

Teaching them young

As part of a Lakshmi Pat Singhania Academy initiative, children of the Hope Foundation were introduced to the values of nature's resources, writes Chandraneev Das

ON Monday morning, a report in *The Statesman* headlined "No more do sparrows break our sweet slumber", reflected the concern of ornithologists about old, spacious buildings being



replaced by match-box flats and the indiscriminate use of pesticides pushing these birds into the "critically endangered" bracket in the span of just one decade. To these reasons, I would like to add one more: the indiscriminate felling of trees.

Most all of us know by now that carbon footprint is the measure of the total greenhouse gases being released into the atmosphere by every individual. But do we actually know how much we are emanating on a daily basis? Every individual is responsible for creating more than 2,500 kg of carbon dioxide, the chief component



of global warming that is paving the way for the drastic climate change we are experiencing, the environmental degradation and pollution we suffer and the spread of innumerable diseases.

As part of a Lakshmi Pat Singhania Academy initiative, I organised a workshop for a group of children from the Hope Foundation, Kolkata, at the Agri-Horticultural Society Garden on 30 September. The objective behind this was to inculcate in their minds the value of our natural resources, how exploiting these was leading to dire consequences known as global warming.

When told of this situation, they were shocked. One even exclaimed in Bengali, "Dada, eta ki shotti hochchey?" (Is this really happening?). The youngsters were asked to plant saplings in

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the garden premises and pledge to not pollute their environment further. This was preceded by an interactive session where they were given the opportunity to talk to environmentalists of the garden. They were told about the dangerous effects of rising temperature and the consequences they would have to face if the situation was not remedied in the near future.

Many of the children were oblivious of the changes taking place in their surroundings, but some realised what the need of the hour was. One of them, Maharnav, when asked about his feelings, said, "From now on I will never break the branches of the trees in my locality. I will see to it that they are watered regularly. Charity begins at home."

Given the growing human greed for acquisition, never were truer words spoken.