

Godrej & Boyce's Magical Mangroves campaign with WWF India creates youth leadership for mangrove conservation

~Volunteers in Gujarat lead awareness sessions to educate people about the critical services provided by Mangroves

22nd March, Ahmedabad: Mangroves are considered as the first line of defence against extreme climate events that impact coastal areas. With their capacity to absorb storm energy and sequester carbon, mangroves are essential for the protection of coastal areas in India. However, the knowledge and conservation efforts for mangroves remain the domain of a selected few. It is with the intention of bringing citizens closer to recognizing their importance, and conserving mangroves that Godrej & Boyce, the flagship company of Godrej Group, launched the Magical Mangroves campaign along with WWF India. The Magical Mangroves campaign is a significant component of Godrej & Boyce's multifaceted approach involving research, awareness, and educational initiatives to conserve these biodiverse ecosystems.

The program involved the identification and training of 116 volunteers, referred to as **Mangrove Ambassadors**, who committed their time towards being educated on mangrove conservation and inspire people in their states to learn and take action for the conservation of these vital ecosystems. The Mangrove Ambassadors were equipped with a curated toolkit of presentations, videos, story books, mangroves app, FAQs and more to enable them to deliver interactive sessions to educate citizens. To empower the volunteers with additional information, Godrej & Boyce and WWF India organized expert talks and quizzes along with regular social media posts with interesting information of various mangrove forests of India and unique biodiversity in them.

Climate change signals dire consequences for coastal states of India – and Gujarat, the state with the longest coastline is no exception. Extreme climate events such as cyclones, floods and droughts are expected to be a significant threat to 29 districts of Gujarat which are home to approximately 62.8 million people.¹ The mangroves are of prime importance for safeguarding the multiple coasts of the state, especially in regions like Saurashtra and Gulf of Kutch, which are exposed to vulnerabilities of climate change.

Despite the lockdown, the Mangrove Ambassadors in Gujarat educated numerous students and teachers in Gujarat, through online webinars. The sessions were interactive, and the participants were encouraged to ask questions about mangroves during the sessions.

Giving an account of her experiences as a Magical Mangroves volunteer, **Sneha Vasant**, a **Mangrove Ambassador from Gujarat** said, *"I have always been passionate about environmental restoration and was on a constant lookout for opportunities to contribute. I had joined the program with an aim to make communities and people in my state aware and concerned about mangroves. Armed with the informative presentations and videos provided to me during my mentorship period, I was able to reach out to students from secondary and high schools, and colleges across educational institutions. Even professors from various colleges and other faculty members joined my webinars. When they told me that my sessions were informative and they had learnt something which they were previously unaware of, that gave me a sense of achievement – yes, this is something good that has been done. I even got an opportunity to author a chapter named 'Mangroves- Peculiar features and ecosystem services' in a scientific book!"*

Through mobilizing youth to reach out to people in their regions, Magical Mangroves campaign has affected positive behavioural change by enabling people to understand that even the choices made by them as individuals go towards creating an impact.

¹ <https://www.ceew.in/press-releases/29-districts-gujarat-vulnerable-extreme-climate-events-ceew>

Highlighting the impact of the online awareness sessions, Sneha added, *“Having done my Masters in Environmental Science, I already knew when I joined the program that not many people were aware about what mangroves are and how important they are to us. In my interactions with students during the webinars, they would react with ‘oohs and aahs,’ so I could see the element of wonder throughout the webinar. After the sessions we would take a pledge to take whatever action we could to ensure the conservation of mangroves and their biodiversity. These are simple actions, like, being mindful of how we dispose of waste, or using environmentally friendly products – such basic things which most people can easily do, can prevent waste from getting accumulated in the mangroves.”*

Several other Mangrove Ambassadors from Gujarat also shared their motivations for joining the program and what they had learnt as part of the **Magical Mangroves** journey.

“As a nature lover, it’s been a pleasure to be a part of the Magical mangroves program. Personally, this programme improves my knowledge, presentation, and communication skills. Initially it was challenging to convince schools and colleges to spare time for this program from their busy schedule but by continuous follow up and guidance I received from our WWF Mentor, it went well. I am confident that after receiving knowledge of mangroves and its biodiversity through this programme, schools and students are now keen to visit and experience mangrove sites physically.” – Mehul Parmar

“It was one of the most wonderful experiences of my life to be a part of this prestigious Magical Mangroves Campaign. Sessions were so interesting and interactive that they provide a practical and conceptual understanding of Mangrove ecosystems in depth. As I am a research scholar so thank you so much for providing me such a great opportunity that justifies my research work also. The campaign provided me a good idea of mangrove conservation through community participation which is also relevant to my research work” - Priyanka Kumari

“I barely knew about Mangroves before. But it was after I decided to volunteer in the Magical Mangroves Campaign that I came to know how wonderful these species are. I was also able to connect with the environment through this programme. All in all, it proved to be an amazing learning experience for me, and I would urge all the change makers of India to actively participate and become a voice for nature.” – Akansha Garg

Through mobilizing youth to reach out to people in their regions, Magical Mangroves campaign has affected positive behavioural change by enabling people to understand that even the choices made by them as individuals go towards creating an impact.

The mangrove conservation efforts by Godrej & Boyce are further advanced by philanthropic support from Pirojsha Godrej Foundation which ensures the continuity of research and awareness programs for conserving the biodiversity of the mangroves.

About Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd.

Godrej & Boyce (‘G&B’), a Godrej Group company, was founded in 1897, and has contributed to India’s journey of self-reliance through manufacturing. G&B patented the world’s first springless lock and since then, has diversified into 14 businesses across various sectors from Security, Furniture, Aerospace to Infrastructure and Defence. Godrej is one of India’s most trusted brands serving over 1.1bn customers worldwide daily. For more information, visit www.godrej.com.

For more information, contact:

Yashodhara Roy

Corporate Communication & PR, Godrej & Boyce

yroy@godrej.com

Sonali Singh: +91-8210595426

Sr. Account Executive, Avian WE

sonali.singh@avianwe.com