



St. Vincent College
(Affiliated to Savtribai Phule Pune University)
Pune -411037

Title of the Event	Ecology Workshop in Desur, Karnataka		
Date of the Event	September 25 to 27, 2025	Place of the event	Desur, Karnataka
Objectives of the Event	To cultivate ecological literacy and ethical responsibility among students through an immersive, interdisciplinary workshop that integrates scientific understanding, community engagement, creative expression, and reflection on sustainability as a holistic, values-driven practice.		
Name/s of the Resource Persons	Representatives of Jesuit Higher Education Association of South Asia (JHEASA)		
A short narration of the program			
Ecology Workshop in Desur, Karnataka			
<p>From September 25 to 27, 2025, six students and a faculty member from St. Vincent College, Pune, participated in an ecology-focused residential workshop organized by the Jesuit Higher Education Association of South Asia (JHEASA) in Desur, near Belagavi. Hosted at a Jesuit novitiate, the program brought together students from St. Vincent’s, St. Xavier’s College (Mumbai), institutions in Goa, and local Belagavi communities for a three-day immersive engagement centered on ecological awareness, sustainability, and ethical responsibility toward the natural world. The workshop was structured to move participants from reflection to action—from conceptual understanding to lived experience—through a blend of expert-led sessions, collaborative creativity, and field-based learning.</p> <p>The first day commenced with informal introductions over lunch, fostering a spirit of camaraderie among the diverse group. The formal sessions began with a talk by Hector Andrade, whose personal narrative of reforestation and wildlife rescue—particularly of often-misunderstood species like snakes and reptiles—served as a gentle yet powerful invitation to see nature not as a resource to be exploited but as a web of interdependent lives worthy of reverence. This aesthetic and ethical appreciation of the environment set the tone for the day. It was followed by a starkly contrasting yet complementary session led by Dr. Fr. Frazer Mascarenhas, who presented scientific and socio-ecological data to underscore the urgency of the planetary crisis. Rather than offering comfort, his talk aimed to unsettle—a deliberate pedagogical choice to awaken</p>			



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a sense of moral accountability in the face of accelerating biodiversity loss, climate disruption, and human-driven ecological degradation.

The final session of the day, conducted by Fr. Steven Almeida, introduced the concept of “eco-preneurship”—a synthesis of ecological ethics and entrepreneurial innovation. Fr. Almeida challenged the false dichotomy between economic development and environmental stewardship, illustrating how businesses can be designed not only to minimize harm but to actively regenerate ecosystems. He emphasized the use of natural, locally sourced materials and circular design principles, framing sustainability as a creative opportunity rather than a constraint. In the evening, participants were divided into six mixed-college groups and tasked with developing short skits that dramatized the day’s key themes. This exercise transformed abstract ideas into relatable narratives, blending humor with critique, and reinforcing learning through collaborative storytelling.

The second day was dedicated to experiential field visits across four villages in the Belagavi region. In Haruri and Tivoliwada, students observed and engaged with community-led biogas systems, learning about their technical efficiency, safety advantages over conventional fuels like CNG, and their role in reducing deforestation and indoor air pollution. The visit to Koundal highlighted a different dimension of sustainability: social empowerment. There, women shared how access to education and external support—particularly from Fr. John—had enabled them to assert agency, participate in decision-making, and contribute to household and community resilience. Though heavy rains curtailed a planned visit to a fourth site, the group proceeded to Needgal, where they interacted with rural youth enrolled in a tailoring program integrated with formal schooling. This encounter underscored the importance of skill-based education as a pathway to self-reliance, illustrating how environmental and economic sustainability are deeply intertwined with human development.

Upon returning to the novitiate in the evening, the groups refined and performed their skits for the entire assembly—students, faculty, and Jesuit brothers alike. The performances, marked by wit and insight, served as both a creative synthesis of the day’s learnings and a communal act of reflection. The third and final day, originally scheduled for a tree-planting activity, was adapted due to persistent rain. Rather than cancel the



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day's engagement, the organizers arranged a visit to Rajhunsad Fort—a decision that turned into a moment of quiet contemplation. Perched above the landscape, the group took in panoramic views of Belagavi, a visual reminder of the beauty and fragility of the ecosystems they had spent the past two days studying and discussing.

Though brief, the workshop succeeded in cultivating what might be called “ecological literacy with conscience”—an understanding that environmental challenges cannot be addressed through technology or policy alone, but require a transformation in perception, values, and daily practice. The integration of theory, dialogue, field observation, and creative expression ensured that learning was multidimensional. For the St. Vincent's contingent, the experience was not merely informative but formative: it deepened their commitment to sustainability as an ethical imperative and equipped them with concrete examples of community-led resilience. As they departed from Belagavi, they carried not only memories but a renewed sense of purpose—to translate insight into action, both within the college and beyond.

Name of the Collaborating Agency	Jesuit Higher Education Association of South Asia (JHEASA)
Learning Outcomes of the Event for the Participants	Students developed a deeper awareness of interconnected ecological and social challenges, learned from real-world community initiatives like biogas adoption and women-led empowerment, and recognized sustainability as both a personal ethic and a collective action—moving beyond theory to empathetic, informed engagement.
Learning Outcomes for the Organizing team	The organizing team (including faculty and JHEASA coordinators) enhanced their capacity to design experiential, place-based learning programs that blend environmental education with social justice, while adapting flexibly to on-ground conditions and fostering inter-institutional collaboration among diverse student groups.
No. of Participants	Six Students and A faculty member
Faculty in Charge	Dr. Radhakrushna Thange
Documents Attached	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Attendance Sheet2. Geotag photographs3. Resume of resource persons if any4. Copy of remuneration paid if any5. Notice of the event6. Thank you letter to the resource persons