

SCHOOL KIDS SENSITISE ADULTS

-Manthan K. Mehta

Sometimes it's the children who show us the right path, awakening us from our slumber. Those who witnessed school children holding placards and banners with slogans against bursting crackers for their environmental hazards outside the Chimbai Municipal School will agree.

An initiative of the Khar Residents Association, and Awaaz Foundation, the kids were asked to hold these placards between 9 am and 10 am on October 24, where three lucky students also won gifts for the best slogans.

Says Anandini Thakoor, Trustee, Khar Residents Association, "We had sent circulars to around 30 schools, including those run by the BMC, to allow their kids to participate in a unique initiative in spreading awareness against bursting of crackers. The kids were asked to hold placards depicting anti-noise pollution slogans coined by them, outside their schools."

Since most of the schools were closed, the response has not been good. However, NGO Aseema that has adopted a Municipal School in Chimbai participated, where kids helped create awareness outside the school.

Apart from Aseema, children from Beacon High School also lined up at the junction of Linking Road and Khar Danda Road (CD Marg).

Says Sumaira Abdulali of Awaaz Foundation, "It is innovative way of reaching out to the students. While visiting the schools I did interact with the students and the feedback that I received was good."

In fact, when the kids go and talk to their parents, it does make more of a difference. She said, "There is certainly an awareness on the issue of noise pollution because many students did concede that noise due to honking and traffic disturbed their peace of mind. Probably, because of this they were able to accept our point of view. In fact, the government should conduct special sessions in schools before the festive season to sensitise the students."

Westside Plus Bandra-Khar

October 26, 2008.

manthan.mehta@timesgroup.com