

## **Kalyan school converts barren campus into biodiversity park**

### **SEGREGATE AND COMPOST Campus houses 20 bird species, 7 reptile species, 150 plant species**

MUMBAI: With its zero-waste initiative, the Sacred Heart School in Varap, Kalyan, has converted its barren campus into an ecological spot. The campus is home to around 20 bird species, 35 butterfly species, 15 insect species and seven reptile species, apart from 150 plant species and 20 wild vegetables species, which the students and the staff have cultivated.

The school achieved this feat by adopting the process of vermicomposting. Sacred Heart composts 1,500kg of wet waste (consisting of monthly kitchen and garden discards). After spotting so many species of flora and fauna, the school campus was converted into CC Anthony Biodiversity Education Centre on August 17.

Albin Anthony, principal, said, "We have a zero-waste campus. We segregate everything; not a single consignment of garbage goes out the school. In 17 years, we converted our campus, which was a barren land, into a biodiversity park and a research centre. Through our efforts, we want to tell citizens that the environment can be saved only if actions are taken in that direction."

The school opened in 2001, and since then, has been segregating and composting wet waste. It recycles and reuses 450kg of dry waste (consisting of paper, plastic, glass).

Bharat Laxman Godambe, the head of department of agriculture and research department at the school, said, "Unlike other schools, Sacred Heart teaches agriculture as a subject. So students engage in agricultural activities and engage in organic cultivation."

The initiatives have received a positive response from students.

Purvi Panjwani, a student of Class 8, said, "Our student committee is now mulling over a concept to grow plants without using soil."

The school management plans to have a seed bank (collection and conservation of seeds of vegetables).

It has been launching several other initiatives, which resulted in water and electricity usage. It also runs a biogas plant with cow dung from the neighbouring villages and has a rainwater harvesting system, which ensures the school has water perennially.