



सत्यमेव जयते

# Nature Camping

A Guidebook



**Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
Government of India**

This Guidebook has been developed by CEE under the aegis of the National Nature Camping Programme (NNCP) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change. The manual should prove useful to organisers and managers of camping activities as well as to campers, especially at nature conservation-oriented camps. It is also expected to benefit teachers, NGO personnel and others engaged in nature education through outdoor means. The chapters and their current content has been written up in-house, mostly on the basis of the experience of many CEE personnel, gained over the past several years of organising camping programmes across India.

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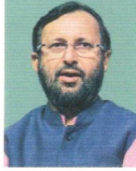


# Foreword

प्रकाश जावडेकर  
Prakash Javadekar



राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार)  
MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)  
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन  
ENVIRONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE  
भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



Across the world, educationists and parents are worried over the fact that our children are getting increasingly distanced from Nature and the outdoors. They spend more and more of their free time with electronic gadgets, on social media, on television. Such disconnect from Nature is already showing several impacts- poor health, attention disorders, depression, and inability to interact in group situations. Despite the rich and ancient Indian tradition of learning in Nature, and from Nature, our children too are no exception to this malaise.

It is widely established that direct exposure to Nature through outdoor experiences such as camping, has a strong impact in motivating people to lead more eco-friendly lifestyles and contribute towards conservation of Nature and the environment. The impact can be lasting, indeed lifelong in the case of young children and youth. It also helps build their confidence, teamwork abilities, problem-solving skills, besides of course supplementing their curricular studies in practical and adventure-filled manner.

Although camping programmes have been around for decades, very few children are able to join those due to the costs involved. We in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change have attempted to extend the outreach through the National Nature Camping Programme (NNCP). I am happy to see that the programme is progressing in the right direction. Over 100 camp batches have been supported across the country and a small nucleus of organizations has been enabled to develop the activity. The programme is overseen by the Environment Education Division in my Ministry.

I am happy that this Guidebook on Camping has been brought out a much needed resource. It will provide information, guidelines and orientation to not just camp organizers but also campers, parents, and all outdoors minded people. Our Ministry will continue to strengthen Nature education, especially through outdoor and experiential learning, in which camping forms an important part.

My best wishes to the teams that are working on this manual and the programme.

  
(Prakash Javadekar)

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# Message

अशोक लवासा  
ASHOK LAVASA, IAS



सत्यमेव जयते

सचिव  
भारत सरकार  
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय  
Secretary  
Government of India  
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change



Spreading education and awareness about the environment and motivating people, especially the youth, to adopt more environment friendly and sustainable lifestyles is an integral part of the mandate of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC). To fulfill this mission, the Ministry has a number of schemes and programmes. The Environment Education Division of MoEF&CC runs a countrywide programme of school-based eco clubs – the National Green Corps. Nearly a lakh schools are registered under this initiative, and receive programmatic and financial support through a network of State Nodal Agencies and Resource Agencies. The Division also runs schemes for supporting environment awareness campaigns, seminars, symposia and conferences.

The National Nature Camping Programme (NNCP) is the latest of these initiatives. It stems out of the objective of making available at least one camping opportunity to every school child, particularly in the interval of classes 6 to 10. Towards this aim, the Ministry has already supported the conduct of over 100 camp batches during FY 2013-14 and 2014-15. We hope to further build on this initiative during the years to come.

In order to bring such a vast nationwide programme to a certain standard and also to provide orientation and a common minimum resource to the organizing agencies, the campers and all other stakeholders involved, it was felt necessary to develop a guidebook on nature camping. Centre for Environment Education, a Centre of Excellence of the Ministry, was entrusted with this task and we are happy that this guidebook, which brings together the experience of several years of camping, is finally being brought out. We are hopeful that it will prove useful as a field manual for all those involved in camping activities. The Ministry will be keen to receive the comments and feedback from all levels of users of this manual.

New Delhi  
Date: 15-3-2016

  
(Ashok Lavasa)



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# Preface

सुशील कुमार  
विशेष सचिव  
**SUSHEEL KUMAR, IAS**  
Special Secretary




भारत सरकार  
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय  
नई दिल्ली - 110003  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS &  
CLIMATE CHANGE  
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In the year 2013-14, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched a national initiative of nature camping for schools under the ambit of its Environment Education Division. The effort was based on the premise that our Ministry should strive to provide each child an opportunity to join at least one nature camp during his/her schooling. Such exposure goes a long way in sensitizing children to nature and environmental issues, and helps shape their attitudes and actions towards nature conservation and environmental protection.

A national consultative meeting was held in November, 2013, where several stakeholder groups provided valuable inputs for strengthening the programme. Centre for Environment Education, a Centre of Excellence of this Ministry, was assigned the task of convening this meet as well as of preparing a manual on camping, which could be used as a guidebook by practitioners and organizers of nature camping, besides by campers themselves. Over the last two years, the Ministry has also supported a number of organisations to conduct several batches of camps for school children across the country, and we hope to further build on this experience in times to come.

I am happy to present this guidebook on nature camping, which represents the experience of several years of camping activities, of a number of groups and people. I congratulate the MoEF&CC and CEE teams involved in this task and am hopeful that this will prove useful to all those who are engaged in nature education through outdoor experiences.

  
(Susheel Kumar)





# Introduction

Being out in nature and directly experiencing the wonder all around us, is one of the most enduring and effective methods of environmental education. While it also involves an element of staying outdoors, the experience becomes one of a lifetime. Ask someone what he remembers of the school days and if they have been to a camp, this would certainly be one of the strong memories. Activities in themselves are remarkable educational tools. A good nature camp achieves all these objectives.

It is with this strong conviction that the proposal to try and give every child who goes to school in India atleast one two-nights and three-days camping experience, arose. Looking at the number of children in India, this may seem a daunting task. However, it is worth every rupee spent on it. As we go forward, camps may need to be organized in virtually every district and it will require large number of trained manpower to deal with the complexity in running a good camp. There is a major difference between an outdoor adventure camp and one which combines education and a deeper understanding of nature without taking adventure and fun out of the camping experience. The Nature Camping Guidebook is an attempt in capturing the experiences in running an effective camping programme, so that not only could we hold more camps but also make them effective and a true learning experience.

Kartikeya V. Sarabhai  
Director,  
Centre for Environment Education (CEE)



# Background, Objectives of Nature Camping

Camping and other outdoor experiences are the most direct, primary and hands-on form of exposure to nature and environmental issues. Their educational impact is strong, irreplaceable, and lifelong. Learning through camping can be a strong conservation tool for building public support for long-term protection of nature and environment, as well as promoting values of sustainable development. Camping and similar experiences become a positive influence in shaping our attitudes and practices with regard to nature, use of natural resources, and our response as a whole to issues of environment and development. Camping experience in a young age also helps children learn about team working, confidence building, leadership skills, responsibility, facing challenging goals in unfamiliar surroundings, living together, inter-cultural learning, indigenous knowledge, local traditions and practices related to sustainable living, biodiversity, forests, wildlife, protected areas and their management, natural resource management, resource recycling, reducing consumption, waste management, renewable and alternative energy sources, and so on. All of these are in line with the aims and objectives of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the new and emerging paradigm of environment education.

In an ideal camping situation, conservation and sustainability should be reflected through routine activities and practices, and not just taught or imparted through instructional methods. As far as possible, activities and practices at nature camps should be in conformity with these objectives, clearly demonstrating the reduction of consumption, minimization of impact on the environment, and sustainability of all actions.

A wide spectrum of camping activities exist across the world, ranging from free to not-for-profit paid camping to commercial level paid camping operations. Organizing agencies include government departments, non-government organizations, voluntary groups, companies, clubs and membership-based organizations.



As an educational activity (and/or movement), camping is several decades old. Many countries have large-scale camping programmes aimed at students, youth and other interest groups. Camping is an activity in line with, and supportive of, ESD objectives. Nature camps inculcate the following aspects in the children/campers as a key outcome of the programme conducted by them:

- Appreciation of nature and natural resources as well as their importance
- Creating love towards environment, nature and wildlife
- Instilling concerns for nature and natural resources conservation
- Introducing variety of flora and fauna of the forests, grasslands, rivers, wetlands, deserts and other ecosystems
- Providing an exciting and adventure-filled opportunity to children to explore into natural areas and wildernesses
- Motivating students to adopt an eco-friendly lifestyle for protection of environment, nature and natural resources
- Helping them develop skills of leadership, teamwork, discovery



*Students exploring the moult of snake skin during field visit in a camp*



## Nature Camps v/s Other Excursions and Tours

Nature Camping essentially comprises travel to, and extended (at least an overnight) stay in, places of importance from the point of view of learning about natural history, conservation, ecosystem and species survival, ecosystem services (water recharge, resources, flood control, climate regulation) and so on. It is an activity intended both for fun-filled learning as well as imbibing conservation ethics and values.

Camping out under the open sky; away from the noise, distractions and stresses of their daily life in the city or town provides children with fresh air, sunshine, a chance to explore the wilderness and perhaps view some wildlife. Camping can be an informal way of learning as it provides children with an opportunity to explore their environment and learn valuable life lessons. The outdoors can help children gain life skills as it can be combined with adventure activities like trekking, kayaking, mountaineering, etc. Nature camps emphasize on Nature and its importance. One of the main aims of nature camping is to develop an interest and appreciation of India's unique natural diversity, varied ecosystems, flora and fauna, as well as to understand the threats to their survival and the impacts on environment, climate, and humans. Once the campers are sensitized, they are more receptive towards nature conservation and protection of the environment. Nature is the best teacher for children and provides teachers with a vehicle for bringing real meaning to theoretical concepts, through hands-on learning in a natural laboratory instead of the classroom. Children exploring the outdoors develop the capabilities to learn at their own pace and also develop better social skills than at regular school.

Over the years a large component of 'camping' activity has gone into the hands of commercial agencies (predominantly travel and tourism companies) and has turned camping into a lucrative business, with very few non-profit entities left in the organizing of such camps. In the name of camps, one comes across pure sightseeing trips, foreign as well as domestic tours to exotic destinations, where 'campers' are lodged in permanent structures such as built-up resorts with facilities like gyms, swimming





*Camp guide explaining the students about forest night life during a night trek in jungle*

pools, etc. which detract the participants from the main focus of camp living. The component of Nature can be altogether missing from many of these excursions. The content, quality and educational component of such trips are overshadowed by entertainment, adventure and holiday considerations. The conservation value and educational potential of the experience is secondary in those instances and often doubtful, since the commercial agencies offering such camps have neither the training nor any interest in the educational aspects and are more concerned with making the event a fun-filled luxury holiday for the customers. Being a part of the organized or unorganized tourism and travel industry rather than a part of the education sector, such operations are also outside the ambit of any quality control, monitoring, dialogue or guidance from the agencies involved in environment education.

