

HCLFoundation

CEE

Centre for Environment Education



A Report

Nature Camp & Award Ceremony

10–12 September 2025





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Climate change requires urgent attention and education plays a critical role in helping learners to make shifts in their lifestyle and a transformation of the way they think and act.

Keeping this in mind, HCLFoundation and Centre for Environment Education (CEE) have collaborated on a national level initiative - GenCAN (Generation for Climate Action). It is a Climate Action Leadership Challenge tailored for schools, targeting grades 6-12. This initiative empowers educators and students alike with tools and techniques to foster climate literacy and action.



Introduction

GenCAN is a sustainability and climate change education initiative, to engage schools with their teachers and students to communicate, collaborate, and cooperate in learning about climate change to develop their own action plan for reducing carbon footprint.

Over 250 schools, 331 mentor teachers and 2147 student leaders from 17 states and 3 UTs participated in the GenCAN programme 2024.

To celebrate exemplary work of GenCAN achievers schools, they were invited to a three day nature camp at lush green landscape of Pachmarhi in Madhya Pradesh. The aim was to reap the recreational and educational benefits of living and learning with nature. Camp was planned to also felicitate school teams for their outstanding contributions, teamwork, and the climate action.



1

Partners



HCLFoundation delivers the corporate social responsibility agenda of HCLTech in India through its flagship programmes and special initiatives. The Foundation aims to alleviate poverty and achieve inclusive growth and development through life cycle based, integrated community development approach that focuses on Education, Health, Skill Development and Livelihood, Environment, and Disaster Risk Reduction and Response.

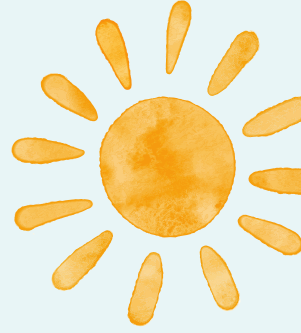
HCLFoundation is present in 21 States and 3 Union Territories, has greened thousands of acres, harvested billions litres of water, managed tonnes of waste, protected endangered species, and treated over thousands animals. The GenCAN is being implemented by 'Harit' which is the climate action flagship programme of HCLFoundation.

Centre for Environment Education (CEE)

was established in 1984 as a Centre of Excellence under the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. CEE's mandate is to promote environmental awareness nationwide. CEE develops innovative programmes, educational material and builds capacity in the field of Environmental Education (EE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Climate change education and action is one of the core areas of the centre to engage and empower different stakeholders through interactive educational methodologies. Paryavaran Mitra is CEE's flagship initiative for schools on sustainability and climate change education. GenCAN initiative was developed as evidence based climate action student leadership programme.





