollution.

According to the Climate Vulnerability Index, Chennai is highly susceptible to floods and cyclones. The CCAP also includes heatwaves, water scarcity, and sea level rise as potential climate risks. A review of existing research on climate action plans highlighted that most plans do not account for heatwaves and the urban heat island effect. Although increasing tree cover and biodiversity can help mitigate heatwaves and the urban heat island effect, the CCAP does not suggest specific actions such as green roofs or cool pavements, other than adding green cover and creating biodiversity parks. The city's green cover is often diminished by development works such as metro rail construction and stormwater drainage and the CCAP provides no solution to this ongoing problem.

The CCAP prescribes mitigation measures such as investing in solar rooftop systems and maintaining storm water drains with the goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. The plan includes perspectives from consultations with a few civil society organisations, but not from other grassroots communities such as trade unions, fisherfolk or the general public including vulnerable populations. Wider community consultations need to be undertaken to assess the feasibility of these ambitious actions. The CCAP aims to create a science-based roadmap for Chennai to become climate resilient, but it would have been a more holistic document if it had included adaptation measures from climate justice perspectives, in addition to its heavily prescribed engineering solutions.

*(The writer is a researcher specialising in environment and climate action)*

An article on the Chennai Climate Action Plan by Shankar Prakash, Senior Researcher, CAG



## குப்பையில் இருந்து மின்சாரம்: புதிய பேராபத்து

அக்பரோஸ்

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உலகின் பல நாடுகளிலும் துரத்திபடிக்கப்பட்ட எரி உலைகள் இந்தியாவில் தலைதாக்குகின்றன. தமிழ்நாட்டில் மட்டும் 57 எரி உலைகளைத் தொடங்குவதற்கு அரசு முடிவெடுத்திருக்கிறது. இவையெல்லாம் நம் உருக்கு வருவதற்கு முன் நாம் அறியவேண்டியவை என்ன? மக்கள் எதிர்கொள்ளும் பேராபத்துகள் என்ன?

டெல்லியில், ஒக்லா பகுதியில் வசிக்கும் ஒரு சிறுமி, உடல்நலக் குறைவு காரணமாக மருத்துவமனைக்குச் சிசிசை பெறச் செய்கிறார். அங்கு அவளைப் பரிசோதித்த மருத்துவர்கள், அவளது நுரையீரல் நிலையைக் கண்டு பெரும் அதிர்ச்சி அடைந்தனர். தொடர்ந்து பல வருடங்களாக புகைபிடித்துவரும் ஒருவரின் நுரையீரலைப் போன்று அந்த நுரையீரல் இருந்ததாம். டெல்லி ஒக்லா பகுதியில் குப்பைகளை எரித்து மின்சாரம் தயாரிக்கும் எரி உலை அருகே வாழும் பெரும்பாலான மக்கள் எதிர்கொள்ளும் பல உடல்நலப் பிரச்சினைகளில் இதுவும் ஒன்று.

தமிழ்நாட்டில் இது போன்ற 57 எரி உலைகள் தொடங்குவதற்கு அரசு முடிவெடுத்திருக்கிறது. அதில் பாதி தொடங்கும் நிலையில் உள்ளன. ஏற்கெனவே வட சென்னையில் மணலி, கோடுங்கையூரில் மக்களின் வசிப்பிடத்திற்கு மிக அருகில், குப்பைகளை எரித்து ஆதன் சாம்பலில் நடைபாதைக் கற்கும் தயாரிக்கும் இரண்டு எரி உலைகள் இயங்கிக்கொண்டு இருக்கின்றன. இந்த இரண்டு எரி உலைகள் அங்கு வசிக்கும் மக்களுக்கு உடல்நலம், சூழலியல் சார்ந்த பல பிரச்சினைகளை ஏற்படுத்திக்கொண்டு இருக்கின்றன. இந்த நிலையில் தான் குப்பையில் இருந்து மின்சாரம் தயாரிக்கும் எரி உலைகளை கூடுதலாகத் தொடங்குவதற்கு தமிழ்நாடு அரசு முடிவெடுத்திருக்கிறது.

