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EIACP Newsletter

Thematic Area: Conservation of Ecological Heritage and Sacred Sites of India

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C.P.R. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE
CPREEC EIACP PC - RESOURCE PARTNER



Supported by

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India

From the EIACP Desk...

The **Environmental Information, Awareness Capacity Building and Livelihood Programme (EIACP)** at CPREEC of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India is the Programme Centre (PC) – Resource Partner (RP) for the thematic area of **“Conservation of Ecological Heritage and Sacred Sites of India”**.

Heritage is the cultural, social and spiritual legacy that we inherit from our past and pass on to the future. Indian heritage is unique in its reverence for Mother Nature in all her manifestations. Ancient traditions, rituals and practices have embedded this reverence in religion and even in normal day-to-day living. The respect for nature and the belief that every organism on earth has a special role in life’s cycle forms the core of our ecological heritage.

To maintain humankind’s resilience in the face of change, it is necessary to draw on the best available knowledge, regardless of its origins. The process of updating knowledge systems provides opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of observed events and their consequences. It facilitates and leads to a joint assessment of information, resulting in new insights and innovations, and better informed actions.

The main purpose of this **Newsletter** is to bring forth and publish articles concerning all aspects related to the knowledge of ecological traditions in India as well as novel interpretations and theoretical issues related to the conservation of the same.

This issue covers an article, **“Know Your Plants - Gurmar”**.

Gurmar (*Gymnema sylvestre*), a woody climbing shrub is a traditional remedy for various ailments, including diabetes, asthma and cardiovascular diseases. Its sweet-inactivating property, attributed to triterpene saponins like gymnemic

acids and gurmarin, makes it a popular ingredient in health supplements. The plant’s phytochemicals exhibit anti-oxidant, anti-microbial, and anti-inflammatory activities, supporting its use in traditional medicine. Various parts of the plant are used to treat stomach ailments, constipation and liver disease, among other uses. Its therapeutic potential and dietary benefits make *G. sylvestre* a valuable herb in Ayurvedic and folk medicine.

CPREEC EIACP PC – RP has already published books on the *Ecological Traditions of the sixteen (16) states of India*, The Centre has, over the years, promoted and encouraged communities to adopt local traditions, practices and rituals that possess ecological significance.

The Centre also focuses on eco-restoration, conservation, creation of environmental assets and advocates the sustainable use of natural resources. The Centre has restored several degraded sacred groves in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The Centre has also documented sacred groves/forests (10,470), sacred gardens (64), sacred plants (94), sacred animals (57), sacred rivers (33), sacred water bodies (365), sacred mountains (203), sacred cities/sites (234), sacred seeds (10), sacred caves (209) and green pilgrimages (20), traditional ecological knowledge (44) and UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India (40) till date.

We would like to thank our readers for sharing their articles, photographs and also for their queries and feedback regarding our newsletters, publications and about information provided in our website website : <https://eiACP.moef.gov.in/drc/eiACP/centre/CPREEC..ntre/CPREEC>.

We cordially invite other scholars and interested persons to share their knowledge and information by contributing popular articles and good quality photographs on the subject areas present on our website.

Cover Story

Know Your Plants - Gurmar

Dr. A. Abirami

Programme Officer

C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre, EIACP PC -RP, Chennai

Botanical Name	:	<i>Gymnema sylvestre</i> (Retz.) R.Br.
Tamil Name	:	Sirukurinja; Sarkkarai Kolli
Sanskrit Name	:	Madhunashini
English Name	:	Gurmar; Cowplant



<https://www.sukhayuayurved.com/gurmar/>
<https://www.verywellhealth.com/gymnema-sylvestre-4692940>

Distribution and Habit

Gymnema sylvestre (Retz.) R.Br. is a large, stout, woody climbing shrub belonging to the family *Apocynaceae*. The plant is found in tropical and sub-tropical regions, well distributed in parts of central and southern India and in the southern part of China, tropical Africa, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. The leaves are elliptic and opposite, 2.5 – 6 cms. long, flowers are small and yellow in colour; calyx long, ovate and obtuse. Stem is aerial, hard, twinning and branched. The taste of the leaf is slightly bitter

and astringent. It also possesses the remarkable property of paralyzing the sense of taste for sweet substance for a few hours, while chewing the leaves. Hence, it is commonly called as sugar destroyer.

Parts used

Leaves, flower, fruit, stem, roots and bark.

Phytochemical constituents

Gymnemic acids, gurmarin, gymnemosides, stigmasterol, triterpenoids, gymnemasaponin,

anthraquinones, hentriacontane, pentatriacontane, phytin, resins, tartaric acid, formic acid, butyric acid, lupeol, β -amyrin related glycosides, tannin, quinones, flavonoids, phenols, coumarin, glycosides and calcium oxalate.

