

South Asian Monkey Colouring Book Workshop

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This is a Report of two workshops conducted at two different venues for two groups of kids (60 and 26) of approximately the same age group (7 to 15). The objectives and tasks were the same, e.g. to explain the meaning of biodiversity by describing valuable life-services provided that makes life on Earth possible. Learning the scientific name for monkey was another objective as was learning the four basic groups of primates. The 'South Asian Monkey Colouring Book' was the centre of both workshops.

The first workshop took place at Pratham Education Centre in Mysore on 19 May 07. The session started with an activity called "my favorite animal and why". Many of these underprivileged children listed out the names of domestic animals but when they were asked about "monkey", they together exclaimed "Oh! We know."

To learn behavioral actions of monkeys, we played the "monkey see, monkey do" game.

A number of important points were taught with the help of the Primates in Peril packet, such as meaning of primate, meaning of biodiversity, where primates are found, what are the different types of primates, where they live and what they eat, how there are different from us, which are close relatives of gorillas and chimps and why they are threatened with extinction.

At the end of this session children were able to say the names of four primates very confidently. Finally children and teacher were allowed to select their favourite monkey page to color. While coloring they learned more about monkeys' diet in the wild. Workshop 2 took place at Mani School of Art, Sarswathipuram, Mysore on 21 May 07 and lasted for two and a half hours. Twenty six children participated.

This Group of children were very much eager to start coloring. So, soon after a briefing session they were allowed to do so. Soon, this above-average level children started asking questions beyond my Imagination! Most of their questions were related to monkey's canine teeth, color, tail, food and habitat.

My teacher's mind started working overtime here. I took this situation as an opportunity to interact with these students to meet my objectives. In Kannada "kothi" means monkey and is a commonly used word to accuse an irritating or very naughty child. This coloring activity inspired them to enact a small skit from their textbook called 'cap seller and the monkey'. It was a very creative and funny play which the children enjoyed.

At the end the children were given posters as a token of appreciation. Soon after the program, I could observe the children sharing what they had



An under privileged child colouring a page from the colouring book

learned with their parents outside. 'Primates in Peril' tool kit was very supportive with its flash cards, masks and all the necessary visual aids to impart knowledge in better way.

For both workshops children promised to save primates and thanked Zoo Outreach Organisation for providing the wonderful coloring books to them. Posters were distributed as a token of appreciation. Over all, the workshops were extremely successful. All the participants enjoyed coloring and learnt a lot about primates about which they were not aware. For the teachers it was a fun way of teaching and they planned to implement this concept in their own centers. Finally, I thank Appenheul Primate Park, Netherlands, and the ZOO team for their great work and kind support.



A participant wearing mask, holding a sticker and the coloured page

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