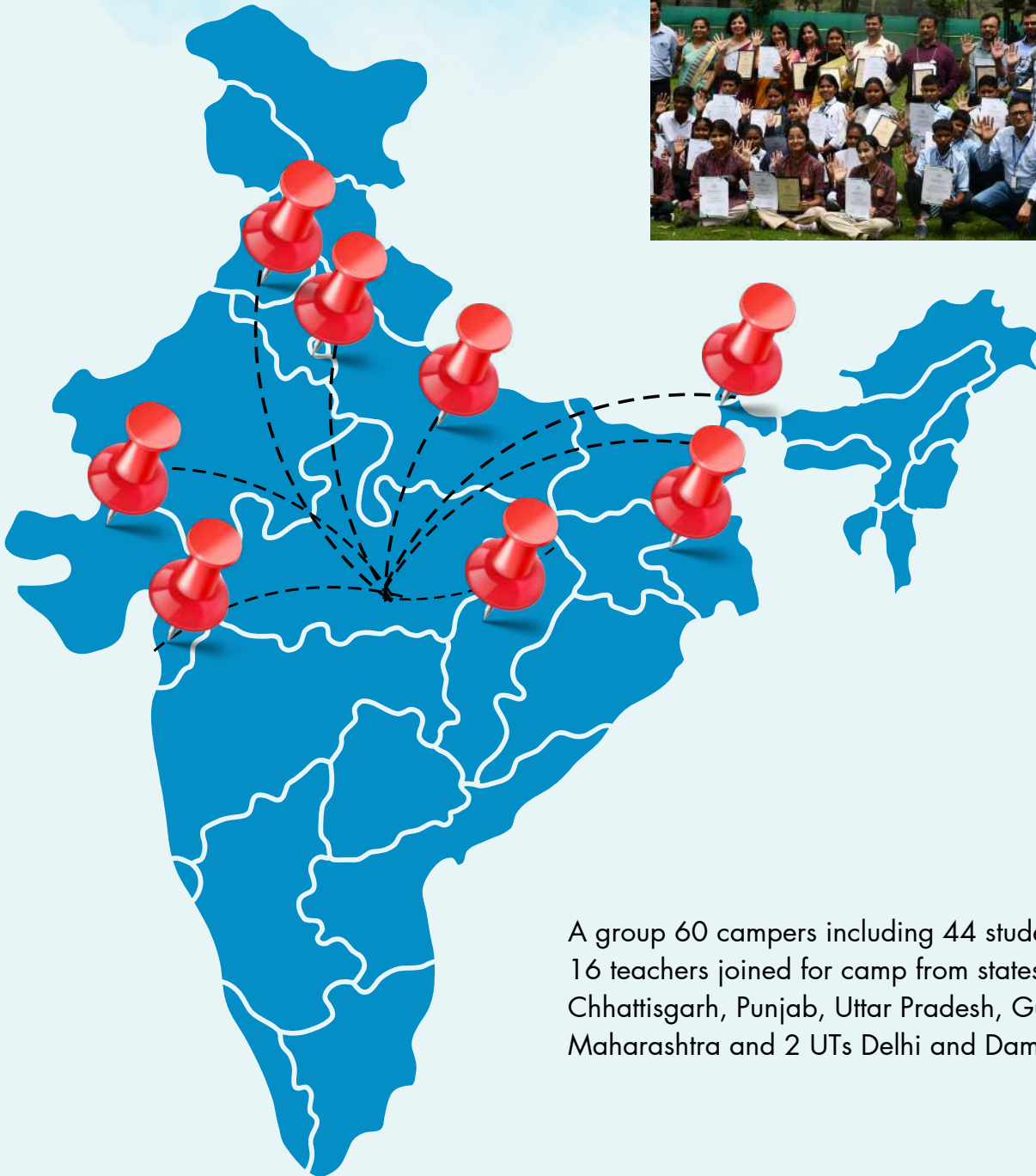
Pachmarhi, often called the “Queen of Satpura”, is the only hill station of Madhya Pradesh, nestled in the Satpura ranges. It is part of the Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve, recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, which includes Satpura National Park, Bori Sanctuary, and Pachmarhi Sanctuary. The region is celebrated for its rich biodiversity and scenic landscapes.

Its forests host teak, sal, bamboo, and several endemic species of thallophytes, bryophytes, and pteridophytes that thrive due to its unique topography. The reserve is also home to a fascinating range of wildlife including tigers, leopards, gaur, deer, and the endemic giant and flying squirrels, making it an inspiring location to explore nature and experience the harmony of ecosystems.



3

About Campers



A group 60 campers including 44 students and 16 teachers joined for camp from states of Sikkim, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra and 2 UTs Delhi and Daman & Diu.



Camp Agenda

DAY 1

Arrival and Registration
Welcome
Connecting with Nature
Knowing about Pachmarhi
Art of Nature Journaling
Biodiversity Study
Trail to Nateran point



DAY 2

GenCAN Award Ceremony
Release of GenCAN Compendium Edition 2
Interaction with Guests
Field Visit to Interpretation Centre
Trekking to Priyadarshini Viewpoint

DAY 3

Nature & Cultural Trail: Jatashanker temple
Bird watching
Working group discussion
Presentation on learnings and reflections
Bidding Adieu





Nature Meditation

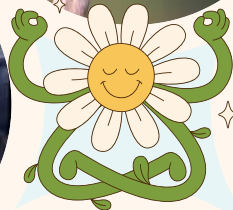
SOUND



SIGHT



TOUCH



SMELL



The camp commenced with a serene nature meditation session. Campers were surrounded by the calm of the natural environment and gently guided to connect with nature through their senses—tuning into the sounds, scents, and stillness around them.