Uses

As it is useful against major diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, asthma, cancer, diabetes and obesity, a different formulation of this plant is found in a number of preparations such as tea bags, health tablets and food supplements.

Medicinal uses

G. sylvestre is a therapeutic herb having multiple potentials as mentioned in folk medicine, Ayurveda and Homeopathic systems of medicine. The plant has been used in traditional medicine, most notably to control blood sugar. Traditionally, it has been used to treat diabetes, malaria and snake bites as well as to treat diseases caused by phlegm and piles (Kanetkar *et al.* 2007). Equal quantities of dried leaves and jamun seeds are powdered and consumed with warm water for 40 days continuously to cure diabetes. It is an appetizer and coolant. Roots are used as antidote for poisonous bites (Sudhakar, 2007). The herb *Gymnema sylvestre* indeed owes its sweet-inactivating property to triterpene saponins, specifically gymnemic acids, gymnemasaponins, and a polypeptide called gurmarin. These compounds work together to suppress the taste of sweetness on the tongue, making it a popular ingredient in traditional

medicine for managing sugar cravings and blood sugar levels (Tiwari *et al.* 2014). The leaves have been used for stomach ailments, constipation, hemorrhoids, water retention and liver disease. The flowers, leaves and fruits have been used in the treatment of alterations of blood pressure and heart rhythms. The bark is useful as an emetic and expectorant. It is also used for malaria, as a digestive stimulant, laxative, appetite suppressant and diuretic (Saneja *et al.* 2010). Various parts of this plant are used by different tribes in India such as the Sahariya tribe of Madhya Pradesh, Junglee Irulas of Nilgiri hills, Kol tribe of Chhattisgarh, and the Nayaks of Karnataka, to mainly treat asthma, eye and gastric problems, Parkinsonism, urinary problems and diabetes (Potawale *et al.* 2008).

Conclusion

G. sylvestre is a highly valued herb in traditional medicine, offering a range of therapeutic benefits and dietary advantages. Its unique sweet-inactivating property, coupled with its anti-oxidant, antibiotic, and anti-inflammatory activities, makes it a popular ingredient in health supplements and traditional remedies. As a natural remedy for managing blood sugar levels, *G. sylvestre* presents a promising alternative or complement to conventional treatments. Further research and exploration of its phytochemicals could uncover new avenues for treatment and prevention of various diseases, solidifying its position as a valuable resource in the realm of natural medicine.

References

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— News —

Nilgiris' sacred flower Rhododendron brings colour to dry winter



Image Courtesy: <https://powo.science.kew.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:77251536-1>

During winter here, associated with frost and dry weather which makes greenery wane and rarely bloom, ancient rhododendron flowers always defy the odds and bloom in this hostile weather.

Rhododendron, considered to be a high-altitude, sacred flower, extensively used in the past during *Shivaratri* festival; this year, in a rare coincidence, Valentine's Day followed by Maha Shivaratri this weekend, adds unexpected appeal to this divine flower.

Rhododendron, an ancient flowering tree, becomes active only in the winter months, braving the severity of frost. It blooms only between January and March, giving a spectacular look to the wild arena as its large and bright crimson red flowers add colour to the hills.

V. Sivadass, Managing Trustee of the Nilgiris Environment and Socio-Cultural Trust said *Rhododendron nilagaricum*, the species which is found in the Nilgiris, is found only in South India. Rhododendron is an ancient flowering tree. It is a sturdy tree with broad leaves bearing clusters of broad, bell-shaped,

crimson red flowers at the tip of the branches during the bloom that attracts with its elegance, he said.

He noted that though rhododendrons trees were predominant in the hills in the past, showcasing its ability to take root in the grassland ecosystem, over the decades, it has disappeared in many areas and only a few are now seen in the jungle environs, especially in the Avalanche and Mukurthi belt.

Rhododendron is called 'Billihoo' in the local Badaga language and has cultural significance in the high-altitude environs. It is considered a sacred flower among the Badagas, who constitute the single largest ethnic community in the Nilgiris.

