

Green laurels for Daramdin Sr. Sec. School, makes it to the Changemaker list of CSE

Government Senior Secondary School Daramdin in west Sikkim has made it to the 'Changemakers' list of Center for Science and Environment's (CSE) Gobar Times Green School Awards for the year 2008.

The awards, instituted by CSE, are being given out since 2006 under its Green School Programme (GSP). This year, CSE has increased the number of categories under which it confers the awards. Thus, while 'New School' includes institutions which joined the Programme for the first time, the category 'Changemaker' is for schools which have been with the programme for over a year and have driven change within their campuses and neighborhoods.

St Paul's School, in Delhi's Hauz Khas, got the first position in the 'Changemakers' category of CSE's Gobar Times Green Schools Awards. In 2007, St Paul's had received mild applause for having done an efficient audit of its natural resources and their management. It was harvesting rainwater, reusing its wastewater, biocomposting, and managing solid waste on the school's premises. In 2008, the school added a unique initiative to its list of achievements. It started advocating the use of public and eco-friendly transport as matter of policy. Earlier, personal vehicles were the preferred mode of mobility for commuting to and from the school. In 2008, with active cooperation from neighboring residents, the school went all out for promoting its school transport (CNG buses), cycling and walking as alternative modes.

Among the other schools that have made it to the 'Change makers' list for the year are pinnacle school in Panchsheel Enclave (New Delhi); Salwan Public School, Gurgaon; Delhi Public School, Rohini (Delhi); Kerala Public School, Mango (Jamshedpur); and Government Senior Secondary School, Daramdin, West Sikkim.

Under the Green Schools Programme, schools across India carry out rigorous self-audit on environmental practices within their own premises, following a set of guidelines outlined in a manual published by CSE, titled How Green is my School? A do-it your-self manual. The schools use the manual in their environmental studies programmes and as an activity in the eco-clubs.

Almost all the participating and short listed schools this year have shown exemplary performance in terms of managing their water, wastes and mobility. About 90 per cent of them have installed rainwater harvesting systems; 100 per cent are reusing all or some of their water. Ninety-five per cent of the schools recycle paper and compost organic waste; 90 per cent of the waste is recycled. And 50 per cent of schools have shown a marked shift to modes of mass transport and bicycles ect for commuting.

The programme is rapidly catching the imagination of schools across the country. From 1,200 in 2006, GSP is now out and covering 5,500 schools across the country. The rural-urban ratio has almost tripled. Of the 20 schools short listed in 2006, only three were rural or semi-urban; this number has climbed since then and stands at eight this year. Also, more than 50 pre cent schools from 2006 have repeated the audit in 2008.

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