Web of Life



In a circle, holding a card representing an element of nature—such as an insect, animal, plant, sun, water, soil etc. Each student gave their new introduction talking about which element is crucial. One by one, students tossed the rope ball to the one whose element is connected to them, forming a web of interconnected strings. The web represents how closely organisms in an ecosystem interact with one another.



About Pachmarhi



forest type

flora

fauna

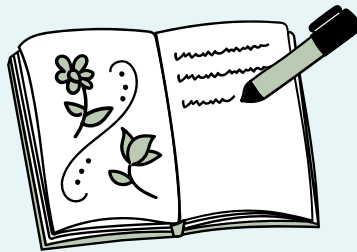
landscape

Knowing History and Ecology of Pachmarhi



Art of Nature Journaling

After learning about Pachmarhi's history and ecology, campers were introduced to the technique of blending observation of the natural world with writing, sketching and painting.





Biodiversity Study



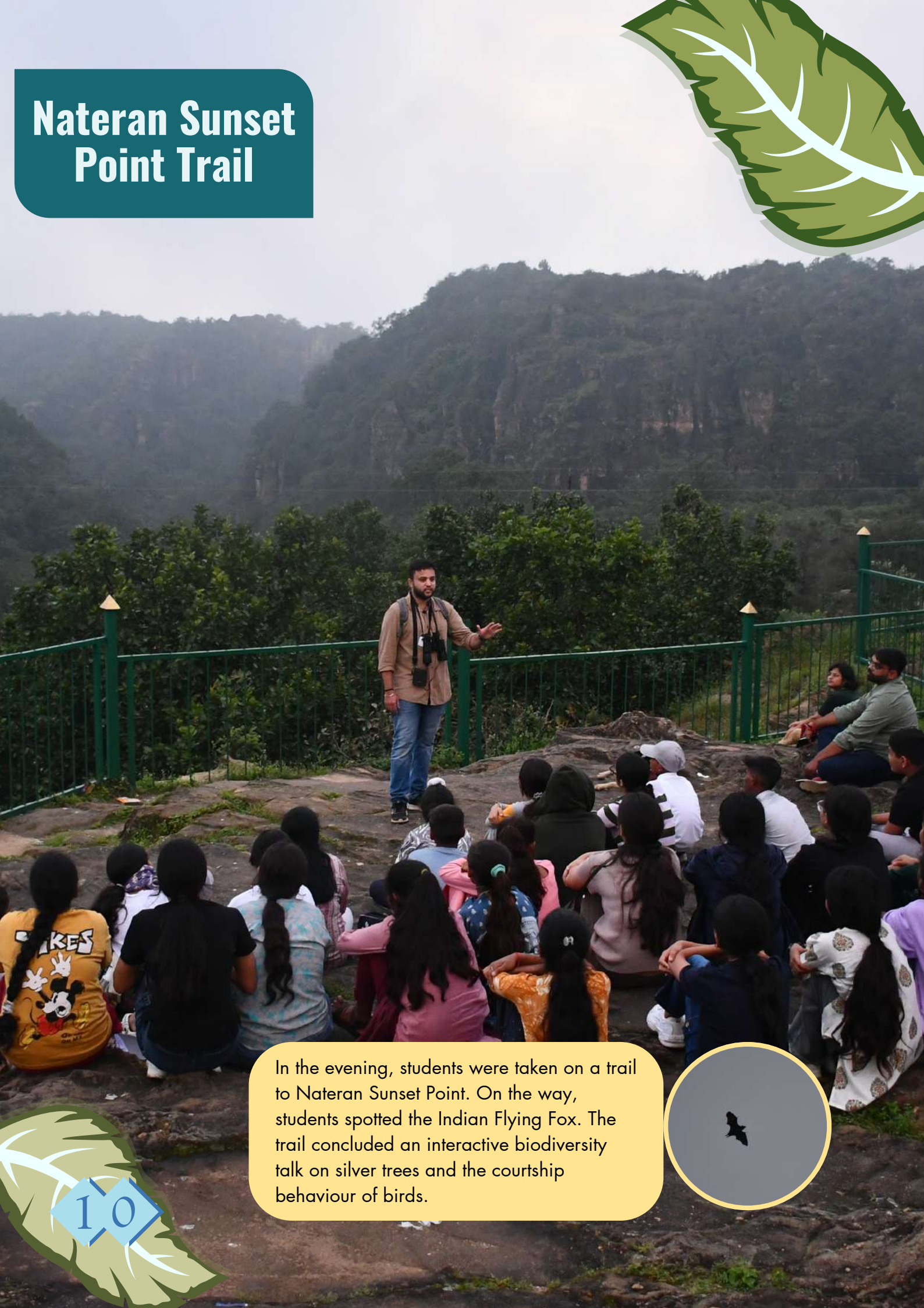
Students were divided into six groups which were assigned different quadrat areas for the biodiversity assessment within the camp site. In a quadrat, they were asked to closely observe different types of trees, climbers, shrubs, mosses, lichens, leaves, flowers, insects, etc.



