

Inculcating waste management habits amongst students



At a time when people around the world are tackling the global garbage crisis, the Jai Hind Seva Club in Gurdaspur District of Punjab is grooming students to be better environmental citizens. For starters, it has installed dust bins to promote waste collection and segregation in five government schools.

The schools covered under the programme are: Government Senior School Warsola; Government Senior School Kala Nangal; Government Senior School Babehali; Government Senior School Ghot Pokhal; and Government Senior School Bariar.

The programme was inspired by the 'Mera Kuda Meri Zimmedari' (My Waste, My Responsibility) campaign initiated by the Deputy Commissioner of Gurdaspur, Sh. Mohd. Ishfaq.

"In today's scenario, it is more important than ever to understand the importance of waste management to reduce our environmental footprint. There's already a momentum around reducing waste and recycling, but with the help of the education sector, the impact could be profound," said Sh. Naresh Kalia, member of Jai Hind Seva Club, which is affiliated to the Nehru Yuva Kendra Gurdaspur.

Members of the Jai Hind Seva Club began work in this direction by getting ten hard drum dustbins ready. These were installed in the rural schools (2 in each). Further, similar bins have been installed at numerous public spaces across the district of Gurdaspur.



To ensure that the initiative is successful and effective in the long run, students and teachers were made aware about the need to segregate waste and not litter. The Club members believe that such habits as also safe sanitation practices should be inculcated and widely promoted in students in their formative years. Plans are in the pipelines to extend the programme to other schools.

“The idea is to integrate children as agents of change in transforming the waste problem to achieve the combined vision of engaging the next generation in sustainable waste management,” Mr. Kalia said.

A few months down the line, positive feedback has been given by students. Teachers have informed that their earlier dustbins were flimsy and would be damaged within a few weeks. The new durable bins which have covers enable them to effectively manage solid waste, and keep at bay odour, spillage, and pests. Regular disposal of solid waste has become easier with the bins.

Most of all, the intervention has created awareness among students about the importance of safe disposal of waste material. Teachers continue to teach children to use bins and refrain from dropping litter to keep their surroundings clean.