**“Teaching a child not to step on a caterpillar is as valuable to the child as it is to the caterpillar.” -- Bradley Miller**





## Brief History of Nature Camping in India

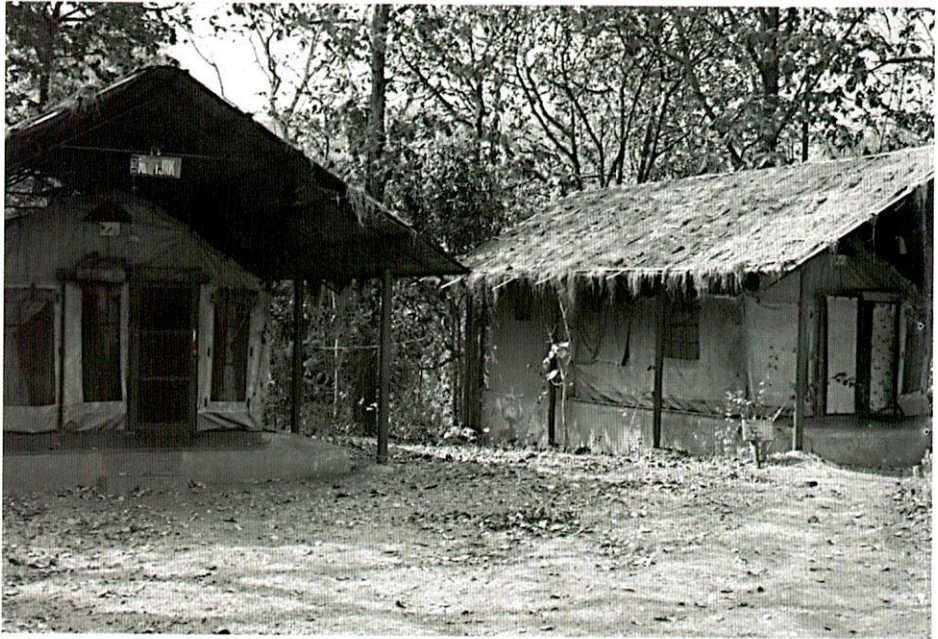
Till about a hundred years ago, camping was an activity reserved for the military. The tents were portable and used for housing troops. Slowly, it turned into a leisure activity. Camping was informal and unsupervised in the earlier years. Thomas Hiram Holding (1844-1930) is called the “Father of Camping”. He wrote in 1908 the first guide ever written on recreational camping, aptly named “The Camper’s Handbook”. Camping became popular after World War I, but then the World War II put a huge stop to all camping activities due to budget constraints. After a few years, camping activities resumed again. Besides families and private people, volunteer service organizations and youth groups have popularized camping.

In India, tribal communities have, for ages, lived in makeshift tents or huts, and many societies have also been nomadic, carrying their entire belongings and putting up camps as temporary dwellings. Historically, kings in the pursuit of hunting game used to travel days on end with their entourage and enjoyed pursuing game. While travelling on their expeditions they would stop over and have extravagant tents put up to rest for the night. There were differently shaped and sized designed tents for the kings, his army and the staff. The Kings and Sultans have always had the rich tradition of camping in luxury tents on expeditions and wars. During battles, tents provided temporary and transportable accommodation for the armies.

Previously, camps played an important role in the outdoor education movement. L. B. Sharp introduced the concept of ‘camping education’. Rachel Carson’s epic book, ‘The Silent Spring’, ushered the beginning of the environmental movement. By the 1970s, outdoor education gained popularity.

Now, with the advent of portable tents, lightweight field gear, camping out has become a viable and affordable leisure option for many families and groups. Exploring the forest, mountainside or beach, and other forms of outdoor living have picked up with the city dwellers as it is a perfect getaway option.





*Camp site at Kali Tiger Reserve in Karnataka, India*

In its current organized form, the nature camping movement in India started in the early 1970s. The earliest nature camps were started by some NGOs, most notably World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-India), Centre for Environment Education (CEE), GEER Foundation, Kerala Sastra Sahithya Parishad (KSSP), Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), and a few others. Some of the famous activist campaigns such as the 'Silent Valley' movement, 'Save Western Ghats' campaign, and the 'Narmada Bachao Andolan' received much impetus from sustained camping and trekking exposure to youth groups.

Today, camping is much more glamorous and easier. Many companies are mushrooming all over India to cater to the growing need of travel to the outdoors and wildlife sightings. From luxury to rustic camping, there is an option for everyone's budget. There are many tailor made and theme based camps. Herpetology camps, birding tours and Tiger sighting tours are the most popular.



## Selection of Nature Campsite

While a majority of nature camps might be held within Protected Areas (Sanctuaries and National Parks) and other wilderness settings, they may also have locations in rural areas, wetlands and coastal areas including even offshore islands. Campsites may also be on large well wooded private estates including those of institutions or even religious bodies.

While assessing the suitability of a proposed nature camp site, it will be good to use some indicators for a quick baseline check:

Is the proposed site in a Sanctuary, National Park or Reserve that is already on the regional/ national tourist circuit and therefore under intense user pressure and disturbance? If so, attempts should be made to identify an alternative nearby Sanctuary/National Park site that is less disturbed. Bookings at such a site will be available more easily, plus it will also offer a more peaceful and tranquil setting to the camper groups.

It is not always essential that we select only wildlife parks or forest reserves for campsites. Nature camps can also utilize other areas with adequate outdoor settings and wilderness, such as landscapes in rural areas, open spaces on properties such as farmland, plantation, privately owned forest areas (e.g. forests of several temple trusts and other religious bodies).

Here is an initial checklist of things to look for while identifying a site for a Nature camp:

- Choose a campsite area where campers' activities would have minimal impact on the surroundings.
- Keep away from areas that are prone to landslides, floods, rock falls, or sudden tidal ingress.
- Be wary while camping near water bodies, since these are likely to be visited by wild animals at night. Weigh the pros and cons such as the opportunity for viewing vs. the security risks involved, before taking a decision.
- It is vital to choose a location that has the basic minimum facilities, especially with younger children. More rustic sites requiring rough living may be tried out with older campers.



- Ensure that the site will have nearby places for getting rations and other essential supplies, emergency medical help, and some form of emergency communication service (STD phone booth or a wireless) as mobile networks may not be available in several remote locations. Such resources and facilities should be a short drive away for managers but reasonably away from the daily routes of campers.
- When establishing a permanent camp, it is vital to make sure the environment around is not stressed. The local natural resources should not be stretched to a point of no recovery, e.g. water sources.
- Decide clearly the size limits for your site and from that the limit on the number of participants per batch. It might be tempting and financially more attractive to plan a campsite for 50, but may be that the site will do better with batches of just 25.
- Prior surveys must be carried out to make sure that the area will be safe to make a campsite.
- Thorough background research should be done on the place, including enquiries with local police and Forest authorities, to find if the area is prone to crime, vandalism, civil unrest or any other form of disruption. Local tour operators, colleges, NGOs or voluntary organizations can also be tapped for such background information.



*Cultural trail path leading to a village*



- Consider the local people and their attitudes before selecting a site. How do they view outsiders, especially groups of touristy outsiders? If in a rural setting, will the farmer be tolerant of 40 kids romping over his cropland and alarming his livestock?
- In case any studies regarding the impact of human activities on the native flora and fauna are available, these should be consulted and adequate safeguards incorporated while selecting the site.
- Prior permissions from all the concerned officials as well as private agencies must be ensured before deciding and announcing the campsite (e.g. police, forest, irrigation, agriculture, local panchayat, health department, food safety, and so on). All coordination for requesting and obtaining various agencies' support should also be done in advance during the recce visits.

### **Gaining Permission to set up camp**

Make bookings with National Parks / Sanctuaries or talk with the local owner of the site.

#### **1. Meet and provide the following information:**

- What kind of group and how many.
- Explain the purpose of the camp and its activities
- What skill levels the leaders have.
- References from other land owners (especially with local farmers).

#### **2. You need to find out:**

- What fire restrictions are in place?
- How is the access to the desired campsite?
- What time is appropriate for arrival, travel, etc?
- If any bonds, fees are needed or forms need to be filled out.



## Camp Planning

Planning is a huge component to run a camp successfully. It is an overwhelming process to plan and organize a camp. It helps when one prepares a checklist of all the things to do, as it streamlines the planning process and makes the process easier and faster. While planning a camp there are several things that need to be done.

- 1) Prepare multiple checklists.
- 2) Select the location; check out its safety and its surroundings. Visit to the campsite in advance.
- 3) Set up organizing team (for administration & accounts, field conduct of programme, logistics and support services)
- 4) Camping budget; charges from participants or nominating agencies; funding support if any
- 5) Travel arrangements; travel to and from the destination, around the campsite
- 6) Medical assistance: hospitals and other medical facilities nearby in case of emergency
- 7) Accommodation
- 8) Plan of daily supplies and services at camp (rations, essential items, consumables to be replenished)
- 9) Food menu: to meet the nutritional requirements.
- 10) Planned activities.
- 11) Equipment checklist: facilities such as tents, ropes, first aid etc.

### Timeline

Decide on when and where the camp is going to take place.

- Book the campsite well in advance.
- Send the details earlier, at least three months before the date of the camp (depending on the place options and their requirements and conditions).
- You will be contacted by the campsite manager (if it's not your own campsite).



- Start planning the camp with your staff and orient the guides
- Keep in contact with your field managers throughout the process. Keep them informed of the decisions.
- Evaluate the camp.

## Sample Checklist

### UNIT CAMP CHECKLIST

Campsite		Dates	
Booked by Phone	Deposit Sent	Forms Sent	
Permission Notes Sent Out		Cost	

#### Staff

QM	Name	Phone
	Address	
FA	Name	Phone
	Address	
	Name	Phone
	Address	

#### Planning

PL Councils			
Campercraft Training			
Theme		Reward System	
Patrol Duties	Patrol Duty Roster	Staff Duties	
Menu	Campfire Program	Camp Program	
Activities	Noticeboard	First Aid Kit	
Wet Weather Activities	Kitlist	Health Forms	
Shopping List	Gadgets needed	List Equipment Needs	
Check fire restrictions	Food storage	Daylight Saving	
Recipe Booklets	PL Booklets	Staff Booklets	
Grace cards	Guides' Own	Check gas cylinders	

#### Patrols

Patrol Name	Colour	Patrol Name	Colour
1		4	
2		5	
3		6	

#### Parents' Meeting

Date	Place	Time
Tetanus Reminder	Maps to Campsite	Allergies
Transport	Medicines	Kit list
Pocket money	Health Forms	Sweets
Reminder Notes	Health Problems	



**Anything else**

--

**Camp Program:**

Day	Activity	Who's in Charge/Organizer
Time	Wake up	
	Breakfast	
	Morning Tea	
	Lunch	
	Evening Tea	
	Dinner	

**Camp Food Quantities:**

**CAMP FOOD QUANTITIES**

Write down every ingredient needed for every meal, and the number of serves needed per meal, then make your shopping list.

Food Item	Number of serves per meal				Total Serves
	Breakfasts	Lunches	Dinners	Snacks (Morning/ Afternoon Tea, Supper)	





<b>Day:</b>
Breakfast
Morning Tea
Lunch
Evening Tea with snacks
Dinner

**Camper Selection:**

- 1) Campers should be chosen with no regard for race, religion, gender or ethnic background - Standard clause for all camp literature.
- 2) Try to ensure that campers possess an enthusiasm for learning.

Conduct a pre-camp meeting for staff and parents to review programme options, provide information about camp details, and answer questions.

- Regularly inform the staff at the camp of the dates to ensure that the supplies are stocked.
- Give staff the dates beforehand
- Inform staff of the mode of travel



## Camp Facilities

One can only feel best camping and outdoor experience if the facilities at the campsite provided are up to the expectations. Facilities required at the campsite include:

1. Accommodation
2. Sanitation
3. Water
4. Energy
5. Group activity spaces
6. Kitchen/Mess/Catering
7. Staff lodgings
8. Stores
9. Equipment/Tools
10. Medical aid

### Accommodation

There should be a proper stay arrangement for the campers at the campsite in the form of guest houses, or loghuts, or dormitories, or tents with appropriate bedding and lighting facilities. The accommodation should be arranged keeping in mind all the safety and security measures of the campers. The camps should be located in clean surroundings, well away from villages and populated areas and not encroached by stray animals. It should also have plenty of sunlight, fresh air, shade trees and be as near the forest as possible. It is essential to clear away all dead and decaying vegetation from the site, as such rubbish attracts ticks, ants, leeches, snakes, scorpions and other unwanted pests. The accommodation provided should be clean and tidy with good ventilation. The floor space in the tents or dormitories must be adequate without over-crowding and secure from foul weather conditions. Eating should be forbidden in the living areas. The accommodation should make the campers feel comfortable and at home away from home.



