



What is the Green Schools Programme?

The field of environment education is dogged by a very fundamental contradiction. While everyone, everywhere, asserts the importance of 'learning to live sustainably', environment remains a peripheral issue in the formal schooling system. It continues to be viewed more as an extracurricular activity and less as a subject with a priority position in the national curriculum. This is true not only in India but worldwide as well. Fortunately, it has not deterred many talented, creative and farsighted educators from experimenting and evolving extremely innovative teaching methods, materials and practices.

The novelty of CSE's Green Schools Programme lies in the fact that it moves beyond theories and textbooks and concentrates solely on 'doing'. It is an environmental education programme directed to subtly sensitizing students to the environment through hands-on and thought-provoking activities. It is also an environment management system that audits, through students, the consumption of natural resources within school campuses and helps schools become good environmental managers by deploying pragmatic solutions to reduce wastage of precious resources.

WHAT IS A GREEN SCHOOL?



A green school is a resource-efficient building—one that uses little water, optimizes energy efficiency, minimizes waste-generation, catches and recycles water and provides healthier space for its occupants as compared to a conventional building.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ADOPT THE GREEN SCHOOLS PROGRAMME?

Adopting the programme does not mean that the most complex technological and scientific problems that our planet faces today will be fixed instantly. It is too big a task. But it will

- Spur the growth of a more environmentally aware and responsible generation of citizens;
- Equip resourceful teachers to foster environmental literacy;
- Help every member of the school community understand the scope and significance of his or her role in the sustainable use of natural resources within the school campus;
- Nudge everyone to get on with the job.

BENEFITS OF AUDITING

- The Green Schools Programme helps move beyond words, jargons and intentions to practices that CSE believes in. It benchmarks a school's performance as environmental managers. The audit measures impact and motivates participants to work towards change.
- The monitoring process is participatory and transparent. It encourages teachers to convert audit tasks into assignments for students. The initiative-based tasks also test students' skills of communication and analysis.
- It helps schools record their available resources and trains students to collect information systematically to feed and ease up the analysis process.
- The analysis of post-audit information can be used by a network of schools or by city or state governments for a comparative evaluation so that best practices can be shared.
- The audit equips school managements to skillfully manage their available resources for optimum utilization and become Green Schools.



Outcomes

The GSP Programme

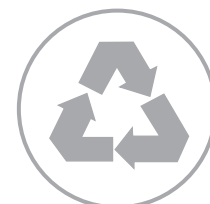
- Empowers students to use natural resources in a responsible and an efficient manner and practice effective and sustainable methods that will become a way of life;
- Provides credible data for Central and state governments for long-term policy change in school infrastructure/curriculum to help schools deal with dwindling resources and become resource-efficient;
- Help, with proper governance, all schools become Green Schools over a period of time.



WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS?

The GSP manual has been divided into two sections. Section I profiles the school, with a focus on water and sanitation and waste. Section II provides suggestive lesson plans for teachers on each of the topics covered in the manual: air, energy, food, land, water and waste.

Water and sanitation and waste will remain the focus area for GSP Audit. Water is one of the most stressed resources on our planet. Severe pollution of surface-water sources (rivers, lakes and wells), depletion and contamination of groundwater, recurring droughts, and large-scale mismanagement of water and wastewater have combined to lead to a situation where experts have begun warning of imminent 'wars over water'.



Schools and their students can lead from the front in turning the tide. We want students to

discover the forgotten practice of rainwater harvesting and learn to conserve water responsibly.

The GSP environmental audit is available online, and it is mandatory for participating schools to submit the audit reports online. Schools can submit the data by using their computers and tablets as the audit portal is system-responsive. The GSP mobile app is also available, and schools in areas that have limited internet connectivity can complete the audit via mobile app. Teachers can download the GSP app on their mobiles and as and when the students collect the information for the different sections, the teachers can upload the information on their mobiles at their convenience.

Submitting the data online will make the exercise easier for schools and, more importantly, save paper! The online version, including the mobile app, also has features to upload photographs, certificates and other supporting documentation to demonstrate the school's environment performance.

GSP has an analytics platform to track the environmental performance of schools. With the data collected, we will shift from counting inputs and outputs to helping schools measure sustainable impact over a period of five years. The data-driven indicators will help participating schools track the environmental value of their work and understand their own impact within and outside their school premises. The environmental dashboard will provide schools the baseline to quantify their year-on-year environmental accomplishments with a richer, story-driven measure of impact. If schools fall short of the standards, they will be guided to improve their environmental footprints. After all, Rome wasn't built in a day!

With the audit now available online, analytics will:

- Help compare the performance of schools in various districts and states, as well as measure the overall performance of schools in India;
- Help schools plug existing gaps to minimize the use of natural resources;
- Help get accurate data;
- Have every school participate in the audit over the next five years and help them become Green Schools by Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary in 2019.

The GSP rating will be valid for three years.