

OTBL CSR Programme 2022-2023

Project title: “Developing Green covers (Plantation) in rural Schools for environment sustainability and environment awareness campaign”

Definition of the project: To develop green covers in Schools through plantation of shade and fruit trees saplings along with herbal plants in three schools campuses near to ONGC, Ahmedabad assets in Gujarat State for development of sustainable environment.

Introduction:

Loss of vegetation and Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are inevitable consequences of urban infrastructure development which are now significant concerns that need to be reduced to maintain the environmental balance. Hence, recognizing the imminent threat of global warming and climate change, OTBL will take an initiative for greening rural Schools near ONGC Ahmedabad assets in Gujarat. The proposed CSR initiative of OTBL named “**Greening of Schools**“ will also be substantiated with environment awareness programs engaging schools students, teachers, staff members, local community, Government and other stakeholders for environment awareness through this CSR initiative.

As medicinal plants receive increased scientific and commercial attention, there is increasing pressure on the wild plant populations from which most medicinal plants are harvested. Overharvesting has placed many medicinal species at risk of extinction. Commercial exploitation has also sometimes led to traditional medicines becoming unavailable to the indigenous peoples that have relied on them for centuries or millennia. For all of these reasons, the study and conservation of medicinal and Aromatic plant species has become increasingly urgent. The accelerating loss of species and habitat worldwide adds to this urgency. Already, about 15,000 medicinal plant species may be threatened with extinction worldwide. Experts estimate that the Earth is losing at least one potential major drug every two years. The benefits of medicinal plants can be summarized into four major categories: healthcare; sustainable economies; environmental protection and ecological restoration. When the full potential and possibilities of these benefits are considered, it becomes apparent that medicinal plants are one of humanity’s greatest natural resources. Here are the four global benefits of medicinal/aromatic plants that makes essential oils a thriving business opportunity

Need for the Project:

To combating global warming, climate change effects due to GHG emissions. Our CSR initiative would protect the environment through green cover developments and will maintain the ecology and environmental balance. It will help promote pollution free environment in sustainable ways for school children/younger generation having larger impact on communities, environment and ecosystems. The trees will provide clean air by absorbing CO₂ and in return produce O₂ into the atmosphere that will controls temperature and help prevent soil erosion and water pollution.

Habitat loss and unchecked commercialization of wild medicinal plants is threatening the future of vital resources, as well as the beauty, diversity, and natural heritage of our planet. As wild lands are destroyed or degraded, we lose unique and precious species, from flowers to frogs to butterflies, and with them potential resources to combat hunger, poverty, natural disasters, and social and economic insecurity. This loss of diversity may also take with it important cures for diseases — both those we face now and those that may emerge in the future. Unchecked commercialization may render important traditionally used medicinal plant resources inaccessible and unaffordable to populations that have relied on them for centuries — as well as to the rest of the world.

Leads available with TERI: A detailed feasibility study has already been conducted by TERI, and field survey has been completed. We have identified and selected three rural government schools out of the many schools surveyed for tree plantation based on our identification criteria for selection of schools. The list of three schools selected for plantation activities are listed below. Also, consent letter from School Authority for providing land space in school campus for cultivation of medical and aromatic plants

Beneficiaries of the programme

Three schools where approx. 2000 students, around 200 teachers, staff, local communities, and other stakeholders. The program will adopt various methods to educate students, teachers and staff to improve the environment at their school, and in their community and vocational training to school students staff to take-up Medicinal and Aromatic plants as a start-up business activity.

Environmental awareness campaigns

To aware and sensitize children and local communities on environmental issues and to infuse a sense of social responsibility by adopting sustainable lifestyle an environmental awareness sessions will be organized in collaboration with local Gram Sabha. We will also adopt the idea of “One Student One Tree” approach where students will serve as the primary planters which allow them to take ownership of the project and responsibility for the trees. The students also participate in pre-planting activities that connects them to the benefits of trees. Planting trees on a school campus will drastically improve the aesthetic appearance of the grounds making the campus more inviting to students, parents, faculty, and the surrounding community.

Impact assessment:

The trees planted in the area will improve the agricultural conditions, by checking soil erosion and improving the water holding capacity of the soil. The leaves falling from the trees will improve the humus content of the soil, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers. The local fauna is also dependent on these native trees, and thus the plantation will help in preserving those species. For social impact assessment, following methodology may be undertaken:

- Sensitization/awareness programs on plants and environment conservation for-
- Spreading the message of forest conservation, restoring/planting in degraded areas.

Outreach and Promotion Plan

The primary focus of the outreach and promotion plan will be to promote awareness on environment. The greening of schools and school awareness program will be highlighted through the circulation of a beautifully designed outreach materials (e.g. brochure standees, posters and banners etc.), which will feature the aims and objectives of the programme. The programme will be extensively captured through audio and visuals documentary for propagating the programme on media channels and online video sharing platform (YouTube). It will feature interviews and response of the children / institutions and the benefits brought by the program to the current surrounding and their own lives.

Outcome of the project:

- i. Green covers in three schools will provide oxygen, fresh air and much needed shade during summer.
- ii. Reduction in impact of air pollution and dust as the trees and shrubs are known to be natural sink for CO₂ and air pollutants.
- iii. An important role of OTBL in ensuring the young children to create awareness and to help become sensitive to the various environmental issues associated with different factors in their lives such as environmental pollutions and climate change.
- iv. Employment generation for local semi-skilled and unskilled workers thereby aiding in economic growth of the region.
- v. Cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants will be established in a school for demonstration of school students about the agro technology of these plants. This plantation will fulfill the supply of the raw materials to the local pharmacies and also ensure the quality of the produce. This herbal farm would pave the way for the establishment of herbal garden which not only conserves these plants but also serves the academic purpose.
- vi. Apart from the ecological and socio-economic impact, the School garden will gain much needed infra-structural development through structures like shed, additional irrigation facilities, boundary protection as well as training to students as business startups pertaining to medicinal and Aromatic plants.