## Setting up Tents

In case you have a tented site, encourage all campers to participate in setting up their tents and be comfortable. Modern tents are very simple. Identify the best site to pitch the tent.

- Check for stones, sticks or any other sharp things and remove them. Check that the area is safe. Look at the trees around the tent site so as to avoid camping where a branch could fall on a tent.
- Choose where the entrance will be.
- Identify where the rest of the group is located.
- The view of the habitat and vantage from the tents should be good.
- Consider the natural elements – where will the sun rise and set? Which direction is the wind?
- Be aware of the direction of smoke if fires are being used. Be careful of the effect the rain has on the area.
- Lay the tent out and make sure corner pegs are hooked tightly.



## Sanitation

Camp sanitation in the form of bathrooms and toilets should be clean and hygienic to avoid any infections and diseases. Proper toilet habits and cleanliness are essential and must be observed by one and all. Sanitation can be permanent or temporary depending upon the type of camping. However, open air latrine in nearby forest should be strictly avoided and not



encouraged. Proper disinfection and maintenance of the sanitation is necessary. Toilet areas should be marked with a flag or sign board for easy recognition. Separate arrangements for ladies and gentlemen are essential.

### **Water**

Ensure that the water at camp is fit for various intended uses. Water from deep wells, rivers is usually safe. However, the water should be purified by boiling or with chemicals before drinking. Points for drinking water and bathing, washing etc. should be marked properly to avoid confusion and inappropriate use. While at the camp water should be used with utmost care to avoid wastage.

### **Energy**

Energy in the form of electricity or natural gas/fuel wood should be made available at the campsite for appropriate use. Electricity or solar power for lighting essential areas in the campsites should be provided. For cooking, natural gas in the form of cylinders can be made available or to give it a more outdoor experience, fuel wood can be provided keeping in mind the local permissions. The fuel wood can be collected from the dead and fallen trees in the nearby forest. Maximum use of renewable energy devices/sources should be promoted. CFLs/ LEDs in case of lighting and biogas for cooking can be such options.

### **Group activity spaces**

Separate area should be provided in the campsite for all the campers to get together and have their recreational activities such as games, group discussions or film shows. These spaces can be either indoors or outdoors. The group activity spaces should be well lit and ventilated, and capable to accommodate entire camp group during any activity. These spaces should be used only for group activity and not for any other purpose. In case of an indoor activity, a hall tent or large room can be made available whereas for an outdoor activity, an amphitheatre can be provided.

- Activity area
- Water area for safe observations of life, and supervised play.
- Problem solving activities – group development, adventure projects, low element ropes, pioneering activities
- Training – outdoor skills, caving, rock climbing, etc., where participants come back to the camp after the activity.
- Nature study area – if suitable sit-out spaces are available in campsite.





*Students playing a game on resource management in a campsite*

### **Kitchen/Mess/Catering**

Kitchen should be situated away from the main camp in order to avoid fire hazards and attracting wildlife. The kitchen should also be downwind so that neither smoke nor smell passes through or over the camp. Preferably, it should be close to a water source, clean and tidy without any unhygienic conditions. Camping involves a group of people in close contact with one another. Germs or viruses can spread through close contact or by the mishandling of food.

Good ventilation is required for the kitchen in order to keep it free of smoke, grit and dust. There should be an outlet for draining water away from camp in order to avoid problems of hygiene and sanitation. In the absence of a kitchen, a mess/canteen should be provided for food service to the campers. In case of short camps or temporary sites, catering with carried food is the best option. Adequate cleaning facilities like soap, scrubbing materials, clean drying cloth and disinfectant should be provided.

### **Staff lodgings**

Staff lodgings separately for the resource persons and the local staff accompanying are quite necessary as the other facilities. The staff quarters



should be clean, well ventilated and should be right next to the camp accommodation itself. They should have proper bedding and sanitation arrangements.

### **Stores**

These should preferably be located close to the kitchen. Proper storage arrangements for provisions and stores (dry and fresh) must exist. Dry stores must be carefully selected beforehand to ensure good quality, freshness and with a variety of menus in mind. They should be securely stored from encroachment by pests. Vegetables, eggs, milk, bread, fruits, etc. should be obtained fresh and as frequently as conditions permit. The stores should be well maintained to avoid any type of contamination.

### **Equipment/Tools**

For every camp, there are certain equipment/tools that are necessary to help the smooth functioning of the camps. These equipment can be listed as,

- |       |                      |      |                              |
|-------|----------------------|------|------------------------------|
| i.)   | Tenting gear         | ii.) | Axe/Spade, other basic tools |
| iii.) | Utensils             | iv.) | Grocery items                |
| v.)   | Kitchen requirements | vi.) | Sanitation requirements.     |

Other tools and accessories necessary for the camp should be regularly checked and cleaned. If there is a problem with the equipment, it should be repaired immediately so it can be used on the next camp.

### **Outdoor camps**

- Know how to look after camping equipment as well as how to store tools such as axes, spades, cooking utensils, tents, gadgets.
- Also make sure that you know how to use the tools. Don't use an axe if you've never been taught how. If you need to use an unfamiliar tool, ask your manager or other trained personnel to show you how to use and care for it.
- Keep buckets underneath water taps, to stop puddles from forming.
- Keep equipment out of the weather. A cool dark room should be used to preserve the equipment.
- Make sure you know and use the safety precautions for all tools and equipment you use.



## The Equipment cycle:

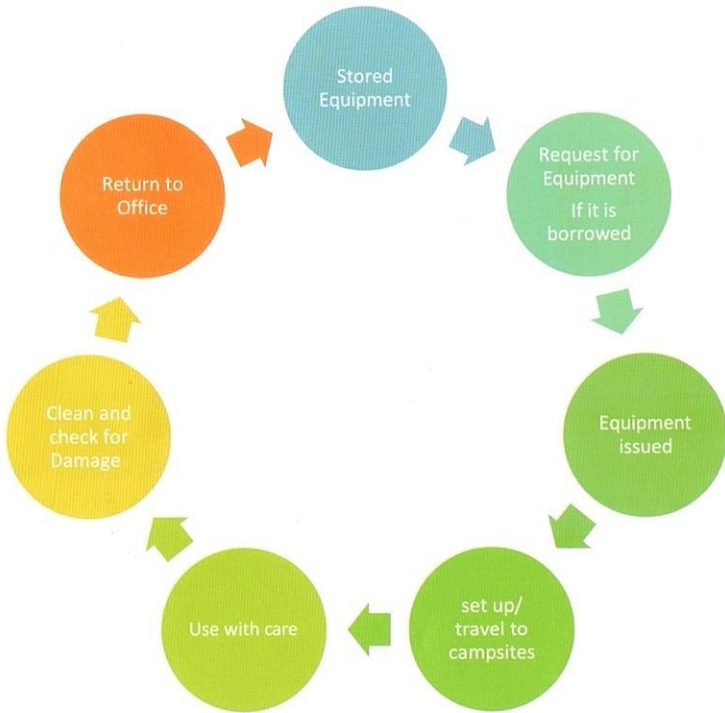


Figure: Equipment cycle.

### Other Equipment issues:

- Keep accurate records of equipment
- Date of purchase is very important.
- Date of replacement, if damaged
- Actual usage
- Make sure all the equipment is insured.

While buying equipment for camps make sure it is necessary, effective and portable. It shouldn't be heavy especially if it's being used while trekking.



**Before the camp:** A suggested equipment inventory is necessary at the beginning.

**Equipment list: Sample**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Deptt./ Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose \_\_\_\_\_

Date taken: \_\_\_\_\_

Date returned \_\_\_\_\_

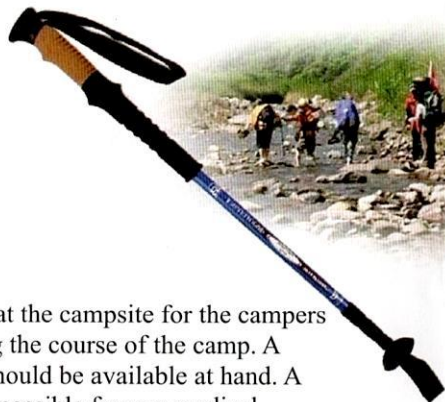
Please list each item that you have taken:

Item	Number (Units)	Returned

In borrowing the equipment, I take full responsibility for its correct use and care. I acknowledge that the equipment I am borrowing is in good working condition and has been properly maintained. I understand that I am responsible for the replacement cost if it is lost or damaged through misuse or lack of care on any part.

Signature:

Date:



**Medical Aid**

Proper medical facilities should be provided at the campsite for the campers to deal with small illnesses or mishaps during the course of the camp. A well planned first-aid kit and medicine box should be available at hand. A camp doctor/physician could be appointed if possible for any medical







*Local woman cooking food for a group of campers*

emergencies or there should be at least one person from the staff with first-aid training, to prescribe simple medicines and to attend to routine cuts, bruises, bites and stings.

### **Upkeep and maintenance of site and facilities**

There should be separate local staff to look after all the facilities and to ensure they are in proper working condition and to maintain the same. The accommodation should be well looked after and cleaned on a daily basis. The flooring should be mopped and the walls cleaned every day. The furniture and bedding should be properly dusted to avoid pests like cockroaches, bedbugs, ticks and ants. Proper pest control of all the living rooms should be done on a regular basis. Sprinkling with disinfectant powder or liquid in toilets and bathrooms at regular intervals keeps away flies and odors. Drinking water can be stored in containers like earthen pots, water buckets, plastic drums, etc. It is very important to clean these containers and change the water in them regularly.

Cooks and helpers both local and brought from outside must be physically fit and healthy without any ailments. The caterers hired for the job must be monitored closely to avoid any unhygienic conditions/contamination. All waste materials should be so disposed that domestic or wild animals do not come foraging for these. The waste generated must be properly managed and disposed of well.



## Finance and Budgeting for Nature Camps

### Sources of funding

The best sources of funds are the camp participants themselves. However, this is not always possible where certain schools/students are concerned. In such cases one has to look for alternative sources in order to subsidize or underwrite the camp expenses. A very important source for grants and subsidies is the Government (central and state), Departments of Environment; Youth Affairs; Education; and Sports, which promote conservation of environment, nature study, adventure and sports etc.

Apart from the Government, other private sources like social service organizations and clubs e.g. Jaycees club, Lions' club, Rotary club, etc. can also be tapped. Industries are a good source of sponsorship for the camps. However, these sources need not be depended upon to give cash only but can also help in kind; especially with material that will be needed and used in the camp.

Instead of chasing additional sources of funds, implement simple food and simple living. All costs is motivating the participants to give it a try. However, certain types of camps may not lend themselves to such compromises. It is not possible to reduce the number of campers or the duration nor the support services. Examples of such camps are the ones conducted, for instance, in the Himalaya with high altitude programmes.

### Budget

Prepare a budget for the camp well in advance. Earlier experience in preparing a camp budget is a great help. Do consult those who have such experience and make the estimate of receipts and expenditure. The location of the campsite, transport accessibility and the strength of the camp should be taken into account while preparing the budget. This will help plan what exactly is required at the camp.

The budget should cover every detail, however small; this will help make the most of the available financial resources. Leave no last minute surprises



to be tackled. The camp budget should take care of the following expenditure details:

**A. Capital purchases (if needed):**

1. Tent/cottages for living, kitchen, stores, mess area, work shelter, toilet partitions, bath cubicles, office, etc.
2. Storage items like trunks, boxes, water tanks, locks, etc.
3. Camping gear like axes, ropes, buckets, knives, magnetic compasses, binoculars, stoves, pressure cookers, cooking utensils, etc.

