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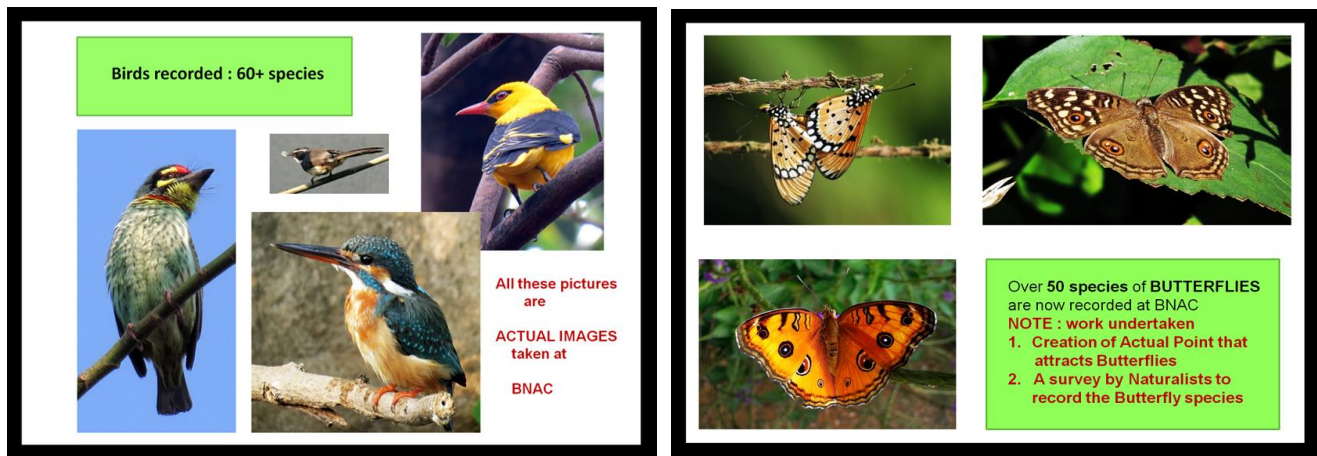
PARTNERING WITH THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON BIODIVERSITY 2011-2020 – ACTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT





BNAC as an Official Partner of the UN Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020

Bhavan's Nature and Adventure Centre (BNAC) has been an Official Partner of the **United Nations Decade on Biodiversity** 2011-2020 since its onset in 2011. It is one of 18 Partners in India, and one among the only two located in Mumbai. BNAC, as an NGO, by now an important example of an urban wildlife refuge, has been active in the field of nature and environment awareness-raising, protection and promotion of the biodiversity, and education for environmental sustainability, mostly among the youth. As such, it **shares and supports the UNDB's vision**, and hopes, that "by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people".



Plantation of 300 flora species resulting into attraction for Birds, Butterflies, Reptiles & others in MUMBAI CITY



Working towards social change - Aims and Activities of BNAC

Bhavan's Nature and Adventure Centre stands out as a niche of beautiful greenery with a serene water body spread over two acres of land, sheltering and nurturing many forms of flora and fauna. What stood as a trash area for dumping garbage including non-biodegradable waste for over a decade, is now **a mini sanctuary to over 300 species of plants, trees, insects, birds (60+ species), butterflies (50+ species), animals, offering a biodiversity rich eco-system right in the middle of a 22 million-crowded metropolitan Mumbai. Over the last four years, more than 40,000 school age children have visited the centre.** Knowledge and practical training on protecting and conserving our planet and all forms of life is freely imparted to light up the minds of the younger generation. Centre works at building a responsible and compassionate mindset for the youth so that they can work and contribute diligently to conserve and beautify this planet in order to combat global warming. The adventure activities aim at building strength in children and youth by teaching them to harness their energy in a meaningful way. Here endurance over aggression forms the base of a strong body and mind. Anyone who visits Mumbai, the financial capital of India with its overwhelming pollution, traffic and crowd of people, get a pleasant surprise when they enter BNAC which is located ten minutes away from Andheri station. Here their lungs are treated with fresh air, their eyes with enthralling greenery, their ears with bird-sounds, their hands with providing care for birds & animals or planting saplings and their hearts with compassion for all living beings.



