

Tata Power's Club Enerji is focusing on sensitising children about the energy crisis and scarcity of resources in India

Starting with 12 schools in Mumbai in 2007, Club Enerji has now reached more than 533 schools nationwide, sensitising over 19.34 million participants



Tata Power's Club Enerji has positively contributed to nation building by inspiring children to take the first step towards becoming responsible (Pic: Club Enerji)

What started off as a pilot programme in 2007 became a full-fledged national movement from 2009 sensitising more than 500 schools across India on the subject of energy and resource conservation. Club Enerji, Tata Power's Energy and Resource Conservation Club has positively contributed to nation building by inspiring children to take the first step towards becoming responsible and environmentally conscious citizens.

This year, Club Enerji has also undertaken the initiative of urging children to 'Say No to Plastics' and help save the ecosystem. We spoke to Shalini Singh, Tata's Chief-Corporate Communications and Sustainability spokesperson, to find out more about their initiatives and talk about how they are sensitising children to become responsible citizens.

Excerpts:

What is Club Enerji all about?

Club Enerji is a resource conservation club by Tata Power that focuses on bringing about a first-hand realisation of the energy crisis and scarcity of natural resources in the country. In a broader sense, it is an exercise that prepares young minds to become a part of a movement that will not just impact their lives and the environment they inhabit but also future generations that will follow them. Starting with 12 schools in Mumbai in 2007, Club Enerji has now reached more than 533 schools nationwide, sensitising over 19.34 million participants and saving more than 25 million units of energy.



Say no to plastics: Some of the Club Enerji schools have conducted activities such as going to shopkeepers and hawkers within the vicinity and requesting them to not use plastic bags

What are the methods through which Club Enerji has sensitised more than 500 schools across India on the subject of energy and resource conservation?

We used the 4 E model (Educate, Enhance, Engage and Empower) to spread the message on conservation. Additionally, we also reach out to students through the 'Moral and Civic Value Programmes' to inculcate good and positive values in school students in today's age of consumerism and socio-economic disparity. To improve the participation of children at a much deeper level, we also conduct the National Energy Savvy School Competition annually. It is a voluntary participation project involving educational institutions.

The 4E Model:

Phase 1 - Educate - awareness sessions are carried out in the classrooms

Phase 2 - Enhance - sessions are organised on how to save energy. Students are also encouraged to take energy audits at home

Phase 3 - Engage - students are encouraged to propagate the message of energy conservation to their immediate sphere of influence. Students perform a host of activities from conducting rallies on energy and resource conservation, cleanliness drives, skits/street plays etc.

Phase 4 – Empower - students are educated not only about energy conservation but also to become an active and aware citizen. **Each Club Enerji student is also provided with a booklet called Club Enerji activity booklet which teaches kids** about golden rules of conservation and how to save energy.

How are you going about the new 'Say no to plastics' initiative?

'Say no to plastics' is a special initiative started by Tata Power just last year as a part of Club Enerji's 10th anniversary and as a continuation of our strategic focus on nation-building. Through this initiative, we are aiming to sensitise individuals about health and environmental hazards which are triggered as a result of using plastic.

Throughout last year, we have organised rallies at various locations around schools where students encouraged audiences to not use plastic. Additionally, some of the Club Enerji schools have also conducted activities such as going to shopkeepers and hawkers within the vicinity and requesting them to not use plastic bags.

What are the mini clubs and who are the energy champions?

Mini clubs are small groups formed within a school under the guidance of teachers and operate as an independent entity within their own energy council consisting of energy mentors, energy general, energy captains, energy monitors, and energy savers. Energy champions are students who have voluntarily performed an activity related to energy and resource conservation. For e.g. planting a tree, coming up with ideas to save energy, practicing Club Enerji's golden rules of conservation etc. Members of Mini Club Enerjis are energetic groups of champions from various schools who conduct exhibitions, street plays, painting competitions etc. to spread the message of energy conservation in a fun and interesting way.



Plant for the future: The themes for Club Enerji's activities have been varied through the years, from saving environment to saving resources, afforestation and more

What have been the themes through these years for the poster competitions, street plays, rallies that Club Enerji has conducted to sensitise children?

While we organise various in-class sessions, there are many other activities too organised with the help of school faculties to sensitise general audiences. This secondary sensitisation includes organising rallies, cyclothons, poster competitions, street plays, batti bandh, etc. The themes for these activities have been varied through the years, from saving environment to saving resources, afforestation, saving water, moral and civic values, disaster management, active citizenship, saying no to plastic etc.

Batti bandh sounds interesting, what is that activity all about?

‘Batti bandh’ is an activity conducted annually during Earth hour - a global movement held once a year where people from all over the world participate in the movement by turning off non-essential electric lights for one hour, on a specific day. It encourages school children to voluntarily switch off electricity at home for an hour. Basically, it is an energy conservation initiative that also helps children understand that they have the power to save energy by simply turning off the switches. In 2009 when it was started for the first time, more than 33,000 students from 66 schools in Mumbai, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Pune, and Bangalore participated in the ‘Batti Bandh’ initiative by switching off all non-essential electrical gadgets and also organising awareness drives.