**B. Recurring expenditure items, among others are:**

1. Cost of reccie visits
2. Fee/Rent for campsite
3. Staff remuneration
4. Staff travel and allowances
5. Honoraria to volunteers and resource persons
6. Travel expenses of volunteers and resource persons
7. Catering
8. Stationery and postage
9. Resource materials and aids
10. Board and lodging expenses
11. Transportation including forwarding of rations and equipments
12. Local guide fees
13. Field dispensary
14. Sanitation and hygiene material
15. Repairs and maintenance of equipment
16. Miscellaneous and contingency expenses

A timely budget would help in arriving at the right camp charges. It would also give a definite idea on the subsidy that can be extended to the campers. If it is possible to get sponsorship and grants, the camp fee would enhance the financial resources and make for a better camp. It is necessary to charge some registration fee so that the participants do not take it as a "free holiday".

The actual camp expenses should not exceed the budget barring emergencies. Optimal utilization of the available funds is a positive



indicator of good management. Collect all bills, vouchers and receipts for all expenditure. These will help in tallying the accounts and will also be required for audit purposes.

**Camping Budget:** It is important to estimate the cost of each item and the overall expenses of the camp. Plan the budget ahead of the camp, so that costs can be managed well.

Items /Camp Supplies	Expenses	Overall/Total
Activity supplies		
Transportation		
Food items		
Equipment rentals		
Campsite		
Local Travel		
Sightseeing Charges		
Other miscellaneous expenses		

**Catering:** Find out local prices of essential food stuffs during the reccie, in order to make an estimate for budgeting. Contract for catering can be given to a professional organization or individual. Discuss and finalize the daily menu with them (depending upon the daily schedule of the camp). Clearly negotiate whether they will do the complete catering inclusive of the purchase of ingredients or only the cooking and serving part, in which case the administration has to provide them with the necessary ingredients. One alternative to hiring caterers is to include cooking as a part of the camp programme. Form groups of four to six (depending upon the size of the camp) and get them to cook meals in turn. However, appoint an experienced person in this field as "in-charge" of this exercise, in order to avoid mishaps such as half cooked or burnt food, which could lead to health problems, like indigestion, among others. Yet another solution to this problem is to take dry foodstuffs to the camp. These include precooked and non-perishable items like pickles, toast bread, tins of baked beans, dehydrated foods like noodles, soups, sweetmeats and the like which have long shelf life without needing refrigeration. However, this is possible only if the camp is of a relatively short duration. It is not recommended for longer duration programmes.



## Camp Staffing

Before undertaking any camping ensure that you have well trained professionals working with you to avoid accidents and ensure the best facilities are provided to your campers. A trained professional is well versed with:

- Planned educational activities
- Emergency response plan
- Staffing details
- Documentation of student preparation
- Pre-requisite skills/knowledge & documentation of staff qualifications
- Experience or expertise in lieu of certification/accreditation
- Strategic planning

Adequate and trained camp staff members are essential for the successful implementation of camps. Ideally the camp requires:

- Camp Manager/Camp Coordinator
- Field Guides/ Naturalists
- Adventure Experts
- Volunteers
- Camp Doctor or Paramedical staff
- Support staff – cook, cleaners, housekeeping staff
- Accounts and Admin staff

All the above staff members have to be well trained professionally and should be good at multitasking.

**The Camp Manager:** He/she needs to be an experienced individual who has adequate knowledge of camping, quick in balanced decision making and managerial skills.

Camp Managers:

- coordinate the various activities and oversee the functioning of camp.
- are good decision makers.
- are rational and help in an emergency.
- demonstrate good leadership skills.



- are good learners and motivators.
- have strong interpersonal skills.
- know about maintenance and upkeep of the campsite and facilities.

**Field Guides/Naturalists:** A minimum of two guides having a good understanding of ecology, the ecosystem of the forest, the wildlife found and knowledge about the local area and facilities.

The guides/ naturalists:

- Should be good at coordinating educational programs.
- Should be enthusiastic, self-motivated; who demonstrate a good rapport with both young children and teens.
- Should be quick learners and inquisitive in nature.
- Should have strong group-building and communication skills.
- Are able to work effectively and constructively in a team
- Are patient, good listeners and have an open mind.
- Let children nurture their skills and be warm and supportive.
- Should interact with others at camp and have a good moral ethic.

**Adventure Experts:** Camps invariably will have some adventure components such as rock climbing, steep hillock climbing, river crossing, rafting, etc. A trained adventure expert is essential who will facilitate and monitor these adventure activities with utmost care and adhering to the safety protocols laid down.

**Volunteers:**

- Should assist the camp organizers/naturalists.
- Are enthusiastic and follow directions.
- Should be passionate about nature and the concept of camping.
- Should have good interpersonal skills
- Should be dynamic and gel with different age groups.
- Should work well together and facilitate smooth running of the camp.
- Should be patient and help kids explore their potential.
- Should be open minded and nurture children/teens.

**Support Staff:**

Support staff is vital to the functioning of the camp. They help to keep the camp operations running efficiently. Support staff includes the cooks, accountants, maintenance personnel, and cleaning staff. They must be willing to work hard and independently. Camp staff can work on shift basis depending on the





*Demonstration of an activity 'Nature Balance' for campers*

schedule of the camp. They should interact well with children and be keen on working outdoors.

**Camp Doctor or Paramedical Staff** trained in First-Aid must be on duty at all times at camp.



## Resource Material

The resource material contains the essential information to meet the purpose of the camp. An outdoor education camp lets campers explore the outdoors and leads to self discovery. For some campers, it can be a life changing experience. Depending on the audience, the educational component and activity experience should be tailor-made to provide the best outdoor learning experience. The idea is for campers to develop a deep appreciation for nature.

There are many activities and outdoor teaching methods possible, as Nature is the best teacher. Use the outdoors to let the campers learn and explore their surroundings. Let their sense of smell, sight and touch develop.

Slides and small short presentations can be shown to help with identification and also enhance the learning experience as we don't always see animals or birds around (since wildlife sightings depend on chance).

Night at camp is in itself an exciting time full of opportunities for activities that will enhance learning. From simple star gazing to astronomy, experiencing sounds and smells of the habitat, experiencing nature through the silence of the wilderness, there are so many possibilities to explore. There are certain nature games that can be specially performed during the night and will help in learning various concepts and in developing skills. For example 'Trust Walk' is a game played at night in which blindfolded campers are led through a hurdle course in the dark, by partners who can see but are not allowed to talk. The aim is to let respective partners quickly develop and communicate their set of touch signals, to build mutual trust, and to help everyone understand how creatures of dark forests or ocean bottoms move about, or how visually challenged persons find their way around. For all such activities the resource materials act as a guide and source of information.

These materials can include:

- Camping module – giving details of schedule of activities with expected outcomes
- Handouts – brief handouts helping campers to understand the surrounding ecosystem, flora, fauna, historical places, geology, etc.





- Trail booklets – for self exploration of nature trails by the campers
- Activity booklet – detailing how specific activities need to be conducted in the field
- Camp guide for tutors – basic camping principles to be followed by the tutors
- Display posters on camping rules and regulations
- Camping brochures on specific campsites or programmes
- Digital materials for identification of bird calls, tree species, bird species, frogs, insects, etc.



**CEE**  
Centre for Environment Education (CEE) is a national institute established in 1984 as a Centre of Excellence under the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Government of India. It aims to improve public awareness and understanding about environmental issues with a view to promote the conservation and wise use of nature and natural resources. CEE South is a southern regional cell of the Centre situated at Bangalore catering environmental education needs of the southern states of the country.

**Nature Education Camps**  
Centre organizes Nature Education Camps for students and general public across the country with an aim to instill nature conservation values in them. In Karnataka, CEE organizes nature education camps in the State owned National Parks, Sanctuaries and other Protected Areas.

**Goal**  
To sensitize students on the importance of nature and natural resources and their conservation.

**Methodology**

- Lecture sessions and group assignment
- Demonstration of nature related activities and games
- Nature walk, Safari visits, Group assignments
- Bird watching, Nature Talking, Creative Learning's
- Interactive discussions on environment related issues
- Slide shows and Screening of movie related to nature
- Observation, Survey & Analysis of nature related data
- Basics of nature photography
- Learning through Pug marking
- Nature related songs / Ministry / Clay modeling
- Puppet show / Role / Story building



**Camping Details**

Location	Kulgi Camp Site (Dandeli) in Uttara Karnataka
	Muhodi Camp site, Bhadra in Karnataka
Lodging	Stay is at comfortable tents / Dormitory
Boarding	Nutritious and delicious Veg food is served
Duration	3 Nights and 4 days excluding travel time
Batch size	30-40 campers per batch

**Fun Corner**



*A brochure on camping activities*



## Camp Calendar

Camping sessions depend on the season, general holidays, availability of accommodation at campsites, government regulations and pre-planned programme schedule of the schools and colleges. However, camping mostly depends on the season and the holiday time.

Different types of campers are

- Schools (rural and urban): Includes teachers and students
- Colleges (science, arts, commerce, engineering and business management): lecturers and students

Requirements of each camper type differ in terms of content, location and the number of days of the camp. Often, urban schools would prefer one-day camp while rural schools prefer one-night and two-day camps. Higher age groups ideally prefer two-nights and three-day camps excluding travel time, in a few cases the camp is preferred for more than four nights and five days but not more than ten days. The schedules are accordingly prepared and executed.

The camp schedule details out the entire itinerary such as

- Arrival and departure time
- Schedule of camp activities (both outdoor and indoor)
- Food timings
- Leisure breaks

From the experience of most organizers, the 2-night-3-day or 2-night-2 ½-day format of nature camps has emerged over the years as a popular schedule for children of 6th-9th standards, and for several reasons. For children of that age, it allows just the right length of travel and stay away from home, and allows them to explore independent group living. Longer duration camps will entail carrying of heavier personal baggage especially in winter months. The common items of luggage suitable for children – backpackers, airbags, tote bags, strollers – will need to be added or replaced with much heavier luggage such as suitcases. With older campers, longer camp durations are popular, which could extend to a week or even longer.



## A Sample Schedule:

### Day -1

Activity	Session Duration	Timings
Breakfast		
Session 1		
Session 2		
Games		
Lunch		
Session 3		
Tea		
Nature games		
Session 4		
Dinner		

### Day -2

Activity	Session Duration	Timings
Breakfast		
Session 1		
Session 2		
Games		
Lunch		
Session 3		
Tea		
Eco-activities		
Session 4		



## Camp Activities

Camping today is being practised and promoted primarily as a recreational activity in which people live temporarily in the outdoors, usually in wilderness settings. However, there are vast opportunities for incorporating several activities and learning experiences into daily camp life, which are useful to the campsite itself and also have demonstration and educational value.

Camps provide an effective teaching environment because learning is enjoyable. Activities are done through hands-on approach and observation of one's surroundings as an essential component of camping, since they enrich the campers. The fun and team-building element in the activities at camp help facilitate campers to actively engage in the camp – an overall learning experience. The activities may be targeted at an individual level or in groups and may be developed based on the camp location, or around the specific flora or fauna of that location, the different seasons, or a mixture of these components.

### **Types of camping:**

1. Day camping
2. Travel camping/ stay over

### **Based on the location of the campsite:**

If the camp is situated in an evergreen forest, then the activities can be structured as a theme, e.g. to explain the ecology and ecosystem of that specific forest such as evergreen forest. The activities can include mapping the forest canopy, tracing the origin of lianas, observing the different barks of the trees, etc. Similar activities can be planned for campsites located in other habitats such as deciduous forests, grassland, marine ecosystems, rocky hill terrain, riverine belt ecosystem, tribal areas, desert areas, mountain regions, etc.

### **Based on the specific flora and fauna:**

The camp addressing the 'King Cobra' would include activities such as tracing the nest, learning how they move around, their life cycle, etc.



Similar activities may be planned for theme-based modules, such as the Asian Elephants, Dolphin, Lion-Tailed Macaque, Amphibians, Insects, etc.

