Students take part enthusiastically in green campaign

Staff Reporter

COIMBATORE: After reading in a newspaper clipping the benefits of trees, V. Senthil Kumar wanted to plant saplings to increase green cover. The Class IX student of the Madurahamalai Devasthanam Higher Secondary School got his first chance last year at the Green School Movement programme at his school and he raised a few saplings.

This year the boy has got his second chance on Friday when the Isha Foundation returned to the school to train student-representatives of over 45 schools to raise seedlings, nurture them and manage pests. “This year I plan to raise as many saplings as possible for distribution. I will also take a couple of saplings home.”

He is already into the job, having muddied his hands while filling eco-friendly plastic pouches with earth. “I should have packed at least 100 covers,” he says on his way to the lunch.

Classmates K. Gowthami and M. Haritha of PSGR Krishnammal Higher Secondary School are equally enthusiastic. Members of the School’s Eco Club, the girls say they want to do their bit to increase the green cover.

Swami Rabhya of Isha Foundation says that volunteers from the organisation are training students in preparing the right mix of earth, processing seeds, raising seedlings, nurturing the saplings and protecting the young plants from pests.

The volunteers showed the students and teacher-coordinators short films on tree protection.

They then led the students to the field for the practical session.

The Swami says that the Friday’s programme was the last of the four-phase ‘Green School Movement’ to involve children to increase green cover. The Foundation, with support from Suzlon Foundation and the School Education Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu, has conducted similar programmes in three schools, where student-representatives of over 120 institutions participated. Those students who were trained would share their knowledge with the students and raise saplings at the schools. The Foundation on its part has given each school 2,000 plastic covers for the saplings and seeds of seven varieties of trees. A few days from now the schools will begin the process of raising the saplings, which the students will plant in the school, take home and distribute to friends and neighbours.

He says that the seeds the Foundation distributed were of Mandharai, Poovarasu, Manjal Kondrai, Vagai, Kumil Thoku, Marutham, etc. It has also asked the schools to add a few more, if they were interested.