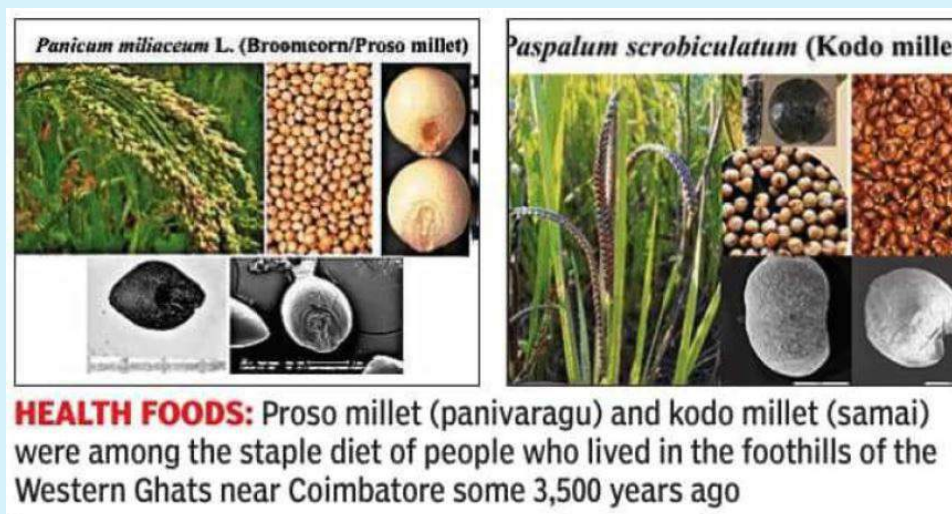
In the past, the Badagas used this flower during Shivaratri celebrations. Nowadays, it is hard to get enough rhododendron flowers to use during the festival.

The juice extracted from the flower petals is a delicious soft drink and it is said to possess anti-oxidant and anti-cancer properties, he added.

Source: Deccan Chronicle Chennai, 14.02.2026, pg.2.

— News —

People of today's TN ate millets 3,500 years ago: Study



Millets and pulses were the staple diet of people who lived around 3,500 years ago in the foothills of the Western Ghats near Coimbatore, a new study has found.

The archaeo-botanical study researchers from Deccan College examined samples collected from Molapalayam, a later period Neolithic site (dated 1,600 BCE), near Coimbatore. The researchers found plant remains including kodo millet (varagu), little millet (samai), proso millet (panivaragu), browntop millet (kulasamai), foxtail millet (thinai) and barnyard millet (kuthiraivali), some of which find mention in Sangam literature (3rd century BCE-3rd century CE).

For the first time, we have found evidence of a variety of millets cultivated during the Neolithic period, said archaeobotanist Satish S Naik of the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology at Deccan College Post-Graduate Research Institute in Pune. He, along with his student, Adithya Ramesan, studied the samples.

Archaeobotanists identified the species by collecting the charred remains of seeds and examining taxonomic characteristics. The samples also showed traces of black gram (*ulundu*), green gram (*pacchai payaru*) and horse gram (*kollu*), hyacinth bean (*avarai*) and fruit seeds such as Indian *jujube*.

The site also yielded the earliest evidence for the use of *tur dal* in Tamil Nadu. It shows people from this region used *tur dal* some 3,500 years ago, Sathis Naik said.

Previously, researchers found evidence for agriculture at Paiyampalli, another Neolithic site in Tirupattur district, where they identified charred remains of horse gram, green gram and ragi millet.

Evidence of cultivated rice was found during study at Adichanallur

This study has yielded important evidence for the grain basket of ancient Tamil Nadu and early agricultural practices, said archaeologist V. Selvakumar of Department of Maritime

History and Maritime Archaeology at Tamil University, Thanjavur, who excavated the site.

Even now, horse gram and other millet crops are cultivated in the Coimbatore region. These drought resistant crops indicate a rain-fed agricultural system practised under semi-arid to sub-humid conditions. The cropping patterns reflect a seasonal agricultural calendar, with millets cultivated during the monsoon and legumes in the post-monsoon period, Selvakumar said.

The earliest evidence for rice cultivation in the Tamirabarani river basin, including sites such as Adichanallur and Sivagalai. Satish Naik also found evidence of cultivated rice and

fragments of green gram during the archaeobotanical study of Adichanallur, an Iron Age site. At Boothinatham, an early historic site, they found evidence of millet cultivation, including browntop millet, sawa millet, ragi, kodo millet and rice, as well as pulses including horse gram, hyacinth bean and green gram.

The cultivation of bajra millet or pearl millet (*kambu*) shows that in the early historic period, agriculture evolved, with rice cultivation spread across the landscape, Satish Naik said.