If the camp theme focuses on Timbers such as Sandalwood, Sal, Teak, Rosewood, then the activities would be based on the same, such as measurement of tree-girth, bark and exploring the leaf-types, etc.

### **Based on target groups:**

Activities may be designed based on target groups such as

- Schools (primary, middle, high schools)
- School type (rural or urban)
- Age group (5-10 years, 10-14 years, 14-20 years, 20 years and above)
- College (Graduate and Post-Graduate)

### **Based on seasons:**

Camping activities would differ from season to season, i.e. monsoon, winter, summer and autumn.

Some of the popular activities at nature camps are:

1. Balancing the Bamboo
2. Sense the Nature
3. Bird Calls Mapping
4. Know your Trees!
5. Butterflies Exploration
6. Blind Elephant!
7. Fish in the Pond
8. Meet a Tree!
9. Color-Mixing Leaves
10. Make a Nature Journal.

Integrating camping with school curriculum: In the new CBSE curriculum (syllabus) there is now an element of CCE (Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation). This works by allotting grades/marks for each child on the basis of observing her/his practices and behaviour throughout the year. Opportunities such as camping could become a good tool in assessing children's group interactions, leadership qualities, interpersonal skills, problem-solving abilities, and many other components of behaviour that are considered in CCE. This will help to increase the usefulness of camping in mainstream school education also. Moreover, there are several topics in



various subjects taught during classes 6th to 9th, which have a fair amount of overlap with topics covered in a nature camp also, e.g. India's natural history; wildlife; major classes of animals, birds, reptiles etc; endangered species; protected areas; biodiversity; forest types and resources of India; habitats and biogeographic zones of India; local social groups, tribes, ethnic societies in various natural ecosystems; habitat degradation; social, developmental and economic aspects in conservation; and so on. It will be easier and beneficial for teachers to handle these topics in field situations instead of through regular classrooms.

Use camp-produced compost in growing kitchen gardens and other saplings; promote hands-on involvement of camper children in these activities; thus demonstrating in real life the cycle of production, consumption, waste, composting, and nutrient recycling.

If there are solar devices at camp, children should be encouraged, under supervision, to learn how to charge and use them and also practise some aspects of their handling and maintenance.

For camps longer than three days, there would be sufficient time to engage campers in fun-filled, team-building group activities such as pitching/dismantling of their lodging tents, mess facilities, and patrolling the fence for identifying and mending weak points.

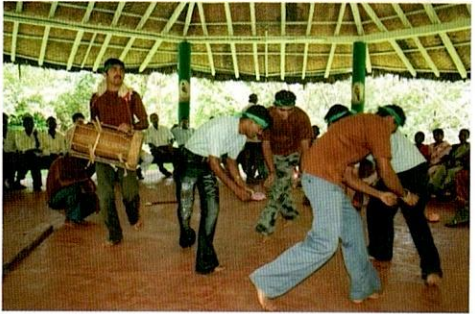
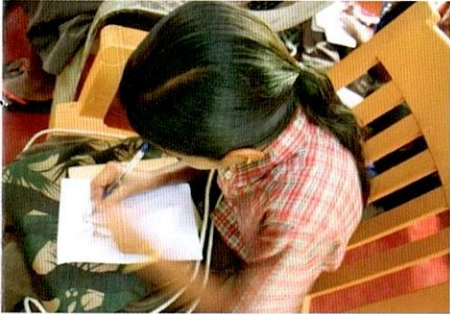
**Other common activities of the camp include:**

- a. Theme-based nature trails – timber trail, desert trail, mangrove trail, hornbill trail, butterfly trail, etc.
- b. Bird watching or birding
- c. Cloud watching
- d. Star gazing, sky watching
- e. Night walk
- f. Trekking
- g. Transect line walk; learning scientific methods of survey
- h. Rock climbing
- i. Adventure activities – rappelling, rafting, mountain climbing, tree climbing, etc.

**Creative activities that can be taken up are:**

- a. Making casts of pugmarks/hoof marks using Plaster of Paris
- b. Clay modeling of wildlife, trees, leaves, etc.





1. Students handling a honeybee hive during camping

2. Playing 'Nature Balance' activity

3. Making notes in a camp

4. Students watching a local youth drama on conservation of tiger and hornbill

- c. Puppet making and puppetry performances on nature/wildlife themes
- d. Story telling
- e. Origami
- f. Candle light camp
- g. Nature painting
- h. Sound mapping
- I. 'Hug a Tree'



## Clothing Requirements

It is essential to plan and pack all the appropriate clothing required for the camp depending on the weather conditions of the place. According to the season and the weather, warm and cold clothing are essential to avoid hypothermia as well as heatstroke. Campers must always carry a water bottle and depending on the weather, wear appropriate clothing. Campers must be informed about the most appropriate clothing to pack. Plan only on what to take. Clean clothes is a must.

### Clothing for Cold Conditions

- Clothing should be layered to avoid both over cooling and heating.
- A windproof outer shell like a jacket reduces heat loss by evaporation and convection.
- Wear woollen sweaters, mufflers to keep warm.
- Wearing a hat or a scarf will retain heat in very cold situations.
- Thermals (innerwear) keep the body warm in extremely cold weather.
- Eye goggles can be worn for safety, especially in snow.
- Gloves (mittens) and thick socks also provide protection.

### Clothing for Hot Conditions

- Clothing should be loose and light coloured.
- Keep clothes on so that evaporation of moisture can help to keep body temperature down.
- Drink lots of water.
- Wear a hat that gives shade to you face.
- Be wary of sunburn; wear full sleeved clothes and apply sun screen.
- Use sun glasses to protect the eyes from glare.
- When trekking in the wild, wear camouflage colours.

### Clothing for Rainy Weather (Monsoon):

- Clothes must always be dry. Change wet clothing immediately.
- Always carry rain coats.
- Rain covers can be used for the backpacks.





- Carry extra clean clothes, as fungus can cause infection.
- Socks should be always dry.
- Carry a warm cap and thermals in case the temperature dips suddenly.
- Umbrella
- Gum boots
- Wear camouflage clothes when trekking or hiking in the wild.

### Sleeping Bags:

Sleeping bags are designed to fit comfortably for warmth at night. The features of a sleeping bag include

- (1) Shape      (2) Insulating Material      (3) Construction

	Materials	Advantages	Disadvantages	Uses
Down	Fine feathers of birds such as ducks, geese or chickens	This is lighter, very long life	If wet, it takes long to dry	Colder terrain (Himalaya)
Synthetic	Polyester Fibre	If wet, dries quickly. Cheaper	Heavier, bulkier, restricted life	Moderate cold weather



## Eco-friendly Nature Camping

Camping, trekking, outdoor living and related activities take place specifically in wilderness areas, which are particularly sensitive natural habitats. The actions of campers can have an immediate impact on the local environment. In many cases the impact or damage can be longer lasting since there are generally no municipal or civic services in such areas to take care of requirements (quick disposal and treatment of human waste, removal of non-degradable waste, and so on). It is essential that any camping activity that is undertaken has minimal effect on the local habitat and environment.

### Points to be followed:

- 'Leave no Trace' Principle
- Use durable surfaces: 'Durable surfaces' are established trails and campsites. Try not to create new paths and campsites, which further disrupt the purity of the area.
- Dispose of waste properly: don't leave anything at the site that wasn't there before.
- Don't take anything natural, including insects, rocks or plants, from the campsite.
- Know the wildlife you might encounter, avoid contact with animals, and do not disturb native plants. The key is to avoid introducing or transporting non-native species to or from the site.
- Minimize campfire impact
- Respect wildlife
- Walk single file on new or unused trails.
- Do not stress the resources available at camp, minimize use of gadgets.
- Use eco-friendly material while building the camp. Minimize transport of material from other places.
- Don't waste food; make the right amount of food for everyone.
- Don't dispose of batteries or e-waste at camp; take it back.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.



Camp life itself should be such that conservation is reflected through routine activities and practices, and not just taught or imparted through instructional methods. As far as possible, activities and practices at nature camps should be in conformity with these objectives, clearly demonstrating the reduction of consumption, minimization of impact on the environment, and sustainability of all actions, especially the actions of organizers and other elders. Nature Camp activities in general should minimize the classroom and lecture approach, and use strategies of field experience, self discovery, and learning by search.

Towards this aim, camp organizers will need to develop, implement and enforce strict protocols governing the practices of campers, organizers, service providers, suppliers of materials, and so on. The following are some details of aspects relating to short-term and long-term impacts from camp activities:

**Composting:** Collection of leftover food after meals; mixing with vegetation waste of campsite (to keep balance between C and N rich components); composting in closed pits or vermicompost units; use of compost manure in camp's kitchen garden to grow some quantity of food material for use in camp itself (e.g. chilli, small vegetables, coriander, mint etc); using the entire process and cycle as an educational display for learning about food waste, minimizing wasteful eating habits, handling of waste, segregation, composting, use of organic manure as fertilizer, growing food plants; the whole cycle of production, waste, decomposition/ composting, and fertilization.

**Water use and conservation:** Although an adequate supply of water to meet the average daily needs of campers and other operations is expected to be ensured by the organizers, campers should be encouraged to minimize wasteful use of water, and conserve water by limiting the duration of showers (if provided), and turning off the water while brushing teeth. Showers, taps, etc. should be equipped with low-flow devices.

Promoting conservation-oriented water use practices and habits at camps – reorienting user behaviour, demonstrating improved devices such as low-flow, foaming taps, improved flush systems, etc.

Wherever possible, flush toilets should employ newer designs that consume less water per use. Host agencies and site managers (whether Forest Department camps, resorts, institutional hostels/ dormitories, or others) should be encouraged by camping agencies to install such devices.

**Rainwater harvesting:** If rainwater harvesting structures are installed in



buildings such as office, hostel/ dormitory, mess/ kitchen, bathroom blocks at the campsite, these will not only augment water resources of the camp but also provide important opportunities for demonstrating the concepts and techniques to children and teachers. Even though it might not actually rain during the stay of a particular camper group, the components and features of a rainwater harvesting unit should be explained and interpreted by faculty, and also explained through installed signage. A walk-through of the entire system should form part of the camp programme. Wherever and whenever possible, campers should be briefed about basic techniques of handling and upkeep, as well as encouraged to participate in periodic maintenance and cleanup of the rainwater harvesting units. There should be reference material available for interested participants who wish to install such units in their homes, schools, etc. Such literature may also include contact details of competent agencies in nearby towns, which can provide installation and maintenance services along with technical advice for rainwater harvesting. Details of any government schemes and subsidies for their promotion may also be provided if available.

**Energy:** Maximizing the use of renewable energy devices at campsites; solar photo-voltaic for locally generating clean power, CFLs & LEDs for lighting, solar heating devices; wind energy devices wherever feasible; using the demonstration potential of all these; involving camper children in hands-on use, care and daily maintenance to arouse their interest and provide them with practical experience.

**Solar devices:** Solar water heaters/geysers, solar box cookers, solar parabolic cookers, solar photo-voltaic based lighting and power systems, solar charging lanterns/ torches, all of these can be incorporated into the fixtures of a nature camp. Attempts should be made to use as many as possible in the daily life of a camp, and also use them for live demonstration of these energy-saving and eco-friendly devices. Their features, advantages, limitations, environmental benefits, economy, and other aspects should be explained by camp faculty as well as through signage and/ or audiovisuals. Wherever and whenever possible, campers should be briefed about basic techniques of handling and upkeep of such devices, and encouraged to try them hands-on (under adequate safety supervision and guidance). There should be reference material available for interested participants who wish to install such units in their homes, schools, etc. Such literature may also include contact details of competent agencies in nearby towns, which can provide installation and maintenance services along with technical advice for such alternative energy devices. Details of any government schemes and subsidies for their promotion may also be provided, if available.