Students identified names of trees: mango, eucalyptus, gulmohar, also ferns, lichens, mosses and insects such as jumping spider, giant wood spider, moths and a camouflaged chameleon. They gained knowledge on how fern's usage for veterinary purpose and how mosses are an ecosystem bioindicator.



Nateran Sunset Point Trail



In the evening, students were taken on a trail to Nateran Sunset Point. On the way, students spotted the Indian Flying Fox. The trail concluded an interactive biodiversity talk on silver trees and the courtship behaviour of birds.







In the award ceremony, winning school teams, best performing students and mentor teachers were felicitated for their outstanding contributions in climate action. The ceremony was graced by the esteemed presence of Dr. Sanjeev, IFS, Deputy Director of Satpura Tiger Reserve.



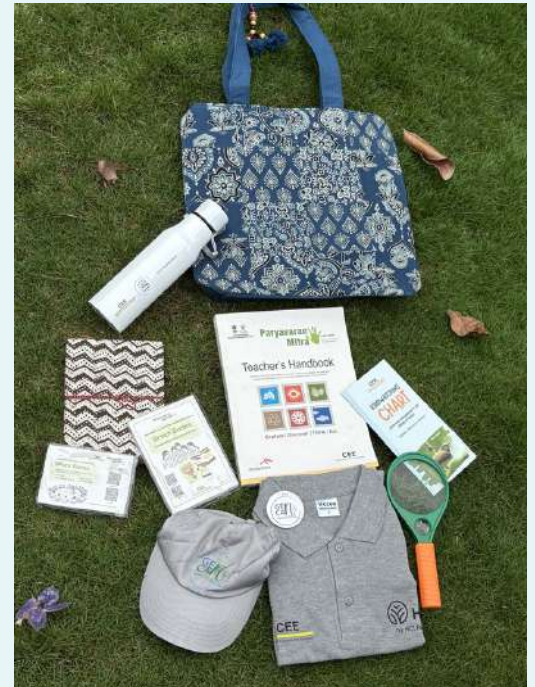
Additionally, the students and teachers were awarded by 4 distinguished guests - Mr. Umesh, Range Officer, Satpura Tiger Reserve, Mr. Rahul Gajbhiye, CEO, Pachmarhi Cantonment, Dr. Santanu Basu, Project Director, HCLFoundation and Ms. Preeti R. Kanaujia, Senior Programme Director, CEE Northern Regional office.





Climate action stories of winning schools, student leaders and teachers were captured in a compendium second edition. This compendium was released during the ceremony.

Release of GenCAN Compendium Edition 2



GenCAN kit and Mementoes





Interaction with Guests



Field Visit to Interpretation Centre

Students had been taken to the Bison Lodge Interpretation Centre, where they learnt about the region's rich cultural heritage, its flora and fauna.

In the centre, they got to see different species of birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals and trees. Students were able to differentiate between different types of beaks and leg patterns in birds. In reptiles they studied behaviour about Indian Rock Python, Spectacle Cobra, and Green Vine Snake. In amphibians they got to know about Bull frogs and Tree frogs. In mammals they got to know about India Gaurs and Tigers and also students gained knowledge on census and camera traps at the interpretation centre.



Trekking to Priyadarshini Viewpoint



Tree My Friend



In the guided forest trail, they explored forest ecosystem and the 5 carbon pools present- above ground biomass, below ground biomass, soil, forest floor litter and dead wood. With “Tree my friend” activity students built an emotional connection with the trees by hugging them.