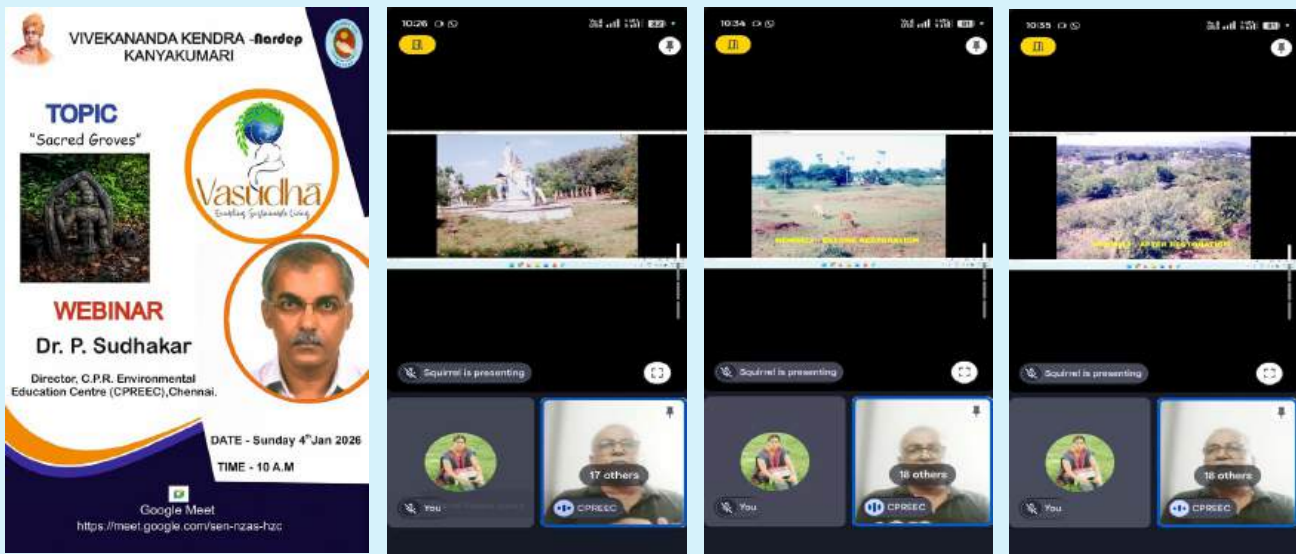
Source: The Times of India Chennai, 04.02.2026, pg. 1 & 6.



— In-focus —

Webinar on Sacred Groves

A webinar on Sacred Groves was organized by Vivekananda Kendra – NARDEP, Kanyakumari on Sunday, January 4, 2026. Dr. P. Sudhakar, Director and EIACP Coordinator, CPREEC EIACP PC-RP, Chennai delivered a lecture on, “Sacred Groves and Conservation”. A total of 25 students, academicians and members of the general public participated in the webinar.



Dr. P. Sudhakar, Director and EIACP Coordinator, CPREEC delivered a lecture on Sacred Groves

CPREEC EIACP PC-RP, Chennai Mission LiFE awareness programme

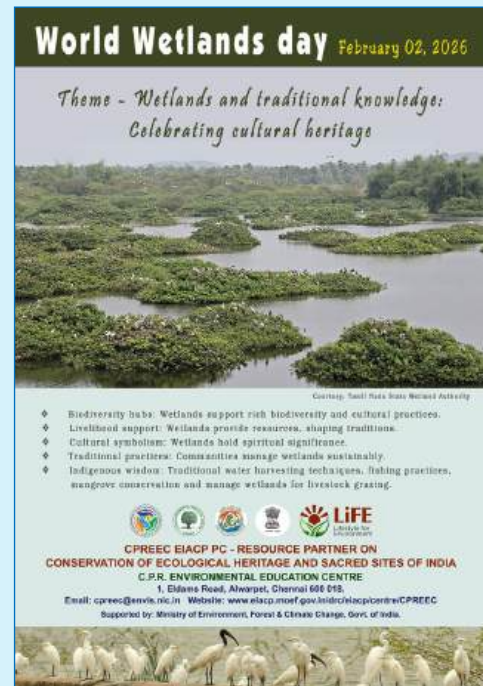
CPREEC EIACP PC – RP, Chennai conducted Mission LiFE Awareness Programme under the seven themes - Save Energy, Save Water, Avoid SUPs, Reduce Waste, Reduce E-Waste, Adopt Healthy Food System and Adopt Healthy Lifestyle at Guru Nanak College, Velachery, Chennai - 600042 on 31.1.2026. A total of 68 students and 3 staff participated and took the pledge on Mission LiFE. Awareness pamphlets were distributed to all the participants.





World Wetlands Day – February 2, 2026

World Wetlands Day, celebrated annually on February 2nd, raises awareness about the critical importance of wetlands for biodiversity, climate, and human well-being, marking the adoption of the Ramsar Convention in 1971. The day highlights how these vital ecosystems provide clean water, flood protection, food and offer support to countless species, while also focusing global attention on reversing their rapid degradation and encouraging conservation and restoration efforts. As part of celebrating World Wetlands Day 2026, CPREEC EIACP PC-RP Chennai developed an awareness poster highlighting this year’s theme, ‘Wetlands and traditional knowledge: Celebrating cultural heritage’.