Promoting on-site recycling of paper and producing handmade paper: Use recycled paper for writing as well as art & craft activities within camp; involve camper children and local community in paper-recycling activities; recycled paper products can be made part of camp merchandise and marketing setup can involve local people as beneficiaries.

Supporting and promoting organic food practices: A significant fraction of food for the camp kitchen can and should be procured from local farmers and other suppliers who grow organic and pesticide-free food. These producers generally employ land use practices that work in harmony with nature; conserve topsoil and water; conserve and propagate native varieties of plants; rely on natural rather than synthetic fertilizers and pesticides; and avoid genetically modified plant species. Information about such local food sources including their contacts should be provided. The campsite should also have its own kitchen garden where organic agriculture practices and growing of organic food are practised as well as demonstrated. Compost manure produced at campsites should be channeled into use in such gardens and demonstrated as an educational activity. Camp schedule should include visits to such kitchen gardens at campsites, and in case the camp does not practise this, attempts should be made to locate some nearby facility (usually an NGO, but maybe also some other resort, farmhouse, or private family) and have a tie-up with them for short, day visits. The environmental aspects of such practices (security and survival of native foods, seeds, plants; benefits of chemical-free agriculture and foods.



## Camp Discipline

Surely the *raison de etre* for nature camping is to let people, especially youngsters, learn about nature conservation in a fun and adventurous manner, away from the daily life of a classroom and home. Nevertheless, a certain degree of discipline mixed with a reasonable degree of freedom to enjoy, is a must in order to prevent undue disturbance, disorder, and risks.

Some do's and don'ts along with basic rules of discipline for camping need to be conveyed to the participants as soon as they have arrived. On arrival, clear briefings and orientation must be given to the group about safety, no-go areas, potential risks of site (including dangerous animals), and clear instructions on contacting the designated staff in an emergency.

**Camper behaviour:** Camp staff should have the ability/training to quickly identify aggressive/bullying behaviour, abnormal interaction tendencies, drug-induced behaviour, and should be able to resolve issues and ensure adequate discipline without harsh methods. There should be a clear policy in place for extreme cases, where isolation or dismissal from camp may be necessary.

It is a must to evolve and enforce a “strictly no collection” policy at the nature camping sites. Uncontrolled groups of school children can be extremely destructive to fragile habitats. Collection of ‘wild’ things out of curiosity, or the temptation of taking things home as souvenirs can lead to degradation of the surroundings in a short span of time. Also, handling unknown material can lead to injury, allergies, rashes, etc. requiring medical intervention. If any re-usable personal water bottles, food plates and containers are brought and used, campers must carry back any such disposable material that they brought in.

**Medical:** If a child has to carry medicine for personal consumption, he/she must bring a copy of prescription from a qualified doctor; the child must not join camp in case of illness, contagious stage or weakness. A guardian's certification/parent's consent is necessary, regarding medical fitness and ability to stay out overnight away from parental care, or a doctor's certificate in this connection.



### **Checklists:**

- Medical Forms
- Consent Forms
- Medication requirements
- Dietary needs

A sample **Pre-Camp Medical Declaration Form** filled by guardians is shown below. If any answer is “yes”, parent/guardian should explain why.

- (1) Any concerns about general health (eating and sleeping habits, asthma, weight, etc.)?
- (2) Any allergies (food, insects, medication, etc.)?
- (3) Any problems with vision, hearing, or speech (glasses, contacts, ear tubes, hearing aids)?
- (4) Any prescription medication (daily or occasionally)? Prescription drugs must be in the original pharmacy bottle/packing, showing the times each medicine is to be administered.
- (5) Any other specific illnesses or social/emotional or behavioral problems?
- (6) Any hospitalization, operation, or major illness?
- (7) Any significant injury or accident? Specify problem.
- (8) Any special needs or support your child may need?
- (9) Would you like to discuss anything about your child's health with the Camp Director?
- (10) Please leave an emergency contact with details.

Ensure every parent has the camp plan and the following information:

- (1) List of staff and students attending camp
- (2) Mode of transport and timings.
- (3) Contact numbers.
- (4) Camp programme.

### **Do's and Don'ts:**

- Make sure you have light and camouflage clothing.
- Pack wisely, keep a checklist of items.
- Carry your personal medicines.
- Do carry with you a sunscreen, good torchlight, additional batteries, extra plastic bags, etc.



- Do carry a water bottle always.
- Do try to leave the least carbon footprint.
- Do not feed or harass wild animals.
- Do not pollute the lakes, rivers or streams by bathing in them.
- Use only eco-friendly bug sprays.
- No alcohol or illegal drugs; no smoking.
- No weapons/firearms
- Camp fires may be limited or prohibited at certain times.
- Within camp grounds and other recreation areas, fires may only be built in fire rings, stoves, grills, or fireplaces provided for that purpose.
- Be sure your fire is completely extinguished before leaving the camp fire site. Do not leave your fire unattended.
- All garbage and litter must either be deposited in the bins provided, or taken with you when you leave.
- Drivers must obey all traffic signs and travel in the speed limit.
- Vehicles must be parked in designated areas only.
- Use of fireworks/explosives within the camp is prohibited.
- Do not carve, chop, cut and damage any live trees.

**Staff must know:** Staff members are role models for young and impressionable campers. They must ensure the following:

- No one-to-one contact.
- Respect privacy.
- Arrange separate accommodation for males and females.
- Constructive discipline.
- Appropriate attire.
- No secret organizations.
- Prohibition of bullying.
- No images and photos of private areas such as showers.
- Physical contact kept at a minimum.
- No ethnic or racial comments.

If the camp staff do come across such instances among campers, the Camp Director must be informed and necessary steps should be taken.





## Hygiene, Food, Water and Sanitation

Good health is very essential for camping where a lot of physical activities are going to be part of the programme. For this, physical fitness, an adequate intake of nutrition, a certain level of personal hygiene, and a clean campsite are necessary. These help in the prevention of illnesses and diseases.

**General Health and Hygiene at a Camp:** Keeping the campsite clean and campers healthy is the responsibility of each and every camper and also camp staff. Clean living quarters, cooking and eating areas, clothes, socks, shoes, personal kit, toilets and water points are a part of daily camp routine. The group leaders should monitor these requirements and ensure implementation of all camp rules and regulations.

**Campsite:** A good nature camp should be located in clean surroundings, well away from villages and populated areas and not encroached by stray animals. It should also have plenty of sunlight, fresh air, shade trees and be as near the forest as possible. It is essential to clear away all dead and decaying vegetation from the site, as such rubbish attracts ticks, ants, leeches and other pests.

**Living Area:** Built-up accommodation or tents must be clean and with good ventilation. They should be free of pests like bed-bugs, lice, rats, cockroaches, scorpions, etc. The floor space in the tents must be adequate without overcrowding and secure from foul weather conditions. Eating should be forbidden in the living areas.

**Cook-house/Kitchen & Stores:** It should be situated a little away from the main camp, in order to avoid fire hazards. The kitchen should also be downwind so that neither smoke nor smells pass through or over the camp. It should be close to the water source if possible, clean and totally cleared of refuse and unhygienic conditions. Good ventilation is essential for the kitchen in order to keep it free of smoke, grit and dust. There should be an outlet for draining water away from camp to avoid hygiene and sanitation problems. Utensils used for cooking, serving and storing must be clean and washed thoroughly before each meal and also soon after each meal. A few points must be taken note of while preparing food in hygienic conditions:

- a. Wash hands before preparing food.



- b. Wash vegetables before cutting.
- c. Cover the food.
- d. Nails should be properly pared.
- e. Kitchen should be clean.
- f. Cook only in clean vessels or utensils.

Adequate cleaning facilities like soap, scrubbing materials, clean drying cloth and disinfectant should be provided. All waste materials should be buried deep enough to avoid foraging by dogs, foxes, and other domestic and wild animals. Soak pits should be dug and covered with locally available materials to avoid flies and other pests and insects.

**Garbage Handling:** Baskets, empty bins, cardboard boxes should be placed at several points in the camp area. Campers must be instructed to use these for disposing of camp refuse/garbage as well as food leftovers etc. As incongruous as it may sound, but as much garbage as possible should be completely burned, a little away from the campsite, and the ash buried deep into soil. This will minimize the chances of any contamination of the habitat by infectious microbes. An improvised incinerator, made from an old metal container or pail with holes punched around the foot, is handy for burning old paper, cloth, cartons and the like. Participants should carry plastic bags on the field to carry back the litter to camp for proper disposal. Nature camps should promote collection and sorting of litter by campers, and encourage them to transport back all non-degradable garbage produced by them.

### **Disposal of Food Waste**

- As soon as possible, put it into a bag to keep the flies out.
- Avoid throwing scraps out for animals/birds to eat.
- Avoid digging a pit near the kitchen/mess and putting the scraps into it.
- Clean dirty dishes as soon as possible after eating.

A good alternative is to dig pit(s) some distance from the campsite – a garbage pit about two or three feet square and at least three feet deep should be dug at least a 100 ft away from water supply and tent site. Some earth or sand should be shoveled on top of each new layer of garbage thrown into the hole. Sprinkle some chlorinated lime on top of each layer of earth. When striking camp, this pit should be completely filled in and the earth stamped down into it.

**Stores:** These should preferably be located close to the kitchen. Proper storage arrangements for provisions and stores (dry and fresh) must exist. Dry stores must be carefully selected beforehand to ensure good quality and freshness with a variety of menus in mind. They must be stored securely from



encroachment and pilfering by pests – animals and human alike! Vegetables, eggs, milk, bread, and fruits should be obtained fresh and as frequently as local conditions permit. Serving any of these when stale or leftover must not be accepted. Cooks and helpers both local and brought from outside must be in good health without signs of infection of any kind. Their hands, nails and hair must be clean and they must have clean habits. A camp can become a health hazard due to carelessness in this aspect. Stomach infections, worms and skin problems are conveyed to campers through irresponsible kitchen staff. While handling food it is important to keep these points and make sure the kitchen staff follows these instructions:

- Always wash hands with soap and water before handling any food.
- Do not cough or sneeze over the food.
- Always wash hands after blowing your nose or using a handkerchief.
- Do not pick nose.
- Do not taste-test the food if it is being cooked for someone else.
- Keep flies away from cooking utensils and uncovered food.
- Do not reuse leftover cooked food.

**Water supply points:** It is vital to remember that when establishing a water point it should be ensured that the water is fit for the purpose of its use. Water from deep masonry wells or rivers is generally safe. However, if it is to be collected from a running water source such as streams, rivers or springs, then the water should be purified by boiling or with chemicals before drinking. Points for drinking water and bathing, washing, etc. should be marked properly. Drinking water should always be drawn from upstream and from the middle of the stream wherever possible. Go at least 20 metres downstream for bathing purposes. For washing clothes and utensils, go another 20 metres downstream. These water points should be marked out clearly with the help of flags or sign boards. Drinking water can be stored in containers like earthen pots, water buckets, *chhagals* (canvas flasks), plastic drums, jerry cans, etc. It is vital to clean these containers and change the water in them regularly.

**Latrines/Toilets:** Where permanent systems are available, they must be kept in working condition. Proper use – 'toilet habits' and cleanliness are essential and must be observed by one and all. Sprinkling disinfectant powder or liquid at intervals keeps away flies and odours. When camping in a group for several days, it is neither healthy nor polite to use the nearby forest as an open-air latrine. Where proper latrine facilities are not available, they must be arranged for, prior to the arrival of the campers. When selecting sites to dig latrines, ensure that any seepage will not find its way into the waterways, wells or water systems used by humans. They must be at least 75 metres away from the water



supply. If the campsite is located on a slope, toilets/latrines should be situated downhill and also downwind from the camp proper. Temporary latrines can be deep trench or borehole types. They must be suitably spaced out, dug deep, edges strengthened and bordered wherever possible. The earth dug up should be used from time to time to lightly spread into the trenches each day. Also spread chlorinated lime on top of the earth in the ditch. This not only acts as a disinfectant but also as a good repellent and can be used for garbage pits as well. If no chlorinated lime or other disinfectant is available, fire can be used instead. Light a wood fire all along the top of the earth in the trench every second day. Allow it to burn for at least five minutes. Also ashes from the camp kitchen's fire (if wood fuel is used) can replace lime. Light dividers made of local grass/bamboo mats are helpful, so is jute cloth if the canvas partitions are not part of the camping equipment. Toilet areas should be marked with a flag or sign board for easy recognition. Separate arrangements for girls and boys are essential.