They observed Sal, Silver and Bamboo trees, learning about their ecological and economic value, and that every part of trees found in Priyadarshini point is useful for medicinal purposes.

They differentiated each tree, observed the growth rate, wood density and got to know how trees act as carbon sinks.



Nature & Cultural Trail: Jatashanker Temple

On our way to the Jatashankar temple, campers observed bulbuls, ibis, kingfisher, wagtails, parakeets, jungle babblers, rufous treepie, and flycatchers, which were commonly found in that region. They spotted the Malabar Whistling Thrush, a fascinating bird with a call like human.

They learnt about feather patterns in birds, how birds imitate one another, and how they build nests. After visiting the Jatashankar temple, students found a gigantic rock. There was serene silence as the path entered the caves, interrupted rhythmically by the melodious temple bells and the chirping of birds.





Working Group Discussion

On the last day of the camp teams were invited for group discussion to discuss about their learnings, memories, skills learnt and what are they taking back from the camp.

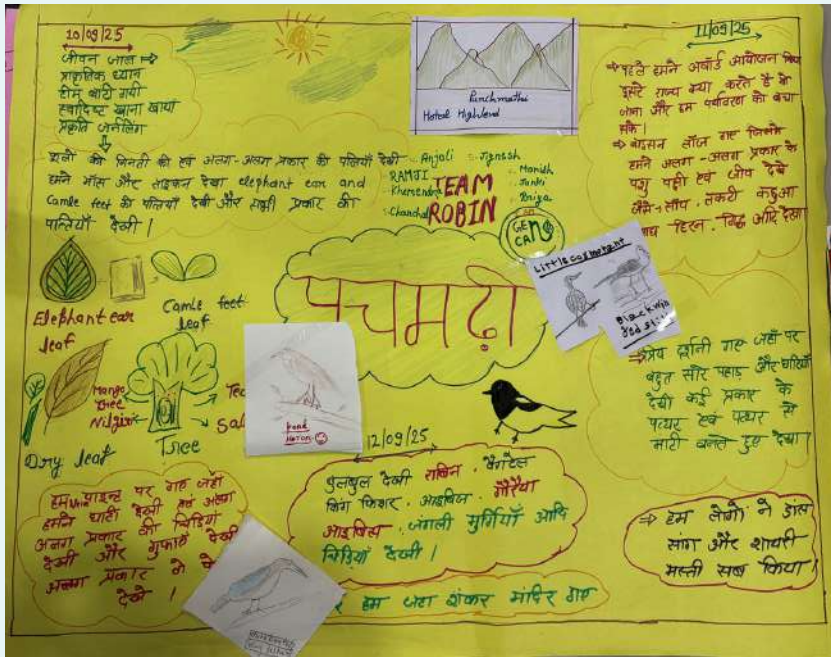
Each group shared their stories, memories, skills and the knowledge they had gained from the camp. Each group also highlighted the activities that took place from day one to day three, and through presentation each team showcased the positive impacts of each activity.

Students said that they got to know about different state cultures, dance and music as well. Students shared that they have learnt many skills such as observation, communication, presentation, team work, meditation, games, documentation, journaling, creative expression etc.

