



Tree's Company

The recent Sapling Exhibition in Chennai has a message for you and MÉ: plant a tree and protect those we have

We all wish for a greener, cleaner world with trees, birdsong and more things natural. It really needn't remain a dream, for if we are willing to do our bit, we can actually have a world with more trees that will naturally enliven surroundings.

The government, schools, our teachers and parents have told us that trees do the planet a world of good with all the puns intended. Yet more trees are being cut down. More forests are being destroyed and the world is on the precipice of losing its green cover.

The message that trees must be saved and more trees planted must be got around with immediate effect. And achieving this is no mean feat. That's why the recent "Sapling Exhibition" held at the Alliance Française was so important, especially for the youth.

Captive captions

Saving the environment is serious business, but humour can enliven matters and actually motivate people better. This display of pictures used the simplest of ideas to come up with a great campaign. **Using just one tree per poster, they made sure that the headlines were catchy, commanded attention, and finally got across the message of conservation and tree protection like no other.**

Held in association with the Isha Foundation, this is a part of Project Greenhands that aims to plant a thousand trees in Tamil Nadu by the end of this year. This comprehensive campaign of 30 messages hopes to inspire people across the world to plant trees and heal the earth. All tree saplings used in the campaign are native to India and an indicator of the trees that can be planted. Wherever possible, the tree species shown have a direct relation to the message it carries. For example, the message "No one ever attained enlightenment under a lamp-post" shows the sacred peepal tree under which Siddhartha attained enlightenment and became a Buddha.

Got your attention? Check this one out.

There are better ways to conserve rainwater than build dams. The roots of trees hold the soil together and keep the water in. Cut down trees and erosion will render the land barren in no time.

Each caption was rooted in daily reality. "If you can read, thank a tree" said one. So many trees are cut down to make paper for us. **Do we pay attention while wasting paper, taking umpteen printouts or not recycling?**



Active campaign

"The furniture, fruit and paper industry are worth millions — turns out that money does grow on trees." Next when, as an irate parent, unhappy with your college goer's grades, you threaten to cut off their allowance, you know what not to say!

Ultimately its aim was simple — plant more trees for a living planet. Besides, trees are important for our films, too.

As one poster asked, completely tongue-in-cheek, "In the future what will Indian film stars dance around?"

For the anxious parent determined to teach their children more about trees and conservation, this was the perfect opportunity. The captions were rife with ideas of getting young people to look at the idea of conservation as a fun thing rather than serious business that only grown-ups could attend to. Look at this one: "There are more presents in a Christmas tree than we see."

The campaign ran for six months in Bangalore Bias, a newly launched afternoon newspaper. With much optimism and hope, this crusade was also printed as a set of 30 postcards and sent to many influential people in the country including the President, Prime Minister, chief ministers of states, principal chief conservators of forests and school principals.

This campaign has featured in many, national and international publications, including a college text book in America.

The idea and inspiration behind it is simple. It's a dream to take this campaign to the world, or at least across India, so it may inspire many to plant trees.

If any corporate or individual shares this sentiment, they may contact Marie at 94866.17098 or e-mail: marie.rischmann@gmail.com.

