INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP DAY – 20TH SEPTEMBER 2008

This year the coastal cleanup campaign started with the successful completion of the "Flipper Fest 08" –A Marine Biodiversity Conservation Awareness Mela , conducted by Indian Coast Guard, SACEP, TREE Foundation, Roots & Shoots and Loyola College on   5th to 7th September 2008, as a prelude, with the participation of over 390 students and 5,000 students and general public.

The nationwide campaign on the **International Coastal Cleanup Day** was jointly organised on 20th September 2008 by **INDIAN COAST GUARD, NIOT, SOUTH ASIA CO OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME-SOUTH ASIAN SEA PROGRAMME, LOYOLA COLLEGE and TREE FOUNDATION ,ROOTS&SHOOTS. (the ICC committee)** Various other Governmental and Non – Governmental Organizations and corporate companies also joined the initiative. The Kasimedu fishing harbour was cleaned by the port Trust, the Marine beaches by students of schools and colleges, the Besant Nagar Elliot's beach by AIG Systems Solutions, TCS, SBI, Round Table Chennai and the Fishing Villages of Periya Neelangarai, Injambakkam, Panaiyur, Nainar Kuppam Uthandi and Reddy Kuppam Kannathur, by the Kadal Aaami Padhukavalargall of TREE Foundation.

Personnel from various walks of life had participated enthusiastically in the beach cleaning drives. At Kasimedu fishing harbor about 100 personnel from Chennai Port Trust, Base Maintenance Unit of Coast Guard, Coast Guard Store Depot personnel had collected about 20 tones of garbage. At Coast Guard / INS Adyar / CISF beach area about 400 personnel comprising Army, Navy and CISF personnel and their families had collected about 10 Tones of garbage.

Dr D Sudarsanam ,Professor Loyola College and SACEP Local Representative said" At Marina Beach around 2400 personnel comprising students from 22 Schools and 47 colleges had participated in addition to the general public and NGO's which was spread across at 8 collection points through out the beach. The notable among them were the 20 students from Jain International Residential School Bangalore who had come all the way to Chennai to participate in this social event." Further students from Bharat Scouts and Guides had participated very enthusiastically in the beach cleaning drive.

Dr Supraja Dharini, Chairperson TREE Foundation said" 322children and 100 youth of the above fishing villages cleaned about 780 kg of litter and 11,421 pieces of litter(Plastic ,covers, bottles, pan covers, rope, slippers, thermacole etc,)on the beaches in front of their villages between 6.45 a.m to 9.20 a.m. By their act they made the older members of the villages understand the problem of marine littering and the crisis the ocean faces right now".

A total of about **50 tons of LITTER** was collected from all the beaches which stretched from Kasimedu Marina, Thiruvanmiyur and 05 fishing villages in South Chennai.

The major sponsors for the event are Coco-Cola, AIG System Solution, State Bank Of India, Airtel, Aavin, Madras Knights Round   Table, Nestle, Madras Royal Yatch Club, Electronic Lab, Sri Krishna sweets and others.

As part of the event competition was organized for the best team which had collected the maximum litter. DG Vaishnav College and KCS Kasimedu College of Arts and Science won the first prize. The second prize was won by MOP Vaishnav College. The third prize was won by SRM University and Kannayappa Community college. The special consolidation prize was won by Jain International Residential School Bangalore.

The Chief Guest for the event Inspector General SPS Basra YSM, PTM, TM, Commander Coast Guard Region (East) speaking on the event had highlighted the need to keep the beaches and sea clean and free from all kinds of pollution. He thanked all the sponsors and participants for their contribution and participation in the social cause.

NOTE ON ICC

Marine debris is a problem along shorelines, in coastal waters, estuaries and oceans throughout the world. Marine debris is any manmade solid material that enters our waterways either directly or indirectly. As more people move near the coast each year the production of trash and the potential for marine debris continue to increase. Trash on the beach can be harmful to the health and safety of beach users. It also makes the beach look ugly and dirty. Many types of animals, like seals, turtles, birds, fish and crabs, can be wounded, strangled, or unable to swim if they consume or become entangled in marine debris. India has a vast coastline and the quantity and type of marine debris along the Indian coast has not been documented so far. .