World Wildlife Day – March 3, 2026

World Wildlife Day, is celebrated annually on March 3, raising urgent awareness about conservation of flora and fauna, biodiversity threats and combating wildlife crime. It commemorates the 1973 signing of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), a vital international agreement ensuring trade does not threaten species survival. As part of observing World Wildlife Day – 2026, CPREEC EIACP PC –RP, Chennai has developed an awareness poster highlighting this year’s theme, ‘Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: - Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods’.



As part of celebrating World Wildlife Day – March 3, 2026, CPREEC EIACP PC-RP's Ooty Field Office organized an awareness programme and released an awareness poster at Global Matriculation School, Devala, The Nilgiris. A total of 4 teachers and 139 students attended the programme and posters were distributed.



As part of celebrating World Wildlife Day – March 3, 2026, CPREEC EIACP PC-RP's Ooty Field Office organized an awareness programme and released an awareness poster at Government PU School, TR Bazaar, The Nilgiris. A total of 3 teachers and 42 students attended the programme and posters were distributed.



International Day of Forests – March 21, 2026

The International Day of Forests, observed annually on March 21st, raises awareness and serves as a reminder of the importance of forest ecosystems. “Forests and Economies” was selected as the theme for 2026, highlighting the central role of forests in sustaining livelihoods and economic opportunities across sectors. As part of observing International Day of Forests 2026, CPREEC EIACP PC – RP, Chennai has developed an awareness poster on the theme, ‘Forests and Economies’.



World Water Day – March 22, 2026

World Water Day, celebrated annually on March 22nd, raises awareness about the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water and highlights the importance of sustainable freshwater management. It aims to inspire action to tackle the global water crisis and supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030. As part of celebrating World Water Day 2026, CPREEC EIACP PC – RP, Chennai has developed an awareness poster highlighting this year’s theme, ‘Water and Gender’.



Capacity Building Programme on Craft making alternatives to Single Use Plastics (SUPs) – Wealth from Waste

EIACP Programme Centre (PC) – Resource Partner (RP) on “Conservation of Ecological Heritage and Sacred Sites of India” at C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre (CPREEC), Chennai organized a 5 days’ capacity building programme on “Craft making alternatives to Single Use Plastics (SUPs) – Wealth from Waste “ from February 5, 2026 to February 10, 2026 at Hall of the Councillor’s Office, Ward No.19, Bathu Basti, South Andaman (11°62’11 N; 92°71’72 E), Andaman & Nicobar Islands. This hands-on training programme aimed to enhance technical skills among women, encouraging sustainable livelihood opportunities and self-employment through eco-friendly crafts, using waste materials, thereby promoting alternatives to Single Use Plastics. Fifty (50) women trainees were selected to attend the course.

Advertisement in Newspapers

5-Day Capacity Building Programme on Craft Alternatives to Single-Use Plastics from Feb 5

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan 8: The C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre (CPREEC)-(EIACP), is organising a five-day Capacity Building Programme on "Craft Making Alternatives to Single Use Plastics (SUPs) - Wealth from Waste" for Self-Help Group (SHG) members and women under the Environmental

Information, Awareness, Capacity Building and Livelihood Programme (EIACP) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India.

The training programme will be conducted from February 5 to February 10, 2025, between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., at the Hall of the

Councillor's Office, Ward No. 19, Bathu Basti, Sri Vijaya Puram.

This hands-on training programme aims to enhance technical skills among SHG members and women, encouraging sustainable livelihood opportunities and self-employment through eco-friendly craft making using waste materials, thereby

promoting alternatives to single-use plastics.

A total of 50 seats are available for the programme. Interested participants are requested to apply on or before February 2, 2025, through

the following link: <https://forms.gle/kWkyCPKYF7wuG62p7>

For further details and clarifications, participants may contact 9474224389 (WhatsApp) / 9933282500 or email cpreecan@gmail.com.

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Andaman Chronicle

Five-Day Capacity Building Programme on Craft Alternatives to Single-Use Plastics Begins from February 5

sanjib 🕒 Posted on 2 weeks ago



Spread the love



Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan 08: 5-Day Capacity Building Programme on Craft Alternatives to Single-Use Plastics from Feb 5 conducted for Self-Help Group (SHG) members and women, under the Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity Building and Livelihood Programme (EIACP) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India, organised by CPREEC, Chennai.

Andaman Sheekha

Inauguration of the Course:

The 5-days Capacity Building Programme on “Craft Making Alternatives to Single Use Plastics (SUPs) – Wealth from Waste” for women commenced on February 5, 2026 at the Hall of the Councillor’s Office, Ward No.19, Bathu Basti, South Andaman. The programme was inaugurated by Shri. Vetri Velu, Ward Councillor, Sri Vijaya Puram Municipal Council.