### வெளியேறும் ஆபத்து

பிளாஸ்டிக் குப்பைகளை எரிப்பது சட்டப்படி குற்றம் என்கிறது பிளாஸ்டிக் திடீக்கழிவு மேலாண்மை விதிகள். பிளாஸ்டிக் குப்பைகளை எரிக்கும்போது அதிலிருந்து வெளியேறும் நச்சு அமிலங்கள் சுற்றுச்சூழலுக்கும், மனித உடல்நலத்திற்கும் பெரும் பாதிப்புகளை ஏற்படுத்தும். குறிப்பாக டையாக்சின், ஃபியூரான் போன்ற மாபடுபொருள்கள், மனிதர்களிடையே

சக்திவாய்ந்த புற்றுநோய்க்கான காரணிகளை இருக்கின்றன. எரி உலைகளின் வேலை என்ன? இந்தியா போன்ற வளர்ந்து வரும் நாடுகளில், பல இடங்களில் தரம் பிரிக்காமல் கொடுக்கப்படும் திடீக் கழிவை டன் கணக்கில் சேகரித்து, எரி உலைகளில் எரித்து சாம்பலாக்குவதுதான். இதன் காரணமாக பிளாஸ்டிக் உற்பத்தியைத் தடுக்காமல் தொடர்ந்து நடைமுறைப் பயன்பாட்டை ஊக்குவிக்கும். மேலும் மாக்கட்டுப்பாட்டு கருவிகள், சுற்றுச்சூழல் பாதுகாப்பு விதிகள் போன்றவற்றைப் பொருள்படுத்தாமல், மின்சாரம் தயாரிக்கிறோம் என்கிற பெயரில் நச்சு வாயுக்கள் சுற்றுச்சூழலில் வெளியேற்றப்படும்.

### உண்மை நிலை

மக்களின் உடல்நலம், சுற்றுச்சூழல் சீரழிவைப் போன்ற முக்கியப் பிரச்சினைகள் இந்த எரி உலைகளால் ஏற்படுகின்றன. இதைத் தவிரமாக ஆதரிக்கும் தனிப்பட்ட எரி உலை நிறுவனங்கள், நகராட்சி அமைப்புகள் என்ன சொல்கின்றன? குப்பைகளை எரித்து மின்சாரம் தயாரிக்கிறோம்; எரிபொருள் தயாரிக்கிறோம்; ஆதன் சாம்பலை வைத்து கட்டுமான பொருள்கள் தயாரிக்கிறோம்; நச்சுக்காரற்றை சக்திவாய்ந்த வெளியேற்றுகிறோம் என்று கூறும். கேட்க நன்றாக இருந்தாலும், கனத்தில் செயல்பாடுகளே நேர்மாறாக இருக்கின்றன. தொண்டூறுகளில் மேலை நாடுகள் குப்பையை எரிக்கும் எரி உலைகளை மிகத் தவிரமாக முன்னெடுத்துச் சென்றன. ஆனால் இன்று, ஐரோப்பிய நாடுகள் தங்கள் நாட்டில் எரி உலைகளை முடிவிட்டன. இதற்குப் பின்னால் இருக்கும் மிக முக்கியக் காரணங்கள் சமூக பொருளாதாரம் சூழலியல் சிக்கல்களே. இன்று இந்த நாடுகள் போலியான தீர்வு களிலிருந்து மீண்டுக்கொண்டு குப்பை மேலாண்மை உத்தினைச் செயல்படுத்தி வருகின்றன.



