

# SIRMOUR VATAVARAN TRAVELS 2006

## ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE FILM FESTIVAL

[1-3 June 2006]

### A REPORT



As a part of its second year of touring across the nation, **Vatavaran Travels** visited Himachal Pradesh from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June. The **Sirmour Vatavaran Travels 2006 – Environment and Wildlife Film Festival** was organized by the Centre for Media Studies, New Delhi in active collaboration with the Shivalik Eco Club, Govt. High School, Moginand, Sirmour.

The Shivalik Eco Club is known for its action-based programmes related to environment in their surroundings. The school had also participated in Vatavaran 2003 and had been honoured with a citation from the Children's Film Society, Mumbai for their film *Tomorrow May Be The Fatal Day*. Very recently, the eco club has also been adjudicated the best in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

Sirmour Vatavaran Travels 2006 has been an effort towards reaching out to children – the future of the nation – for an eco-friendly world. It has been the first time that the festival traveled to Sirmour and also the first time that an Eco Club has been a host to the premiere festival, in a remote area far from the cities and away from up-to-date facilities.

The festival subsumed screening of thirteen Vatavaran films from a bouquet of award winning and competitive films besides holding parallel events such as interactive sessions and environment educational activities. A puppet making as well as a script writing session was organized by the Shivalik Eco-club.



## FESTIVAL PARTICIPATION

Sirmour Vatavaran 2006 saw the full participation of all the students of the host school, spanning across children from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> standards. It also witnessed the participation of the special children of Aastha Welfare Society and local women based in and around Moginand.

Sirmour Vatavaran 2006 has been lauded and much appreciated by the Environment Society, Nahan, Himachal Gyan Vigyan Samiti and the Departments of Forest and Education, Nahan.

The second day of Sirmour Vatavaran 2006 had a Special Guest, Dr. Nina Roberts, Associate Professor, San Francisco University and Dr. S. C. Joshi, President of Environment Society, Nahan. Dr. Roberts expressed her surprise at the commitment in environmental conservation and education programmes in a remote district like Sirmour with much limited facilities.

The Festival also saw the involvement of the Himachal Gyan Vigyan Samiti, Sirmour who ran a bookstall within the festival.

## INAUGURAL CEREMONY

The three-day-long festival commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June with the screening of the film *Rhino – The Indian Unicorn*. Sirmour Vatavaran Travels 2006 was formally inaugurated at 10.30 am with a keynote a welcome address by Dr. Sanjeev Attari, Teacher-in-charge, Shivalik Eco Club and keynote address from Shri Ramesh Chand, Head Master, Government High School, Sirmour.

The Chief Guest for the inaugural ceremony, Mr. Shekhar Gupta, Vice President, Chamber of Commerce and Managing Director, C S Zircon Products Pvt. Ltd., lit the lamps marking the commencement of the festival. Mr. Gupta complimented the school for its commitment to environmental education and emphasized that the future would be more secure if each individual, especially the younger generations, strive to conserve their natural heritage.

CMS representative for the festival, Ms. Priya Verma, thanked the Government High School, Moginand for bringing Vatavaran Travels 2006 to Sirmour district and introduced the participants to the concept of Vatavaran initiative.

## FILM SCREENINGS

The Festival's inaugural film was *Rainwater Harvesting*. Some of the issues discussed through the medium of documentaries, public service message and animation were waste management, water crisis, electronic waste business and its impact on environment and human health, wildlife trade and conservation, etc.

Vatavaran films screened in the three-day long festival were **Rainwater Harvesting** by Saumya Sen and Nandita Das; **Rhino – The Indian Unicorn** by Naresh Bedi; **Victims of Garbage Dump** by Plan India; **Chasing Butterflies** by Gurmeet Sapal; **Do Your Bit** by Anand Thakur; **Shadows** by Debanjan Nandy; **Cute Bunny** by Prosenjit Ganguly; **A Second Hand Life** by Nutan Manmohan; **Burdened Existence** by Plan India; **A Hunter's Tale** by Abhishek Singh; **Yamuna** by Nandan Saxena; **Magic of Life** by Gautam Pandey and **Spandan** by Leoarts Communication

In keeping with one of the objectives underlying Vatavaran Travels, which is to provide a platform for regional concerns and to encourage initiatives from aspiring, upcoming and brilliant environment and wildlife documentation, Sirmour Vatavaran 2006 screened *Listen: The Nature is Crying Here*, a production of the Shivalik Eco-club on the issue of over-industrialization facing the area.



Poster of film “*Listen: The Nature is Crying Here*” by Shivalik Eco-Club

*Cute Bunny* and *Chasing Butterflies* were the opening films on the second day of the festival. These were specially screened for the physically and mentally challenged children of Aastha Welfare Society. The day also saw the participation of local rural women. Sirmour Vatavaran concluded with the screening of the film *Yamuna*.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Apart from presenting an array of amazing and intriguing films on environment and wildlife this Environment Fest also conducted certain inspiring and educational activities for children. Games like ‘Waste-Segregation’ focused on the identification and the importance of segregation of waste from the source and ‘Oh Deer’ focused on the ecological balance, which is essential for survival amongst different variables in the ecological systems.

The interactions and activities were oriented towards reinforcing issues discussed in the films and helping children to connect it to their immediate environment.

## CLOSING CEREMONY

Sirmour Vatavaran 2006 formally concluded on the 3rd of June by a Special Vote of Thanks by Shri Ramesh Chand Sharma to all the participants and Guests for their involvement and for their active participation during the three-day festival.. Special Guests Shri Paramjit Singh, Deputy Director, Higher Education, Sirmour District and Shri Y. P. Gupta, IFS, District Forest Officer, Sirmour Dr. S C Joshi, Retd. Principal and President of Environment Society, Nahan were felicitated for their invaluable contribution in the field of environmental conservation and education.