Shri. Vetri Velu, Ward Councillor, Sri Vijaya Puram Municipal Council, South Andaman inaugurated the programme and addressed the gathering



Trainees involved in Hands on Training on making crafts



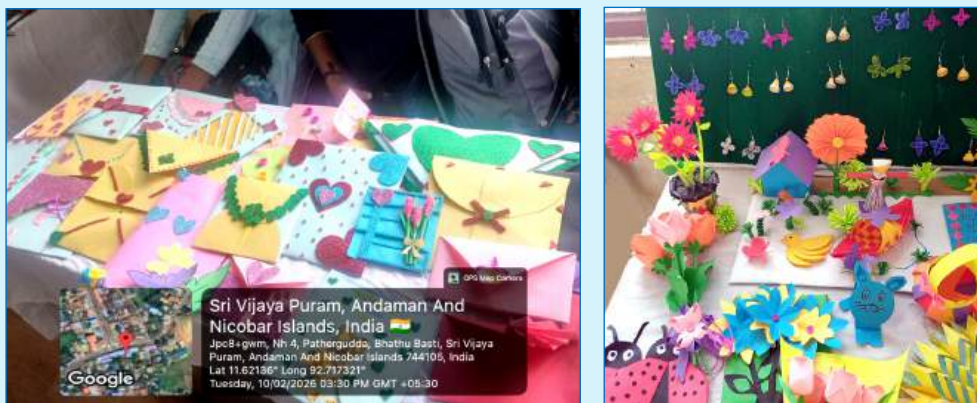
Trainees were involved in drawing, designing, and colouring a wall – decorating with items Butterfly and Lotus made from waste paper

Valedictory

The Valedictory function for the Capacity Building Programme on “**Craft Making Alternatives to Single Use Plastics (SUPs) – Wealth from Waste**” for women organised by CPREEC EIACP PC -RP, Chennai and supported by MoEF&CC, New Delhi was held on February 10, 2026 at Hall of the Councillor’s Office, Ward No.19, Bathu Basti, South Andaman. Lieutenant Sachin Parashar, Air Electrical Officer, INAS 325 Squadron, INS UTKROSH was the Chief Guest. Shri. A. Gopal, Project Officer, CPREEC’s Field Office at Sri Vijaya Puram organized and coordinated the programme.



Valedictory address by the Chief Guest



Display of Paper crafts



Display of crafts made from paper as an alternative to SUPs



Trainees show cased their crafts made from paper as an alternative to plastics



Chief Guest viewing the crafts made by the trainees



Chief Guest distributing the course completion certificate to the trainees

Green Skill Development Programme

Certificate Course on Micro-Entrepreneur NTFP (Non Timber Forest Produce): Plant Origin – Coconut Shells & Fibre Handicraft for ST.

Exposure/Field visit

The GSDP trainees were taken on an exposure/field visit to Sargaalaya Kerala Arts & Crafts Village at Iringal, Kerala.



Exposure/Field visit for GSDP trainees

Valedictory Programme

The valedictory programme of the Certificate Course on Micro-Entrepreneur NTFP (Non Timber Forest Produce): Plant Origin – Coconut Shells & Fibre Handicraft for ST was held on January 28, 2026 at Pandalur, The Nilgiris. Mr. Krishnamoorthy, Sub Inspector of Police, Devala, The Nilgiris was the Chief Guest. He highlighted the importance of Skill development. Dr. P. Sudhakar, Director and EIACP Coordinator, CPREEC, Chennai presided over the function and distributed the tools and Course Completion Certificate to the trainees. Mr. M. Kumaravelu, Field Officer, CPREEC, The Nilgiris organized and coordinated the programme.



Chief Guest highlighted the importance of Skill development



Display of value added coconut shells artefacts made by the GSDP trainees during the valedictory function



Display of Coconut shell artefacts



Chief Guest visiting the exhibits of coconut shell handicrafts made by GSDP trainees



Chief Guest interacting with GSDP trainees



Students visiting the exhibits of coconut shell handicrafts made by GSDP trainees



Dr. P. Sudhakar, Director and EIACP Coordinator, CPREEC, Chennai distributed the Course Completion Certificates and tools to the GSDP trainees



Sharing of Feedback by the trainee



Trainees with their GSDP Course completion certificates at the valedictory function

Certificate Course on Micro-Entrepreneur NTFP (Non Timber Forest Produce): Plant Origin – Coconut Shells & Fibre Handicraft for SC

Inauguration Programme

CPREEC EIACP PC RP GSDP certificate course on “Micro Entrepreneur NTFP Plant Origin – Coconut Shells and Fibre Handicrafts” for SC was inaugurated on January 23, 2026 at Pandalur Town, The Nilgiris. Mr. F. Robert, Former President, Rotary Club, Gudalur Valley & NGC District Coordinator, Gudalur inaugurated the programme, Ms Vijayakumari, Trustee, RK Trust, Gudalur felicitated the gathering and Mr. Kumaravelu, Field Officer, CPREEC emphasized the objectives of the course.