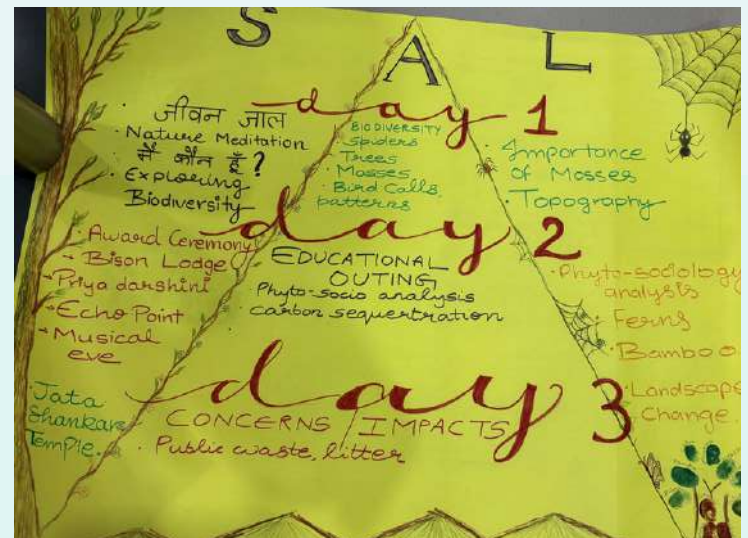
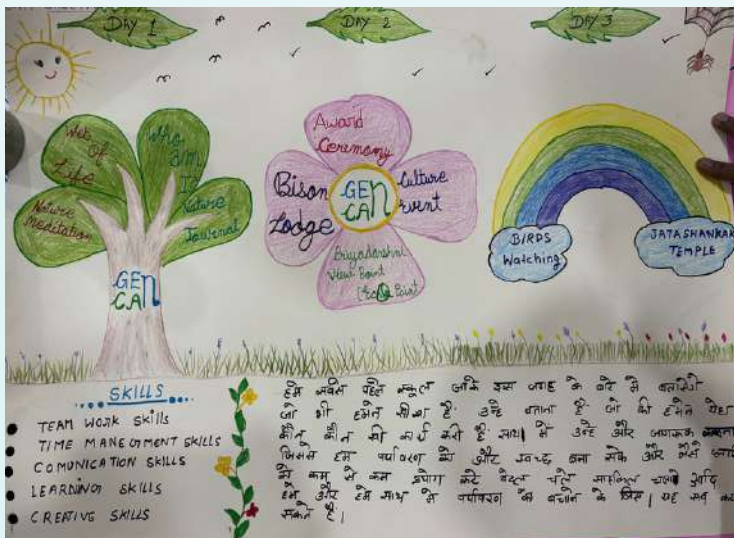
Presentation on Learnings and Reflections



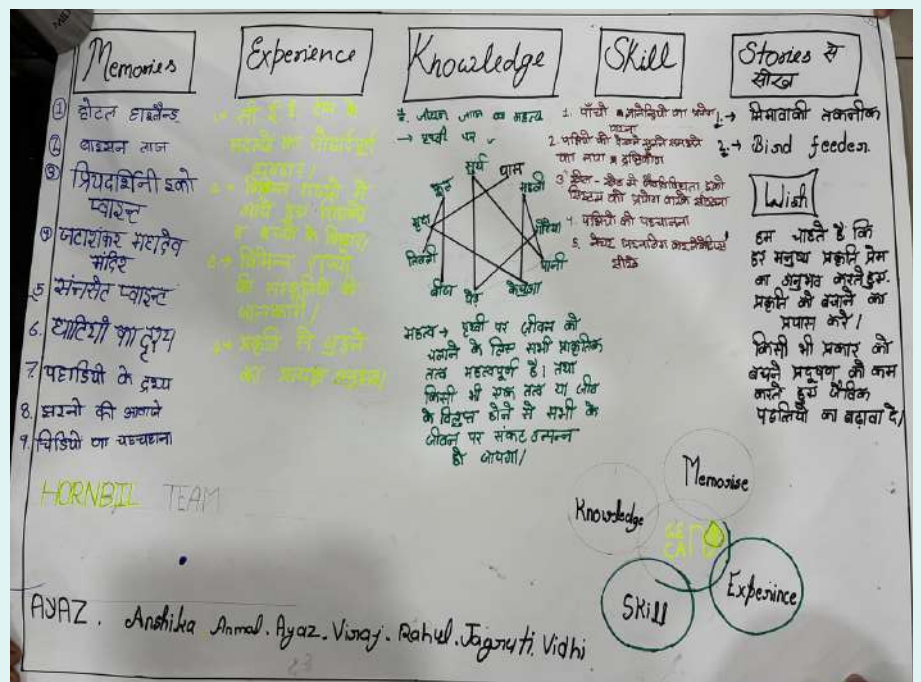
Posters on Learnings and Reflections



A student from Punjab shared this was the first time for him to travel in a train with school team. Students shared that it was interesting to circle around the tree and observe the whole community it has insects, spiders, moss, lichens, herbs and shrubs.



Many of them shared that they counted different butterflies, observed birds and got to know about the courtship behaviour of birds where they make unique sounds and calls and also got to see the feather patterns and nest construction of different birds.





Bidding Adieu





“

LOOK DEEP INTO NATURE, AND
THEN YOU WILL UNDERSTAND
EVERYTHING BETTER.

— Albert Einstein

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