**First Aid Post:** A well planned first aid kit and medicines chest should suffice for simple day-to-day camp ailments. The ideal condition, of course, is when after the conclusion of the camp one finds the kit and the chest unused. Among the camp leaders there must be at least one competent person capable of prescribing simple medicines and attending to routine cuts, bruises, bites and stings. It is best if a trained medical attendant is available on call.

### First Aid Hygiene

- Disposable latex gloves must be worn when dealing with blood.
- Double bag (plastic) all soiled bandages and dressings.
- Use a pocket mask when performing mouth-to-mouth breathing.
- Wash your hands before and after treating sick or injured people.
- Keep all your vaccinations up to date.



## Camp Safety

Camp organizers must have access to identity data (police-verified data) of all staff, transport operators and service providers coming to the campsite. A complete directory of the campers' names, genders, ages, mobile numbers (if carried), guardians' contact details, emergency information numbers, individual medical emergency number (preferably family doctor's), must be carried at every batch and should form a part of the record to be filed for long term.

Safety around water bodies, steep slopes and falls is must. If it's appropriate there can be a 'No Swimming' policy at the nature camp wherein campers should be advised not to bring any swimming clothes and that swimming will not be permitted.

If any campfire is to be lit, it must be inside a ring cleared of vegetation and lined with stones, away from lodgings. Always keep water bucket/ sand and shovel at hand when working with fire. Make sure appropriate permissions are taken. Camp kitchen fire or gas must be handled only by trained staff. All fires must be completely put out and doused with water after their purpose is over.

If there is no camp doctor, at least 1-2 camp staff must be trained in first-aid, resuscitation, and bone injury manipulation techniques. A well stocked first-aid and emergency medical kit to be at hand. This should be replenished as and when materials get used up or are beyond the date of expiry. Extra quantities of items required most frequently need to be kept (blister pads, sprain relief rubs or sprays, cotton gauze, anti-diarrhoeal, anti-vomiting, sting relief lotion or spray, antacids).

Do a head count after every field outing, especially if group had scattered out of sight. **Procedure for missing/ lost persons:** immediate search in surroundings; alert to local police or forest personnel; seek help through mobile tracking, if available, through nearest police station; reporting to guardians and school in case camper cannot be located within 1-2 hours.

Establish systems and policies regarding insurance, multi-level liabilities of various agencies, protection & indemnity of various agencies, systems of grievance redressal.



## More Safety Tips:

- When in unknown locations, group leaders must be continually aware of their campers' location and insist that they stay together as a group.
- Instruct them to remain where they are if they get separated from the group, so as to let *you* find *them*.
- If possible they are to approach a member of the facility staff for assistance. They are not to approach strangers.

Tick Bites	Insect Stings
<p>•••••</p> <p>It's not uncommon to find a tick on a child. While most tick bites are harmless and don't require medical treatment, some ticks do carry harmful germs.</p> <p>•••••</p> <p><b>Did You Know?</b></p> <p>Lyme disease is carried by the deer tick or western black-legged tick. These ticks are harder to detect than dog ticks because they're much smaller (an adult tick is about the size of a sesame seed).</p>	<p>•••••</p> <p>Although insect stings can be irritating, symptoms usually begin to disappear by the next day and don't require treatment by a doctor. However, kids who are highly allergic to insect stings may have life-threatening symptoms and may require emergency treatment.</p> <p>•••••</p> <p><b>Signs of a Severe Allergic Reaction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• swelling of the face or mouth</li><li>• difficulty swallowing or speaking</li><li>• chest tightness, wheezing, or difficulty breathing</li><li>• dizziness or fainting</li><li>• abdominal pain, nausea, or vomiting</li></ul>
<p><b>What to Do:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. If the tick is still attached to the child's skin, remove it:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using fine-tipped tweezers, grasp the head of the tick close to the skin.</li><li>• Firmly and steadily pull the tick straight out of the skin. Do not twist the tick, or rock it from side to side while removing it.</li></ul></li><li>2. Put the tick in alcohol to kill it.</li><li>3. Wash your hands and the site of the bite with soap and water.</li><li>4. Swab the bite with alcohol.</li></ol> <p><b>Call the child's doctor if:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the tick may have been on the skin for more than 24 hours</li><li>• part of the tick remains in the skin after attempted removal</li><li>• the child develops a rash of any kind (especially a red-ringed bull's-eye rash)</li><li>• the area looks infected (increasing redness, warmth, swelling, pain, or oozing pus)</li><li>• the child develops symptoms like fever, headache, fatigue, chills, stiff neck or back, or muscle or joint aches</li></ul>	<p><b>What to Do:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Remove the child from the area where he or she was stung.</li><li>2. If the child was stung by a honeybee, wasp, hornet, or yellow jacket, and the stinger is visible, remove it by gently scraping the skin horizontally with the edge of a credit card or your fingernail.</li><li>3. Wash the area with soap and water.</li><li>4. Apply ice or a cool wet cloth to the area to relieve pain and swelling.</li><li>5. If the area is itchy, apply a paste of baking soda and water, or calamine lotion (do not apply calamine to the child's face or genitals).</li></ol> <p><b>Call the child's doctor if:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the child shows symptoms of a severe allergic reaction</li><li>• the site looks infected (increasing redness, warmth, swelling, pain, or pus occurring several hours or longer after the sting)</li></ul> <p><b>Seek emergency medical care if:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the child shows symptoms of a severe allergic reaction</li><li>• the sting is anywhere in the mouth</li><li>• the child has a known severe allergy to a stinging insect</li><li>• insecticide epinephrine was used</li></ul>

## Basic First Aid Kit:

Personal medications	Sterile compresses	Sunburn lotion
Roll bandages	Splinting materials	Burn ointment
Adhesive tape	Feminine products	Snake-bite kit
Antiseptic wipes	Razor blades	Eye drops
Sterile gauze pads	Plastic bags	Heat/cold packs
Cotton swabs	Pain spray	Small torchlight
Tweezers	Anti-vomiting drugs	Latex gloves
Safety pins	Small mirror	Antibacterial soap
Scissors	Band Aid/Handyplast	Thermometer
Bee-sting kit	Antacids	Antibiotic soap
Sinus medications	Antibiotic cream	Road flares
Tissues	Aspirin/Ibuprofen/	First-aid manual
Bug repellent	Allergy medication	Nail clippers
Notepad/pen	Hydrogen Peroxide	



### **Minor cuts, Strains, Sprains, and Suspected Fractures:**

- If a camper sustains a minor cut or scrape, have the camper wash it with soap and water.
- If there is swelling around the area, possibly a fracture, try and take the person back to camp or to the first-aid expert.
- While awaiting help, stay with the camper or staff member and have someone go and get an ice pack.
- Remain calm and help the injured person lie down.
- Appoint someone to do crowd control and encourage other campers to go back to their activities.
- If there is any possibility of injury to the head, neck, back or spine, **do not move** the injured person.

### **Major Health Emergency**

- All accidents and illness must be reported to the director immediately.
- In the event the victim cannot be moved, someone must be sent or called to find help immediately.
- In case of a snake bite, the camp staff that has training must do the necessary first-aid. All the reactions of the victim must be jotted down. Ask the victim how the snake looked. Try getting an image. The anti-venom must be administered accordingly.
- The victim must be transferred to a hospital for further treatment.
- Emergency contact numbers of the campers and their medical history shown to medical professionals.

Always keep a vehicle ready in case of an emergency and the hospital contacts around the camp.

**Fire Plan:** First step is prevention. Make sure there is proper storage of inflammable materials and waste; smoke alarms (if installed) and fire extinguishers are working. Ensure that a full bucket of water is at hand before lighting a campfire, and that the campfire is fully put out with water afterward. During a fire emergency, the following steps are to be taken:

- The person discovering the fire should alert any person in immediate danger.
- Immediately notify staff at the camp.
- Camp Director will notify the Fire Department and Forest Department.
- Assemble near an open area where it is safe (attendance will be taken). Designate an area before hand in such emergencies.



- The Camp In-Charge will issue all orders and directions concerning the emergency.

### **Lost Student:**

- In case a student is lost, the Camp In-charge and all the staff must be informed.
- Staff will begin an immediate systematic search of campsite, programme areas, and other areas visited.
- If search is unsuccessful, the Camp Director will issue appropriate instructions and contact local emergency personnel.
- Staff will conduct regular checks near water bodies. If the count before & after visit does not match; the staff in-charge must inform the Camp Director who will initiate search.
- The staff in charge of water activities will direct the search at the water/river.
- The Camp Director will issue appropriate instructions and contact local emergency personnel.

### **Severe Weather**

- In the event of a typical thunderstorm, the camp staff must inform all campers to stay inside until the storm has passed.
- In case of extreme cold, all campers to stay indoors, fully clothed.
- In the event of severe or threatening weather, the Camp Director should monitor local weather forecasts for updates.
- In case of extreme heat, all activities will be cancelled and campers and staff are to rest and drink lots of water.

### **Wild animal:** If a wild animal enters the premises:

- The Camp In-charge/Director must be notified immediately.
- All the campers must be indoors with doors and windows closed.
- The Camp Director will assign staff members to comb the grounds and buildings looking for any remaining staff or campers.
- Only after ensuring that the animal has moved away and that there is no danger, the campers can come out.

### **Contacting Parents:**

Parents/guardians must be contacted whenever a camper is seriously injured or involved in other emergency or discipline situations. These contacts will be established by the Camp Director or a deputed staffer.





## Transport

The cost component of travel to and from camping sites forms a sizeable chunk of expenditure on camping. The rates of private operators can be quite exorbitant. In many cases, it can become prohibitive for schools. Similarly, unless the camp batches are booked several months in advance, the chances of securing train reservations, especially for big groups, are quite bleak. Simply, the inability to travel to camping destinations on assigned dates, would lead to chain disruption of batch schedules and have other cascading effects.

Therefore, it is advisable both from the point of view of programme efficiency as well as economy, for camp organizers to approach and explore partnerships with State-owned transport agencies and corporations as well as the Railways, for concessional packages and ensuring committed travel facilities for camper groups. There are possibilities of availing concessional group fare for the rail journeys of nature campers, or reserving full coaches at concessional rates. Similarly, various State Roadways Corporations could extend fare concessions to camper groups.

The mode of transport also has a large role in deciding group/batch sizes. Most large buses in India are maximum 52-seaters, so a maximum of 40-42 campers with 2-3 teachers (a minimum of 1 teacher:15 students is considered essential by most organizers), 2-3 assistant staff and 2-3 bus crew would be the limit of the group. Most schools have class size in the range of 40 to 60 students. So if an entire class is to be taken then the transport has to be planned with two buses for each class or the group has to be broken into separate batches. Other modes of transport, like trains can also be considered (with jeeps/ tempos/ buses used for local movement between stations and campsites). Similarly for marine, coastal or wetland camps transport like boats, etc. may have to be planned, for which again there will be different group size considerations. Several campsites may be in ecologically fragile areas, where it may not be advisable to take large groups of 40 or 50 participants. In those cases also, smaller batches may need to be planned.