Inauguration by Mr. F. Robert,
Former President, Rotary Club, Gudalur Valley
& NGC District coordinator, Gudalur,
The Nilgiris



Felicitation by Ms Vijayakumari,
Trustee, RK Trust, Gudalur, The Nilgiris



Mr. Kumaravelu, Field Officer, CPREEC
emphasized the objectives of the course



Trainees involved in processing
the coconut shell



Trainees involved in training on
tools' handling



Demonstration on painting of
Coconut shell products



Latitude: 11.491842
Longitude: 76.34584
Elevation: 949.3948.86 m
Accuracy: 7.1 m
Time: 03-12-2026 14:46
Note: Pandaur

Powered by NoteCam

Demonstration on designing of Coconutshell products

Exposure/Field visit

The GSDP trainees were taken on an exposure/field visit to Sargaalaya Kerala Arts & Crafts Village at Iringal, Kerala.



Latitude: 11.503524
Longitude: 76.024229
Elevation: 349.9213.09 m
Accuracy: 20.4 m
Time: 03-14-2026 09:36
Note: Iringal

Powered by NoteCam



Latitude: 11.559898
Longitude: 75.605024
Elevation: 18.35174.0 m
Accuracy: 2328.0 m
Time: 03-14-2026 12:15
Note: Iringal

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Valedictory Programme

The valedictory function of the Certificate Course on Micro-Entrepreneur NTFP (Non Timber Forest Produce): Plant Origin – Coconut Shells & Fibre Handicraft for SC was held on March 24, 2026 at Pandalur, The Nilgiris. Mr. F. Robert, former President, Rotary Club, Gudalur Valley & NGC District Coordinator, Gudalur was the Chief Guest and highlighted the importance of Skill development. Dr. P. Sudhakar, Director and EIACP Coordinator and Mr. T.S. Sridharan, Assistant Director - Accounts & Administration, CPREEC, Chennai presided over the function and distributed the tools and Course Completion Certificates to the trainees. Mr. M. Kumaravelu, Field Officer, CPREEC, The Nilgiris organized and coordinated the programme.



Chief Guest highlighting the importance of Skill Development during the Valedictory Function



Dr. P. Sudhakar, Director and EIACP Coordinator, CPREEC, Chennai addressing the trainees on Micro Entrepreneur during the Valedictory Function



Display of Coconut shell artefacts



Dr. P. Sudhakar, Director and EIACP Coordinator, CPREEC, Chennai distributed the Course Completion Certificates and tools to the GSDP trainees



Sharing of Feedback by the trainee



Trainees with their GSDP Course completion certificates at the valedictory function



Media Coverage by Dina Malar News Paper's Channel



News Clipping (Daily newspaper - Dinakaran – March 26, 2026, Coimbatore edition) pertaining to the Valedictory of the GSDP Certificate Course conducted by CPREEC EIACP PC-RP at Pandalur, The Nilgiris



Abstracts of Recent Publications

- ❖ Shilpa, B., and Ashalata, D. (2024). “Perceptions and linkage of indigenous community in conservation of sacred natural sites in Assam, Northeast India”. *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge*, Vol. 23 (4), pp. 316-323.

Sacred natural sites are one of the most valuable ecosystems preserving the cultural integrity of different communities worldwide. Out of different sacred natural sites, sacred groves have acquired more importance due to spiritual theories and religious ethics. There are many sacred groves with diverse historical importance which have not yet been studied. The current study aimed to report the documentation and prominence established by the local community for the conservation of sacred groves in Assam between 2015 to 2017. Sacred groves were inventoried across the state, wherein sacred plants, people’s perceptions and anthropogenic disturbances were studied. Assam is a culturally rich state, and various ethnic communities conserved a total of 282 sacred groves covering an area of 672.48 ha, distributed within 23 AMSL to 955 AMSL. 83 tree species belonging to 68 genera and 38 families were listed, out of which 15 sacred trees were protected in the vicinity of the sacred groves. We observed a significant relationship between the cultural belief system and anthropogenic disturbances in the sacred groves, $\chi^2(1, N= 768) = 50.032, p < 0.001$. The record on the degree of anthropogenic disturbances revealed 51% of wood collection from sacred groves, followed by browsing/ grazing activities (38%) and fire frequency of 11%. The result of our study has widened the perception of the need to conserve the sacred groves not merely for aesthetic but also for community implications intended for ecological significance.

