

Principals' Orientation Programme held at National Zoological Park on 5th May 2004 – A Report

Shika Nalin *

National Zoological Park has been organising teacher's orientation programme twice every year for the past ten years now. Initially the programme used to be for pre-service teachers, but now it is focusing on in-service teachers. The main objective of the programme is to impart necessary skills to the teachers for amalgamating zoo visits into the curriculum and using the zoo as an educational resource.

Although the teachers appreciated the programme, they were apprehensive of the authorities attitude. It was, therefore, felt that orienting only teachers wasn't sufficient. To bring about a meaningful change, the higher authorities like Principals and policy makers in governing bodies also need to be involved. Thus, on 5th May 2004 a Principal's Orientation Programme was organised exclusively for the principals of Kendriya Vidyalayas wherein Mr. Rajbir Singh, Dy. Commissioner, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan was invited as Chief Guest. Commissioner, Kendriya Vidyalaya took keen interest and sent letters to all schools under his jurisdiction. As a result, twenty principals took part in the programme.

After formally welcoming the chief guest and all present, Mr. B.S. Bonal, Director, NZP apprised everyone about the management and objectives of N.Z.P. This topic made them familiar with the zoo and its efforts to save wildlife. The Director emphasised the need of having this programme and invited the principals to join hands with NZP to achieve the goals of the country in conserving wildlife.

Special invitee for the day, Mr. Brij Kishor Gupta, Scientific Officer, Central Zoo Authority gave a talk to the principals on the government directives to zoos in the area conservation education. He appraised everyone with the present scenario and gave insight into future perspective.

In the next presentation, Ms. Shikha Nalin, Education Assistant of the Park, gave the principals an overview of the previous programmes that were organised for the teachers. She emphasised on how schools should conduct a zoo visit and how it is actually conducted. She explained expectations of NZP from schools highlighting areas where mutual collaboration is possible and put forth trouble areas that impede successful implementation of the school programme like teacher-student ratio, pre-visit training and

attitude of teachers and students etc. She invited principals to reach a consensus for the betterment of children who will be future custodians of our country as well as wildlife.

Mr. Rajbir Singh, Dy. Commissioner was then invited to inform everyone of the government's guidelines in respect to environment education in schools and Kendriya Vidyalaya's plans to implement the same. He stressed how schools run by the Sangathan are striving hard to make their children cognizant with the current problems faced by the environment today. He assured Sangathan's full co-operation for implementation of the school programme. Following this, the principals were invited to put forth their views and an open discussion took place. The principals explained their difficulties and discussed possibilities that could be workable. Together the zoo authorities and the principals tried to find ways to help each other and this resulted in reaching a mutual consensus on teacher-student ratio, pre-visit training etc. Principals gave several suggestions to the zoo for developing an effective programme for students too.

In the next phase of the programme Sh R. A. Khan and Ms. Shikha Nalin took the principals around the zoo, to give them a "Feel of the Zoo". After showing the major exhibits and giving them an idea of the practical difficulties the teachers face with more number of students in such a large area, the principals were taken to the veterinary hospital, where Veterinary Officer, Mr. N. Paneer Selvam showed facilities available at the zoo hospital while discussing various techniques of hand-rearing, and giving them a demonstration of the tranquillisation process. They were then taken to Commissary and given an idea of how a scientifically balanced and nutritious diet is prepared every day in the morning for over 1200 inhabitants of Delhi Zoo.

The principals appreciated the programme and efforts done by the Park for conservation of the species. In their vote of thanks the participants said that they were better-informed individuals and promised to take all initiatives to help the zoo education programme blossom.

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PROGRAMME FOR PRINCIPALS - MAY 2004

10.00 am	Welcome and bouquet presentation to Chief Guest
10.05 am	Management & objectives of NZP by Director, B.S. Bonal
10.20 am	Government and Environmental Education, Brij Kishore Gupta, CZA Officer
10.50 am	Problems when educational institutions visit the zoo, Shikha Nalin, Education Assistant
11.10 am	Role of Environment Education in zoos, Sh. Rajbir Singh, D.C., Kendriya Vidyalaya
11.30 a.m.	Discussion
12.00 noon	Feel of the zoo by Sh. R.A. Khan & Ms. Shikha Nalin
1.30 p.m.	Lunch