

School principals and corporates join hands to save environment

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pune: Solutions for environment-friendly immersion of Ganapati idols, composting of 'nirmalya' during the Ganapati festival, creating awareness among students about environment were some of the ideas discussed at the annual Times NIE principals' meet held on Monday.

The meet was organised by Times NIE in association with Cummins Group in India. The theme was 'Eco-friendly practices—Need of the hour'.

The event started with a panel discussion and a presentation by the Cummins Group. Vikas Thapa, vice-president, Cummins Group in India, spoke about various initiatives taken by the group in finding green solutions to a variety of problems faced by us.

S Ravichandran, head of corporate responsibility,

Cummins Group, spoke about the plaster of Paris idol dissolution project.

Cummins has been working on an idea that could help dissolve plaster of Paris. "By partnering with the National Chemical Laboratory, we now have a solution to dissolve the plaster of paris (PoP) in an eco-friendly way, where the liquid residue from the process can directly be used to water the city's green spaces and the environmentally solid residue used in several industrial applications," said Ravichandran.

Mojj Engineering has supported in designing a prototype in which the idols can be dissolved.

Suresh Jagtap, deputy commissioner of the PMC's solid waste management department, who was one of the panel members, described the serious problem of PoP when Ganapati idols are immersed in the river. Jagtap said, "The



AT THE TIMES NIE PRINCIPALS' MEET: From left: Vibhakar Telore, principal, SNBP School Yerawada; S Ravichandran, head of corporate responsibility, Cummins Group in India; Ashwini Kulkarni, director, City Pride School, Vijay Pillai, director, Sungrace High School, Col Shashikant Dalvi, district manager, Pune for the Climate Reality Project and Lakshmi Gandhi, principal, Dr Kalmadi Shamrao High School. (Right) From left: Suresh Jagtap, deputy commissioner, solid waste management, PMC; Dr Shubhangi Umbarkar, senior scientist at the NCL, Vikas Thapa, vice president, Cummins Group in India and Mahesh Suryavanshi, treasurer of Dagdusheth Halwai Ganpati Mandal

POP idols are non-biodegradable, resulting in choking of water bodies."

Ameet Lele, general manager corporate responsibility, Cummins Group in India, and Shubhangi Umbarkar, senior scientist at NCL, also participated in the panel discussion and spoke about the future journey and implementation for the Jal Abhishhek project. "It's our annual practice and this year too vol-

unteers from Cummins, civic body and police authorities and SWaCh representatives will be present at the 'visargan ghats' to create awareness about immersion of idols in the makeshift water tanks installed by the civic authorities as part of the nirmalya project," said Lele.

Mahesh Suryavanshi, treasurer of the Dagdusheth Halwai Ganpati Trust, who was also part of the panel,

spoke about taking the project to Ganesh mandals and masses while Aditi Ravetkar, HR leader distribution business unit of Cummins India Limited, informed about the 'Coach them Young' project of the company. The project entails sensitizing children and making them aware about the need to protect the environment documentaries on initiatives that prevent pollution and help preserve

the environment.

Ravetkar said, "By using the vast network of the distribution business, the project was scaled up over the years and it has now reached over seven lakh students across 80 cities since 2014."

The panel discussion was followed by a dance performance by the Mrudang Academy. A panel of school principals and other experts in the field then discussed best prac-

tices implemented by them in schools and work places.

Col Shashikant Dalvi, district manager of Pune for The Climate Reality Project, India, an independent chapter of Nobel laureate Al Gore's The Climate Project, who was one of the panel members said, "Rainwater harvesting is the need of the hour and citizens must understand the potential of this technology. Despite having three rivers and four dams, Pune is facing water crisis. The only source of water in future can be rainwater harvesting."

Ashwini Kulkarni, director of City Pride School, said that small goals with respect to environment conservation must be set by every organisation to protect nature. Kulkarni said, "Once we conducted a project in school where students were told to measure the amount of water wasted from leaking taps in the school. They measured the water wasted in one minute, one hour and 24 hours and this was calculated for one day, one month and one year. The total water waste was calculated and students were sensitised about how it could impact us in the long term."

Lakshmi Gandhi, principal of Dr Kalmadi Shamrao High School, Aundh, said, "At school, we try and restrict the use of paper which is also contributing to environment degradation as it results in loss of trees. We try and reuse the available paper resources and similar practices are encouraged among school children."

Vibhakar Telore, principal, SNBP School, Yerawada and Vijay Pillai, director, Sungrace High School, who were members of the panel also spoke on how the school creates awareness among students on environment protection and conservation in daily classroom sessions.

Telore proposed simple practices like tree plantation, avoiding plastic usage that can be implemented at school level.

Pillai said that the school gives saplings at felicitation functions instead of bouquets. He also proposed to start an inter-school competition for best eco-friendly practices in schools. S Ravichandran from Cummins Group in India who chaired the panel assured full support from Cummins to reach out to maximum schools.

Pics: Sadanand Godse