Keywords: *Anthropogenic degradation; disturbance; management; sacred groves; traditional Trees.*

- ❖ Premananda Borah. (2023). “Climate Change and Its Impacts on Tribal Culture of Assam, North East India”. *European Chemical Bulletin*, Vol. 12 (10), pp. 12663-12679.

Climate change is a global phenomenon that poses significant challenges to the environment and societies, with tremendous consequences for vulnerable communities of India, particularly indigenous tribes of North-east India. The complex link between environmental change and its effects on the tribal culture of Assam, a state in northeastern India, is explored in this abstract. Tribal people in Assam have an extensive heritage of culture tightly linked with the natural world, rendering them particularly vulnerable to the disturbances brought on by shifting climate trends. The research explores the many facets of Assam’s climate change. It explores how it may affect several factors of tribal culture, such as traditional means of subsistence, cultural practices, social systems, and religious practices. Tribal agricultural practices are disrupted by changing patterns of rainfall, increasing temperatures, and an increase in adverse weather conditions, which causes a shortage of food and water. The study emphasizes how climate-related occurrences are forcing tribal communities to move, which is eroding their traditional lands, community cohesiveness, and distinctive identities. Tribal populations frequently experience pressure to merge into mainstream culture as a result of challenges to their livelihood, which puts the safeguarding of their distinctive cultural legacy at risk. This abstract highlights the urgent requirement for comprehensive policies that incorporate local knowledge, community involvement and scientific know-how to address the interdependent issues of climate change and the safeguarding of tribal culture in Assam and other comparable regions of

India. In the face of climate change, collective efforts that enable tribal people to adapt while respecting their distinctive history can help to create a more sustainable and culturally varied future.

Keywords: *Climate change; tribal culture; North East India; indigenous communities; Adaptation; cultural heritage; traditional livelihoods.*

- ❖ Sunanda Yadav, C. (2022). “**Contribution and Practices of Green pilgrimage for sustainable tourism in India**”. *Multi-Disciplinary Journal*, Vol. 1 (1), pp. 1-7.

A pilgrimage is a sacred journey, an act of religious devotion undertaken for a spiritual purpose to holy sites. Pilgrims are different from tourists for they travel for spiritual reasons, not just to relax or for fun. Pilgrimage is a search for meaning, purpose, values of life or truth. It has been the tradition for thousands of years in all religions, up until the present times. Today we are witnessing global ecological crisis and nature is suffering in ways we have never experienced before. In India we see this phenomenon significantly. Once, where nature was abundant, we now see bare hills, polluted rivers, heaps of untreated waste, the receding of wild forests and the subsequent loss of wildlife. All of these bring trouble for human communities including lack of clean water, air and other natural resources, and unforeseen natural disasters such as floods and landslides. The environment, in many holy places and pilgrimage centres is getting adversely affected by large incursion of visitors. In today’s world, consumerism has corrupted pilgrimages. In ancient days, a pilgrimage was considered as a holy journey which was full of odds and difficulties. Introduction of comfortable and improved means of transportation has enhanced the accessibility of the tough religious sites which has led to adverse effects such as increased dumping of filth

and waste. The religious observances have unknowingly affected the natural forests. This calls for an urgent need to bring a shift from the concept of just a simple “pilgrimage” to “green pilgrimage”. This paper has made an attempt to highlight the significance of green pilgrimage and its beneficial effects on the environment of the present day. Green pilgrimage is the need of the hour. It is essentially the sustainable behaviour of green pilgrimage that will show the means to protect the environment by changing the mindset of the travelling pilgrims.

Keywords: *Consumerism; accessibility; ecological balance, religious observances; green pilgrimage.*

- ❖ Brinda Jegatheesan. (2019). “**Influence of Cultural and Religious Factors on Attitudes Toward Animals**”. *Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy* (Fifth Edition), Academic Press, Chapter 4, Pages 43-49.

Cultural values and norms get transmitted from one generation to another, and the process ensures continuity of traditions within a group of people. Acquisition of a culture is a learned phenomenon that shapes the customs, beliefs and behavioural conventions of society as a whole. However, it is noted that the above is related to a group of people, and care must be exercised not to stereotype any one person based on his/her culture. This is because an individual’s “culture” is further influenced by many social factors (e.g., socioeconomic status, social stressors and immigration experience). The same also applies in determining a person’s attitude and behaviour toward animals. This chapter discusses the role culture and religion play in influencing attitudes toward animals and briefly presents a culturally responsive framework for animal-assisted intervention.

Keywords: *Acculturation; cultural attitudes towards animals; cultural continuity; human-animal interaction.*

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