

# Greening minds.....from schools to communities....



Cotton tree  
(*Bombax ceiba*)

To ensure long term sustainable growth of the region, it is very important that the local dwellers have knowledge of the environment around them. A realization that regions environmental assets have become problems and a requisite set of skills is required to deal with these problems to initiate action at a local level.

A comprehensive environment education program based on the three pillars of sustainability namely economic, social and environmental can act as a catalyst for the Initiatives that can be taken by community to better their own environment. Schools and school children's are doorways to the community. A well designed environment action program not only facilitates knowledge from the schools to the community but also intergenerational transfer of traditional knowledge and practices.

The schools selected for the program are located in and around the Shirval and Khandala town. 650 students from 10 schools are involved in this environment action programme. The training workshop and sessions on making of clay Ganesh idols were conducted in the month of August 2014

The Ganesh festival entails worshipping of Ganesh idol on a large scale, both individually and collectively. The idols are very often made from plaster of paris to make them attractive, this however has adverse effects on the environment as they release harmful and toxic chemicals during immersion, raising the acidity of water which kills aquatic life. The festivals need to be celebrated differently today and should be in sync with present situation.

To this effect a workshop was organized on 21<sup>st</sup> of August 2014 at Sushilatai Paranjape Vidyalaya, Atit for training students in making of clay Ganesh idols. 100 students from 10 schools of Shirval and Khandala talukas participated in the workshop. This workshop was guided by the prof. Deshpande along with his students from Bharati Vidyapeeth, College of Fine Arts, Pune.



Glimpses of the Workshop

## Project team

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Students came forward with a resolve to avoiding use of plastic and harmful chemicals and enthusiastically made Ganesh idols themselves in this session. Students enjoyed working with clay and designing the idols of various shapes and sizes. They eagerly wanted to take the idols home to their parents ..... who we are sure will appreciate this effort!!



*Students involved in the making of clay Ganesh idols*



*Ganesh idols of various shapes and sizes made by the students and teachers as well*



“Nowadays most of the Ganesh Statues are made of plaster of paris and harmful chemicals which adversely affect the environment. The training provided a great opportunity to make ecofriendly Ganeshas. We are more than happy to celebrate the ecofriendly Ganesh festival through ecofriendly idols.-- **Mr. Talekar( Sushilatai Paranjape Vidyalaya, Atit)**

“ Making clay Ganeshas was real fun too. The best part was that we could take these idols to our home . Moreover we can train our neighbors and friends in this art of making clay Ganeshas.-- **Students ( Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Vidyalays, Naigaon)**