Practising Ecological Sustainability at School

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Written specially for Vikalp Sangam "[redacted]", or "I am worthy", the motto that Tagore International School has adopted, goes a long way into providing a glimpse of the highly visionary approach the school has taken over the years towards battling climate change. Located in one of the posh lanes of Delhi, the school has ensured the finest standards of infrastructure for the students and yet, stands as a vanguard of ecological sustainability. Over the last decade, the school has undertaken multiple efforts in the fight against climate change ranging from the harnessing of solar energy, composting, recycling to rainwater harvesting. This stands as a very inspiring model for shaping the minds of future generations towards alternative sustainable ways of life. Mr Deepak Kumar, secretary of the Tagore Education Society, envisioned a carbon free future for the school. The solar initiative started in 2013 when the school set up its first 25 KW rooftop plant. Over the years, the school has consistently added onto the capacity and today it has a staggering 225 KW rooftop solar plant. To put this into perspective, the school is completely self-reliant when it comes to electricity. While one can safely assume that all the electrical appliances and electronic devices like ACs, fans, lights, TVs and computers run on Solar energy, what might not be so obvious is the fact that heavy electrical machines like lifts run on solar energy as well. The benefits of a solar rooftop for a school are enormous. Since the school is operational during the day, it doesn't require batteries to store the electricity. This hugely cuts the cost. Additionally, during the peak summer months, the school is shut and all the electricity that is generated over the two months goes to the grid. This way, the school earns a lot of credits from the discom which in turn reduces their costs during the months when the output from the panels is lower. Owing to all these reasons, the school has seen a tremendous reduction in electricity bills over the last 4 years.

Tagore International School hasn't stopped at that. The premises hold 14 rainwater harvesting pits that effectively reuse rainwater for the regular needs of the school. One of the favourites of the students in RolliPolli, which is their adorably titled composting device that turns the "wet" waste of the school into manure that is then used in the gardens of the school. The school also has a waste paper recycling machine that produces diaries, files et al, which are given out to guests on special occasions. Mrs Madhulika Sen, the director of the school, takes great pride in the efforts the school has taken over the years to reduce its carbon footprint and feels that the greatest success of these endeavours lies in the enthusiasm and ownership that the students display towards these sustainable methods employed by the school. She urges all schools to set out on this path towards creating a green space, owing to both economical concerns as well as a method to shape the future generations towards a sustainable future. According to her, one such step has a lot of cascading effects. It inspires others to follow on your lead and inspires you to take the next step when you see the benefits of the first. Mrs Sen quite confidently asserts, that the school would always remain at the forefront when it comes to adopting newer and sustainable ways of life in the years to come. A couple of years ago, she mentions, some students got together to map the carbon footprint of the school and suggest further steps to reduce it. Therein lies the truest fulfillment of the vision that the school set out with.

Tagore International School - Solar Champion

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