

---

## **CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENT CONGRESS-2017 on 'Environment and Sustainable River Basin Management Basin'**

*21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2017, School of Sustainability*

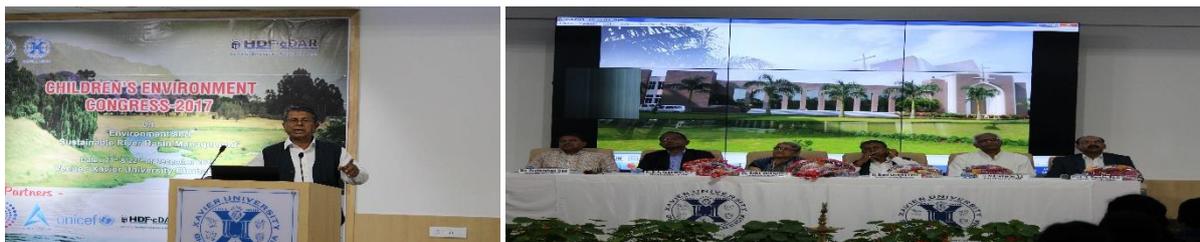
---



Children are the rivers of light and life. when they confluence, they create an ocean of light illuminating the entire planet. This special event of, for and by the children aims at creating this ocean at Xavier University, Bhubaneswar, So that they begin to imagine and internalize the life of rivers, what they do for humanity and what humanity does for them. With this objective School of Sustainability, Xavier University, Bhubaneswar once again partners with Human Development Foundation –Centre for Development Action & Research (HDF-cDAR) to enable children to be the initiators of protecting and preserving our river basins.

Children's Environment Congress has hosted students from all the districts of Odisha to address the issues and contemplate the way forward by looking at 'Environment & Sustainable River Basin Management'. This event is a culmination of series of events/competitions organized at cluster, block, district and state level.

CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENT CONGRESS 2017 - is a part of Odisha Environment Congress (OEC). Looking at SDG 6 "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all"- this event creates a platform for children to Imagine, Believe and Achieve through expert talks, activities and competitions to appreciate the life of rivers, what they do and what we can do for them.



Rivers in India have not been treated as geographical entities but as life giving gods and goddesses. Rivers hold tremendous potential, they thrive life systems and they treasure memories. But today the world is running so fast for development and growth that the life of rivers seems to be dwindling due to global warming, unseasonal rainfall, long agonizing droughts and what not. The critical question now arises who is responsible – we, the people or the legal system?

The answer could be both. A country's growth is defined by the potential of its children, of its youth. Children are the torch bearers of humanity and this world. They are the future agents of change. There lies an intrinsic relationship between children and rivers to give birth to new cultures and civilizations. To showcase this thought, Children's Environment Congress lightens and provides a platform for these children to be aware of our environmental crisis and mainstream sustainability.



In today's scenario, scarcity of water is a well-known issue. With the growth of population, demand for land and to top it all climate change are affecting nature. Our rivers are drying up leading to irreversible disastrous consequences. Awareness needs to be created among everyone that children are our future. Children's Environment Congress creates a dais for small children to showcase and recognise their innermost potential and talents and also empower themselves through the knowledge of environmental issues and to tackle with the same with renewed ferocity. It aims at incorporating sustainable practices in children at a very young age.



Children's Environment Congress 2017 had many dignitaries who shared their experience to inspire and light a fire in these young children. The inauguration ceremony was graced by Sri. Badri Narayan Patra, Minister of school and mass education, Govt. of Odisha., Dr. Seba Mohapatra, Former Director,

Health Services, Govt. Of Odisha Mr. Sudarshan Das, Organising Secretary, OEC., Prof. Dr. Fr. Paul Fernandes, S.J , Former Vice Chancellor, Xavier University, Bhubaneswar, Fr. E.A Augustine S.J, Registrar, Xavier University, Bhubaneswar, Prof. Dr. S. Peppin, Former Dean, XSOS.

There were many competitions that were conducted namely, debate, drawing, creative writing, essay and song. The topics were based on the core theme, "Environment and sustainable river basin management." There were 280 students who participated in all competitions that were held parallelly and 405 attendees at the congress. There was a video that showcased the B.Sc Sustainable Development programme and the initiatives undertaken by School of Sustainability, Xavier University, Bhubaneswar, of how education and children can be agents of change. There has to be changes in the system else it will be very late to make amends.



The competitions were followed by deliberative discourses under themes such as "Children and Rivers", "Insight into the life of rivers" etc. These sessions were followed by the presentation given by ConXerv committee of School of Sustainability in where the initiative of introducing the Wipro Earthian to the students and their respective schools was undertaken towards invoking the idea of sustainability in the minds of students. The committee made a pictorial power point presentation for students to make them understand the concept of sustainability and how they can implement it through Wipro Earthian. The students were briefed about the core objective of Wipro Earthian and how they can be part of the same. Another presentation named "Seeds for Life" was made by a budding NGO Upsana which aims at enriching and uplifting the quality of life promoting sustainable plantation replenishing the vegetation cover in the urban areas and on the banks of Mahanadi River to preserve the flow of river. A new concept of "seed balls" was shared with the students which was highly appreciated.



The valedictory ceremony was graced by the Waterman of India, Mr. Rajendra Singh shared his views by stating that "Water is my life, water is my happiness and it is my teacher". He asked the young and dynamic children to be like water. Give, keep and make life beautiful.

The closing ceremony was then followed by a cultural evening named Tarang 2.0 – Tarang of joy, Tarang of hope, Tarang of Life!



The second day was happening with sports events like tug of war, 100 mtrs running race, lemon and spoon race etc. In which both students and teachers participated and had fun.



The message drawn from the Congress was to empower the children to take the onus and responsibility of the earth today and to fight against all environmental concerns that is burning the earth, with the clarion call of sustainable development. Children’s Environment Congress, hosted by School of Sustainability, is imparting and will continue to implant a sense of sustainable living practice and an attitude in the minds of children, in the spirit of magis.