Diverse debris have been found all along the coastal and marine areas, some of which are cigarettes with filters, food wrappers and containers, caps/lids, bottles, tobacco packaging/wrappers, crab and lobster traps, fishing lines, worms at nets, plastic sheeting, ropes, trapping bands, syringes, bags and balloons which account for 60 – 80 % of the world's marine pollution. **Dr R Venkatesan National SACEP representative said** " It is estimated that 6.4 million tonnes per year comprising of 8 million items at a rate of 13,000 pieces of plastic every km^2 is dumped daily into the ocean globally". Though many regional efforts have been undertaken, no accurate data has been recorded particularly in the Indian subcontinent.

Some of the identified sources of garbage to the coastal waters of India are industrial effluents, ports and harbours including fishery harbours and fish landing centres, ship building and breaking yards, fish/food processing industries, coconut husk retting, salt pans, tourist resorts / beaches, solid

waste dumping, urban runoff including municipal waste, shipping including garbage from ships, oil rigs, agricultural runoff, fishing industry including gear from fishing vessels, aquaculture, recreational and leisure usage and marine mining.

Since 1986, over 6 million volunteers have removed about 100 million pounds of marine litter from a grand total of 170000 miles of beaches and inland waterways as part of the international coastal cleanup day observed every year on the third Saturday of September. Even though the International Coastal Cleanup day (ICC day) was observed in India earlier, for the first time in 2006, it was planned on a large scale involving most of the coastal states, including the islands of Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar, with the help of many NGOs, research and educational institute and government organisations. Apart from beach cleaning, even ports, harbours, jetties and dry docks were involved in the cleanup. Efforts were made to remove underwater litter from jetties and harbours and this experiment was carried out by TREE Foundation in the Kasimedu Fishing Harbour.

The Local Municipalities and Corporations, Ministry of Environment and Forests, State Pollution Control Boards and Fisheries Department were also involved in the coastal cleanup campaign to increase the effort of cleaning the coastal areas. The Indian Coast Guard managed the countrywide coordination for this cleanup with the help of the regional stations. Many states in the country experienced their first coastal cleanup day and students from schools and colleges were also involved.

Through this coastal cleanup campaign, a phenomenal awareness was inculcated among the public in general and fisher folks in particular. Indeed many fisherfolk of Haldia (West Bengal); Paradip, Gopalpur, Bali Ground (Orissa); Visakhapatnam, Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh); Kasimedu, Uthandi, Thoothukudi, Cuddalore, Kanyakumari (Tamilnadu); Kalapet, Kurusukuppam, Nallanadu, Narambai, Solai Nagar, Vambakeerapalayam, Veerampattinam (Pondicherry) and Kochi (Kerala) involved themselves with a sense of integrity and cleaned their shore. Further, students of schools and colleges of 10 to 20 years of age set a role model for the public by their active participation with a sense of enthusiasm and involvement and attracted the passers-by and walkers. The sense of modesty and solidarity on the part of students towards the social cause is a great success that our country can be proud of. As a testimony, the officials of corporation / municipality were made to realize that it is part of their division of labour too.

The success of the programme had been reflected by the attraction of media who came in large numbers to cover and propagate the "beach cleanup idea".

As a remedial measure, it is suggested that marine litter can be curbed at the source itself, by spreading awareness among the public on the methods of disposal of the wastes. Since most of the tourists on the beach tend to dispose off their wastes on the beach itself, there is a need to spread awareness on proper disposal and reduce the amount of waste generated. The public can be advised to use biodegradable products instead of non-biodegradables. The local authorities can regulate better means of disposal of the waste/garbage collected in the bins. It could also be more hygienic if the storm water / wastewater drainage systems are treated before discharge. It would help decrease the spread of infections and minimise the impact on human health and the marine life.

Similarly, shipping discharges can also be treated offshore and then released into the sea, which can facilitate less transport of invasive species. Coastal industries or institutions can be advised on better means of disposal of their waste products depending on the nature of materials. Management of shore-based activities would reduce the debris during storms and other natural calamities. For the reduction of marine litter accumulation, it is necessary that the message be spread all over the world on a regular basis reminding the public on the need to keep the coastal environment clean. It can be started right from the level of a school to that of multinational organisations.

TREE Foundation participated in the cleanup to celebrate 20th September as International Coastal Cleanup day and   UN Peace day which is on the 21st September this year as Dr Jane Goodall is the UN Messenger for Peace and since TREE is inspired and guided by her and is a member of Roots & Shoots international network of the Jane Goodall Institute.