

Empowering the rural youth through yoga and sports

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TIRUCHI: With the twin objective of enhancing the green cover and empowering the rural masses, particularly youths, through meditation and sports activities, a special 'Rural rejuvenation project' was implemented in three select villages near Tiruchi.

The five-month long project - jointly implemented by the Isha Yoga Centre, Coimbatore and M/s Suzlon, a leading manufacturer of towers for wind mills - went down well with the villagers of Vazhavanthankottai, Tirunedunkulam and Solagampatti.

The youths were sensitised to the need for protecting the earth from global warming. Realising the achievement of

the Isha Yoga Centre, the villagers extended their maximum cooperation for planting the saplings. Against the target of 20,000 saplings, the local residents planted as many as 35,000 sapling, most of them shade-giving and timber-value species. A co-ordinator, Murugaiyan, said that the villages were selected to enhance the green cover in the Thuvakudi region under the 'Project Green Hands' of the Isha Yoga Foundation.

An intensive training on yoga was imparted to the youths of these villages. "There was an overwhelming response to the project," says the Project Organiser, K. Joseph Regis. Through simple steps, the villagers, including the aged persons, were guided in to the

'Pranayamam' and other fundamental 'asanams.' The sessions were framed in such an interesting manner that the villagers came to the training centre without any break. Training on sports events formed yet another highlight of the project.

In all, 15 teams were formed and young boys and girls underwent a rigorous practice in volley-ball and throw-ball events respectively.

"In fact, the valediction of the project was marked by special sports events of these games," says a resource-person Murugaiyan.

The General Manager, Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited, P. Nainar; the Assistant General Manager, J. Shankaran, who spoke at the valediction

of the project, commended the efforts taken by M/s Suzlon and the Isha Foundation in shaping the character of rural youths through sports. Apart from ensuring green cover for these villages,

The project also brought about integration among the local residents.

The village panchayat presidents, S. Kamaraj of Tirunedunkulam; V.S. Velusamy of Vazhavanthankottai, in their feed-back about the project, said that the yoga session had brought about a positive outlook among the villagers. Training in sports events had created a sense of self-confidence among the youths.

Mr. Nainar gave away the prizes to the winners in sports events.