### பெரும் பிரச்சினைகள்

உலகில் இருக்கும் பல மின்சாரம் தயாரிக்கும் முறைகளில் அதிக நச்சுத்தன்மை வாய்ந்த நடைமுறையில் தயாரிக்கப்படுவது, குப்பையில் இருந்து தயாரிக்கப்படும் மின்சாரமே. இது, வழக்கத்தைவிட செலவு மிகுந்த மின் தயாரிப்பு முறை. இதில் இருந்து கிடைக்கும் மின்சாரமோ மிக குறைந்த அளவுதான். அது மட்டுமல்லாமல், குப்பையை எரிக்கும் நடைமுறை பல மடங்கு நச்சுகளை வெளியேற்றக் கூடியது. உதாரணமாக, ஓர் அண்ட் மின்நிலையத்தில் இருந்து வரும் டையாக்சின்களைவிட 28 மடங்கு அதிக டையாக்சின், குப்பையை எரிக்கும் எரி உலைகளில் இருந்து வெளியேறுகிறது. இது அங்கு வசிக்கும் மக்களை மட்டுமே பாதிக்கும் என்று நினைத்துவிடக் கூடாது. உதாரணமாக, மணலியில் இருக்கும் எரி உலையில் இருந்து வெளிவரும் கார்பன் டை ஆக்சைடு, கார்பன் மோனாக்சைடு, நைட்ரஜன் டையாக்சைடு, பார்டிகுலேட் மாட்டர் எனப்படும் நுண்துகள்கள் போன்ற மாபடுபொருள்கள் காலநிலை மாற்றத்திற்குப் பெரும் காரணங்களாக இருக்கின்றன. இதில் இருந்து வெளியேறும் டையாக்சின், ஃபியூரான்கள் காற்றில் மட்டுமல்லாமல், நீர்நிலைகளிலும் கலக்கும். மணலி எரி உலையின் பக்கத்தில் சென்னை மக்களின் நிராதரமான பூழல் எரி இருப்பதை மறந்துவிடக் கூடாது. எரி உலைகளில் குப்பை எரிக்கப்பட்டவுடன் அது உண்மை அளவிலிருந்து 30 சதவீத சாம்பலாக மாறிவிடுகிறது. இந்த சாம்பல், நச்சு வாயுக்களில் டையாக்சின், சயம், காட்மியம், பாரசுமம், நுண்துகள்கள் இருக்கின்றன. எஞ்சும் சாம்பல், அடாபசுரமான குப்பையாக மாறிவிடுகிறது. இதை மீண்டும் குப்பை மேடுகளில் போட்டாலும் சரி, கட்டுமானத்துக்குப் பயன்படுத்தினாலும் சரி, நச்சுத்தன்மையை

உமிழ்ந்துகொண்டேதான் இருக்கும். உலகில் அதிக டையாக்சின், ஃபியூரான் உமிழும் ஆதாரங்களில் குப்பை எரி உலைகள் முன்னிலையில் உள்ளன.

### பிரச்சினையும் தீர்வும்

பொதுவாக எரி உலைகள் குப்பையை அடிப்படையாகக் கொண்டிருக்கின்றன. அதிலும் குறிப்பாக, பிளாஸ்டிக் குப்பையை இடப்படியிருக்கும் நிலையில் தமிழகம் உள்ளட எந்த மாநிலமும் குப்பையை எரிக்கும் எரி உலைகளை நிறுவினால், அது பிளாஸ்டிக் உற்பத்தி, பயன்பாட்டைக் குறைத்துவதற்கு பதிலாக, அவற்றின் உற்பத்தி, பயன்பாட்டை ஆதரிப்பதாகவே மாறும். எரி உலைகள் இந்தியாவிற்கு உகந்தவையல்ல. தரம் பிரிக்காமல் எல்லாக் குப்பையையும் எரிப்பது, சுற்றுச்சூழலை மாசுபடுத்துவது, மக்கள் உடல்நலத்தைச் சீர்குலைப்பது, ஏற்கெனவே இந்தியாவில் இருக்கும் முறைசாரா தரம்மையப் பணியாளர்களின் வேலைவாய்ப்பைப் பறிப்பது என்பது போன்ற கோணங்களில் யோசித்துப் பார்க்க வேண்டும். இந்த எரி உலைகள் இவை எல்லாவற்றையும் சேர்த்தே எரித்துக் கொண்டு இருக்கின்றன. அரசு மானியங்கள் கொடுத்து, மேலும் பல சலுகைகளை கொடுத்து இந்த எரி உலைகள் நச்சுகளைப் பரப்புவதற்கு ஏன் வழிவகை செய்ய வேண்டும்? மாறாக, பிளாஸ்டிக் உற்பத்தியைக் குறைத்தல், கழிவைத் தரம் பிரித்தல், மறுபயன்பாடு, மாற்று பயன்பாடு, மறுகழற்சி போன்ற முறைகளைச் செயல்படுத்த வேண்டும். இது பல புகைமேலவைவாய்ப்புகளை உருவாக்கும் என்பதும் உறுதி. கட்டுரையாளர், சென்னை சி.ஏ.ஓ. அமைப்பில் திடீக்கழிவு மேலாண்மை ஆய்வாளர்