🌿 **Five years in the UN
Decade on Biodiversity
– BNAC’s support to the
Strategic Plan for
Biodiversity 2011-2020
and the Aichi
Biodiversity Targets**

Before actual Plantation of Saplings is carried out, students being given demonstration & training on how to plant saplings

**Enriched with 300
Plant Species**

Half-way down the line, Bhavan’s Nature and Adventure Centre has worked hard to promote the vision and mission of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. By reaching out to communities and especially younger generations, to teach them respect, value and interest for the flora and fauna surrounding them, BNAC’s work has been geared towards promoting the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and in particular the ones under *Strategic Goal A - Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society.*

ANIMAL RESCUE

Hundreds of birds and animals have been rescued and rehabilitated at BNAC. These include kites, owls, mynahs, turtles, squirrels, an emu, etc.

Emphasis is on wild animals as there are many NGOs dealing in domestic animals like dogs, cats, ferals, pigeons and so on. The rescue team is deployed after attending calls and the injured animals are brought to BNAC.



Over the years, BNAC has reached out to cross-sections of the community and people from all walks of life, and its work has been in line with **Target 1 – By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.**

RELEASE & REHABILITATION

Animals brought up by humans can not easily survive in the wild. However, our volunteers, with the help of experts in the field, release and rehabilitate animals back into their habitats. Number of animals like Kites, Owls, Pigeons, Parakeets, Egrets, Squirrels, Monkeys etc. have been successfully released or rehabilitated back in to the wild. Watching them free is a reward in itself.



Night heron



Cattle Egret



Asian koel

OUR SUCCESS STORIES

Hundreds of animals and birds have been rescued here at BNAC. They came in as injured and abandoned babies & with the hard work and dedication of our committed team, they grew up into healthy adults. Once old enough, they were set free into the wild to take life head on. Working day in and day out, BNAC prides itself of several success stories and journeys of the young feeble babies transforming into strong self dependent adults.



In the city of Mumbai, nature & wildlife lover volunteers have spread out as a chain. Injured animals, babies fallen from nests and such abandoned creatures in need arrive at the centre which require nurture, care & healing. Volunteers are trained at the Centre and they look after, treat and help re-habilitate such living beings setting them free after they are fit.

BNAC stands humbly and peacefully successful in touching, nurturing, treating, fostering and releasing, re-habilitating various forms of life: those that were the lowest on the food chain to those who were blessed with intellect and knowledge.

Education

People irrespective of their age, caste, colour, creed, religion or status in society were taught to coexist peacefully with nature without depleting or destroying its natural resources. Further the idea of nurturing all forms of life and carefully using natural resources without completely exhausting them was constantly emphasized on.

Education to under-privileged children of Abhyudaya - SPJIMR



Community Participation & Involvement

Students from different Colleges are regularly invited to observe, learn and they are trained as Volunteers in various eco-restoration activities. Skill development of the youth & empowerment of the economically humble sections is an integral activity woven into environmentally important areas of sustainable development at BNAC.

While emphasizing on Environment Education, Nature Conservation Awareness, enriching Biodiversity, it has formed and run a successful Animal Rescue programme as well. Many volunteers (often from economically very

modest backgrounds) have been trained – enabling youngsters to earn pocket money while learning and promoting eco-friendly life-style.



A Tribal Trail was created through mannequin exhibits of various Tribes. The theme focuses on sustaining on bare minimum necessities in the present era of excessive commodity-oriented life-style, prodding a simple way of life. Groups of volunteers were trained to create tribal statues from plastic water-bottles, metal coke-pepsi tins and such other non-biodegradable waste. Involving youth in creative, contributive & environmentally, socially positive activity is an additionally encouraging outcome of this project. Youth from financially less privileged background often benefit from 'learn & earn' internship-like schemes offered by the Centre. They are provided training for various skills so that they could be employed by similar eco-environment or nature-adventure related organizations. The skill set empowers them with dignity and they in turn helped us maintain and develop various life forms. They return home with knowledge and part-time employment which not only benefits their families but the society and environment too.



