



Summary report (2023-24)

Beyond The Waves:

Enhancing Ocean Literacy in the coastal regions of India

Introduction:

‘Ocean Literacy’ is defined as the interrelationship between ocean and us. The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) aims to galvanize transformative actions and partnerships among science, industry and community to safeguard the ocean and its resources for current and future generations. Recognizing the vital role of youth and coastal communities of India in this endeavor, ‘[Estuarine and Coastal Studies Foundation \(ECSF\)](#)’ initiated ‘Ocean Literacy (OL) program’ in West Bengal, India in 2023.

Background:

In Indian context, Oceanography (a subsection of Earth Science) is a multidisciplinary course, which is not mainstream in schooling and higher education system. As a result, Indian students are lacking the knowledge of ocean climate nexus and such knowledge hardly percolates to the community level. The main vision of the OL program is to introduce ocean education into the classroom and to some extent directly to the coastal community. The target populations are students, professionals, and coastal communities (e.g., fishermen, women and kids). The OL program will enhance awareness about ocean and its services to humanity, which in consequence may lead to ocean conservation efforts from the community.

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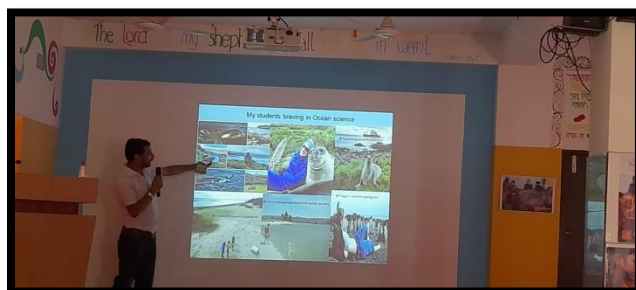


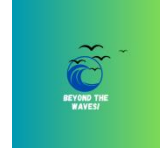
Activity

1

The 1st Ocean Literacy workshop was organized on 4th March, 2023 to create awareness among students about marine ecosystems such as mangrove forests, sea grasses, coral reefs, marine mammals which are all known for their biological productivity. The workshop was organized in the premises of Ashar Alo, a model school in Piyali with a missionary zeal, a green village in South 24 pgs district, West Bengal, India. The speakers shared their valuable research insights in a very lucid manner to motivate the girls. Students and teachers wholeheartedly participated in the poster making session afterwards.

'When the event organizers contacted the school principal, she shared that the 90% of the girls have never been to the sea...from there to introducing the underwater realm, ECSF OL team have been working hard to fill the gap.'





Activity

2

The ECSF held its 2nd youth focused workshop in B.E. Model School on 7th July, 2023, which is located in the Indian Institute of Engineering, Science and Technology, Shibpur, WB. Around 89 participants attended the workshop aged 16 to 18 years old. The students were very enthusiastic and hence QnA session continued for more than an hour.

'When asked, the students said they've been to sea so many times but never thought about such alarming situation what today's ocean is facing. They were curious to know how to take up ocean-climate focused courses in higher education and pursue research for conservation'.





Activity

3

The Ocean Literacy team hosted its 3rd workshop in collaboration with Purbasha Eco-Helpline society on 28th Dec, 2023. The Purbasha school, a pre-school in Chargheri Village of Sundarbans, is founded by Mr. Umashankar Mandal, who's renowned as the Mangrove Man in India for his noteworthy work in mangroves conservation. The workshop was scheduled for 3 hours with 49 kids and their mothers. The kids were mostly under 6 years. The organizing team educated them about mangroves conservation in a very playful manner with some fun activities like games, poetry, art, music, drawing etc. The students were very enthusiastic and mesmerized with the interactions and photographs. At the end, chocolates and fruits were distributed among the students as a token of love. The workshop ended with the thanks giving ceremony to the founders of the school and all other staff who extended their spontaneous and hearty support for the success of the workshop.