An article on waste to energy by Afroz Khan, Researcher, CAG

# Conclusion

**CAM 2023 was a grand success with over 40 events conducted in 31 days impacting over 8500 individuals in Chennai. We were delighted to receive positive feedback from our stakeholders and their promises to switch to sustainable modes of consumption and mindful living were truly encouraging and fulfilling.**

The use of performance art elements such as Tamil folk, gaana and rap music, mime, art and craft, storytelling, movie screenings, games, etc helped us draw the attention of the audience and enabled the stakeholders to connect with the subject better with prolonged attention. One of the hits of CAM 2023 was the nature walks, which were widely enjoyed by the participants. People from different backgrounds and age groups participated in our walks and expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to reconnect with nature away from the hustle and bustle of the city and requested us to organise more such nature walks.

**We found that among all the different stakeholders we engaged with, school students between classes 6 to 8 were the most enthusiastic and keen to learn.**

Contrary to popular belief, although they were the youngest group of stakeholders,

their understanding of the climate crisis and their ability to grasp new concepts, including technical aspects, was remarkable. The school students were genuinely concerned about the issue of plastic pollution and pledged to refrain from using single-use plastic bags and bottles and make small yet impactful changes in their lives such as carrying a reusable bag, water bottle and to segregate waste at home.

One of the relevant findings was that among college students, the understanding of environmentalism was quite primitive.

**We found that they easily buy into commonly propagated greenwashing tactics and strongly believe that beach and street cleanups and planting trees as the common solutions to environmental issues.**

Many students approached us at the end of each session and expressed that the sessions were truly eye-opening and asked us for suggestions on how they and their families can contribute to mitigating climate change at an individual level.

**Another important observation across all stakeholders, particularly, in colleges and companies, was that while global warming seemed to be a familiar term, awareness of the phenomenon of climate change and**





**understanding of the imminence of its impacts were fairly low.**

Almost all stakeholders were unaware of the government initiatives to combat climate change, even the most popularised ones such as the 'Meendum Manjappai' and the ban on 14 single-use plastic items.

During Kuppai Thiruvizha VII, we realised that there were many entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu and other states selling alternatives to single use plastics, however, they do not receive enough and frequent opportunities to connect

directly with consumers and therefore they are unable to sustain their businesses by making it profitable.

Following the conclusion of CAM 2023, we received many inquiries from colleges for further collaboration on issues discussed during the awareness sessions, such as setting up an effective waste management process on campus, helping them achieve a single-use plastics free campus, involving their students in CAG's research work, particularly fieldwork, and helping them design their environmental studies syllabus, etc.



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# Recommendations

Based on our observations, experiences and learnings from CAM 2023, we recommend the Government of Tamil Nadu to consider the following:

1. Strengthen efforts to impart climate literacy at educational, financial, government, private, community, social welfare and legal institutions.

2. Familiarise the term 'climate change' and simplify the various dimensions of the climate crisis by highlighting its impacts and consequences at an individual level and communicating it through Public Service Announcements (PSA) at prominent locations and media forms.

3. Involve popular personalities and celebrities to endorse and promote the government's efforts in combating climate change.

4. Increase awareness on the need for sustainable consumption with respect to food, energy, water, clothing, transportation, etc., in addition to plastics.

5. Promote alternatives to single-use plastics through PSAs and facilitate the creation of a market space for easy access to these products by consumers.

6. Ensure effective implementation of the ban on single-use plastics and other subsequent and relevant government orders in that regard and regularly monitor and evaluate the status of implementation on single-use plastics, starting with their implementation in government departments, institutions, etc.

7. Strengthen the impact of the ban by widening the scope to prohibit the use of single-use plastic (PET) water bottles and promoting the use of reusable water bottles in government offices, ceremonies, meetings, etc.

8. Mandate urban local bodies, municipalities and private waste management service providers to conduct regular awareness sessions on the importance of segregation of waste.

9. Mandate corporate stakeholders to actively contribute and participate in the government's efforts to combat climate change. This shall not be limited to beach and street cleanups, as they are not real/effective solutions to the climate crisis or plastic pollution.

10. Promote the 7 Rs of sustainability - Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Repurpose/Repair/Refurbish, Reuse, Recycle, Rot.





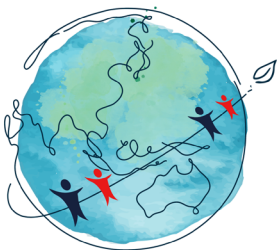






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