Sparrows thriving at BNAC, whereas becoming locally extinct in other parts of urban areas

The centre has reached out to various target groups:

Students, Families, Management students & Corporate groups, Social Groups, Senior citizens, Women groups, Underprivileged sections and many such varied people are consciously invited to participate in programmes appropriately customized for them.

They participate in sessions on animal rescue and care, tree plantation, medicinal plants, inter-dependence & web of life, compost and vermi-culture, growing vegetable garden, apart from various adventure sports, arts and crafts using natural resources and so on. At times, grandparents enjoy sipping on herbal tea, taking a quiet walk on the nature trail, the parents choose to accompany their children in most of the activities while the children gleefully opt for rock climbing, flying fox, tyre walk, commando net, burma bridge and many more adventures. Animal interaction continues to be a common favourite.

Elite B-Schools and Employee groups of Corporate also avail of training programmes on Leadership & Success at the Centre. They go back with eco-friendly perspective over and above the out-bound strategies and orientation. They participate in strength and endurance building activities, observe the biodiversity in our center and many a times decide to implement it even at their own offices by keeping small potted plants. They have been influenced to organize corporate tree plantation drives.

The elderly who love nature share their wisdom, observe happily, enjoy & interact promoting Yoga & Healthy life-style including day to day Herbal uses home remedies, organic diet, Ayurveda, discussing Nature in Ancient Indian Culture and promising to pass on a legacy of traditional knowledge to the younger generation.



The history and trajectory of BNAC is also intrinsically connected to **Target 5 - By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.**

Years ago a simple decision to retain this serene area as a green heaven has come as a blessing to the insects, plants, birds, animals and human beings. The result was more than what we expected. Entry to learning and working in the field of conservation and biodiversity is no longer restricted to any particular certificate.

We stand humble but our trees stand tall and proud. Our wild birds nest in them. We receive saplings and food grains as contributions from people who visit the Centre. We have conserved a well that supports aquatic life and extended a request to support the conservation of a neighboring pond which is being welcomed by all institutes in Bhavans campus.



Looking ahead to 2020!

Big steps have been made across the world since 2011, to bring biodiversity and its sustainability to the forefront, as well as to create a genuine understanding of everyone's responsibility towards environmental sustainability. These have built hopes for the future!

Since 2011, Bhavan's Nature and Adventure Centre has increased its reach and its pool of supporters. Over the last four years, more than 40,000 school age children have visited the centre and left with a new set of values they have to potential and the energy to spread. Schools, learning centres, organizations,

individuals, have spread the word about BNAC in Mumbai, and India at large – the centre is now listed on several travel platforms as a must-visit environmental initiative in Mumbai – with a direct impact on its sustainability, in turn translating into further investment in the environment. BNAC has also developed a large support base of more than 100 volunteers, young people who have decided that our vision shall be their own, while they pursue their own careers.

Partnerships :

BNAC has always been open to forge tie-ups and explore joint strengths to work towards spreading the awareness and action on protection and enhancement of biodiversity and wildlife conservation. It has hosted Prakruti Festival since 6 years consecutively, having visitation of 10 to 15 thousand beneficiaries exposed to workshops and innumerable programmes on Nature. (total numbers of 6 years)

Among others, **Bhavans Nature Adventure Centre** has been successful in building long lasting working relationship with organizations such as **Maharashtra Nature Park, Indian National Kennel Club, Arts Interactions, West Zone Cultural Centre of Government of India, National Centre for Performing Arts and Excel Industries** with in the little span of its existence. An Annual 3-day 'Nature Festival' hosted here around January attracts over 10,000 visitors to explore Environment protection programmes.

The **UN Decade on Biodiversity** will end in 2020, and still has some (successful!) years ahead. For us, at the Bhavan's Nature and Adventure Centre, the hope is to see the trajectory that has been ours over the past five years continues over the coming ones, and to further the mutually beneficial relationship between communities and their environment. There is still a lot of work ahead – and the environment will certainly need its champions for a few more years – but the team is growing bigger and stronger!

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