Having taken the above into consideration, at the organizing stage itself one should plan according to the following checklist:

- (1) Mode of travel at each stage of journey. Announce clear schedule of arrival/ departure of each transport mode at each stage, giving distances and approximate travel times and fares, in case people have to travel on their own.
- (2) Any break-journey? Arrangements during halts (food, restroom, purchases).
- (3) Clear directions on how to reach the campsite (if direct) or the collecting/receiving point in case of group arrangement by organizers or other agency like school/college.
- (4) Fallback plan of travel in case of any glitch with the decided plan.
- (5) Transport needed during the camp (e.g. local journeys as part of camp schedule).
- (6) Return journey, to be planned and announced along similar lines.



## Camp: Indemnities and Liabilities

Organizers can use these sample forms to devise their own. These are to be read and signed by parent or guardian on behalf of the participant attending and/or participating in an activity.

### Sample 1: Indemnity Form

1. I am familiar with and will obey any and all of the rules, written and spoken, established for the programme activities.
2. I understand and appreciate the inherent risks and dangers of outdoors. Programme activities, initiative games (including but not limited to the hazards of climbing or descending trees; walking on logs/wires suspended above the ground; travelling through mountainous areas; paddling or otherwise travelling through turbulent or calm waters; climbing or descending rock faces; exposure to the forces of weather and/or nature; accidents or illnesses occurring in remote places without medical facilities and travel by air, train, automobile and/or other forms of transportation) which could result in property damage and personal injury. I agree to accept all risks whether present or future, known or unknown, arising from or as a result of my participation in these activities.
3. **I shall hold harmless and indemnify** \_\_\_\_\_ and its employees and all sponsors and individuals assisting in the conduct of \_\_\_\_\_, for any liability and all claims of damages, demands and actions whatsoever in any manner resulting from my participation in this programme/ activity.
4. I understand that the activities are facilitated by trained and qualified full-time/ part-time facilitators.
5. I understand that I must be healthy and reasonably fit in order to safely participate and that I will inform the programme/activity leader of any medication, ailment, condition or injury that may affect my performance or reasonably preclude me from participating.

I STATE THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTAND, AND AGREE TO ALL CONDITIONS SET FORTH HEREIN AND THAT I SIGN VOLUNTARILY.

Signature & Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Participant name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Sample 2: Indemnity Form

I agree to indemnify \_\_\_\_\_ from and against any and all liability, claims, losses, costs, expenses or damages arising from unknown accidents or causes. I accept that all reasonable precautions will be taken to ensure the safety and welfare of my child and that I shall be held responsible for the payment of medical and/or hospital accounts, where applicable, should any injury be sustained which cannot be ascribed to negligence on the part of the staff responsible. I hereby delegate to the representative/ camp personnel, the power to authorize whatever treatment/ surgery, he/she, in their sole discretion deem necessary, should medical treatment/surgery be deemed necessary for my child. As far as I know he/she is in good health.

Parent/ Guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample 3: Indemnity Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, being the parent/ legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, give permission for my child to attend the camp at \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. I understand that my child will participate in all activities at his/her own risk. I understand that the organization, the camp leaders and other staff personnel, will do all in their power to ensure the safety of my child and his/ her property, but can in no way be held responsible for any loss or damage to life or property that arises while my child is away at camp.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample 4: Indemnity Form of the School

We, at the \_\_\_\_\_ School, indemnify the organizers from and against any and all liability, claims, losses, costs, expenses or damages arising from unknown accidents or causes. We trust that the organizers of the camp will take care of our students with utmost care and make well balanced decisions. We ask the organizers to call and inform in any emergency and ensure the student/child gets medical attention that is deemed necessary. We will not hold \_\_\_\_\_ responsible for damage to life or property while the children/ students are away at camp.

Authorized Signature & Stamp: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Sample Formats for Camp

### Camp Payment Form

Date:

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The camp preparations are under way and the cost of the camp is \_\_\_\_\_ which includes accommodation, food and transport. It also includes all activities as previously mentioned.

Attached is a form for payment of the camp. It can also be done through our online mode of payment. Please make the full payment in favour of \_\_\_\_\_

More information will be sent shortly for you to read and forms to sign and return.

Yours sincerely

Camp Organizer



## Camp Registration Form:

Camper's Information	Details
Last Name (Surname):	
First Name:	
Gender:	
Date of Birth:	
Age:	
Address:	
State:	
Pin:	
Primary phone no:	
School name:	
<b>Parents/Guardian Info</b>	
Parent 1/ Guardian 1 Name:	
Birth Date:	
Relationship:	
Address:	
State:	
Pin:	
Home Phone:	
Cell Number:	
Place of Employment:	
Nature of Work/ Business:	
Primary Email Address:	
Emergency Contact Details:	
Parent 2/ Guardian 2 Name:	
Birth Date:	
Relationship:	
Address:	
State:	
Pin:	
Home Phone:	
Cell Number:	
Place of Employment:	
Nature of Work/ Business:	
Primary Email Address:	
Person(s) authorized to <b>pick up</b> your child:	
Any other information?	



## Camper's Feedback

We value the feedback of our campers and strive to meet your needs to make your camping experience pleasant. Please complete and return this evaluation form to us at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your valuable feedback.

	Very Good	Good	Average	Needs attention	Comments
Camp Facilities: How did you find the facilities (i.e. amenities, hall, kitchen, etc.)?					
How did you find the food (i.e. variety, portion sizes, menu)?					
How did you find the accommodation?					
Programmed activities (if applicable):					
How would you rate your experience with our staff?					
How would you rate the hygiene/ cleanliness of our facilities, e.g. toilet blocks, tents, rooms, hall?					
Did you feel that all activities were conducted in a safe manner?					
Would you come back to our camps?					

Name of the Camper:

Signature:



## Medical Information Form

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Carrier (in case it is covered by Insurance): \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Plan Details: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies or intolerance to food, medication, or any other substance: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical conditions (please list any serious past illnesses):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please list any past surgeries or major injuries:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does camper have any chronic or recurring illness?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any activities that the camper should not participate in?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Will the camper need to take medication at camp? If yes, please describe the medication:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does the camper wear any medical devices? If yes, please describe:  
\_\_\_\_\_

What medication does the camper usually require in case of allergic reaction?  
\_\_\_\_\_

If an allergic reaction occurs, please list steps to relieve reaction:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Chronic physical problems, pertinent developmental information, any special accommodations needed (please mention):  
\_\_\_\_\_





Does your child take medications or vitamins as prescribed by a Doctor? If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Tetanus Immunization – Year of last tetanus immunization? \_\_\_\_\_

**Consent for Medical Treatment:** I hereby authorize that all the information above is correct and that my child is able to participate in all activities without the need for individual or specialized attention or medical assistance. I hereby consent and authorize the administration of all medical treatments advisable or necessary under the judgment of the camp staff, emergency room physicians or any other clinical physicians with the understanding that I will be notified as soon as possible.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

**Parental Agreements:**

1. The camp organizers agree to notify the parent/guardian whenever the child becomes ill and the parent/guardian will arrange to have the child picked up as soon as possible, if requested.
2. The parent/guardian agrees to inform the camp manager within 24 hours or the next working day after his child or any members of the immediate household has developed a reportable communicable disease.
3. My child has permission to be transported by vehicle and to participate in all programme activities and related field trips.
4. My child has permission to participate in water-related activities.
5. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and understand/be aware of **all** policies, and agree to all permission forms.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:



## Cancellation Policy

If fees have been paid and cancellation is made two weeks or more before the start of camp session, the balance will be returned less the non-refund deposit. If fees have been paid but cancellation is made less than two weeks before the start of the camp session, the balance will be returned less the non-refund deposit and an additional 20%.

(Figure to be decided according to the organizer's budget)

All information on this form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand and agree to the Emergency Medical Authorization and the Parental Agreements, and Cancellation Policy outlined above.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

**Or**

**Cancellations** – Non-refund of deposits and payments if the camper and/or the parent/guardian cancels a session (before or during the camp).

\_\_\_\_\_ shall be entitled to keep any and all deposits and payments by way of compensation, regardless of the reason for cancellation. In the event of the camp (or portions or activities) being cancelled by organizer before or during the session for reasons for which is beyond their control, the organizer is not responsible (e.g. *force majeure*), the risk shall be assumed by the camper and the parent/guardian, and organizer shall likewise be entitled to keep any and all deposits and payments.



## Camp Proposal Letter Draft

Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

The Principal,  
\_\_\_\_\_ School, \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Sub: Invitation to Participate in \_\_\_\_\_ Nature Camp**

This is to inform you that a Nature Camp is being organized from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. The camp fees per child shall be Rs. \_\_\_\_\_, including all activities, accommodation and meals.

The features of the nature camp are:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

We welcome your students for the above mentioned nature camp. You may like to send a batch of \_\_\_\_\_ children accompanied by \_\_\_\_\_ teachers. We look forward to your kind consent to our above request. For further details, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at our office.

Thanking you,  
With sincere regards

(Signature)  
Name & Designation  
Organization Name

## Concession Letter Draft

Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

The Director,  
\_\_\_\_\_ Sanctuary/ Reserve, \_\_\_\_\_.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Sub:** Concession at \_\_\_\_\_ for Nature camp organized by \_\_\_\_\_

With reference to the above subject we request you to permit our students to avail the concession at your campsite for the nature camping activity. The total number of students along with the escorts would be \_\_\_\_\_. These students are from Std. \_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ School.

Looking forward for your approval and response.

Thanking you,  
Yours truly/sincerely/faithfully,

(Signature)  
Name & Designation  
Organization/ Institution name





**Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
Government of India**

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, is the nodal agency in the administrative structure of the Central Government for the planning, promotion, co-ordination and overseeing the implementation of India's environmental and forestry policies and programmes.

The primary concerns of the Ministry are implementation of policies and programmes relating to conservation of the country's natural resources including its lakes and rivers, its biodiversity, forests and wildlife, ensuring the welfare of animals, and the prevention and abatement of pollution. While implementing these policies and programmes, the Ministry is guided by the principle of sustainable development and enhancement of human well-being.

The Ministry also serves as the nodal agency in the country for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and for the follow-up of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The Ministry is also entrusted with issues relating to multilateral bodies such as the Commission on Sustainable

Development (CSD), Global Environment Facility (GEF) and of regional bodies like Economic and Social Council for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) and South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) on matters pertaining to the environment.

The broad objectives of the Ministry are:

- Conservation and survey of flora, fauna, forests and wildlife
- Prevention and control of pollution
- Afforestation and regeneration of degraded areas
- Protection of the environment and
- Ensuring the welfare of animals

These objectives are well supported by a set of legislative and regulatory measures, aimed at the preservation, conservation and protection of the environment. Besides the legislative measures, the National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement on Environment and Development, 1992; National Forest Policy, 1988; Policy Statement on Abatement of Pollution, 1992; and the National Environment Policy, 2006 also guide the Ministry's work.

<http://www.moef.gov.in/>

## Centre for Environment Education (CEE)

Centre for Environment Education was created in recognition of the importance of environmental education in India's overall environment and development strategy. The result of a unique partnership between government and a non-governmental institution, CEE was established as a Centre of Excellence of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, in 1984.

CEE works for a wide range of sectors, target groups and geographical areas. CEE's primary objective is to improve public awareness and understanding of the environment with a view to promoting the conservation and sustainable use of nature and natural resources, leading to a better environment and a better quality of life. To this end, CEE develops innovative programmes and educational material, and builds capacity in the field of Education and Sustainable Development (ESD). It undertakes demonstration projects in education, communication and development that endorse attitudes, strategies and

technologies which are environmentally sustainable. CEE is committed to ensuring that due recognition is given to the role of education in the promotion of sustainable development.

CEE's head office is in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. In order to effectively reach out to all parts of the country, and to facilitate programmes that are culturally sensitive and locally relevant, establishing a regional presence has been recognized as essential. Regional Cells, located at Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Guwahati, Lucknow and Pune, facilitate effective coordination, monitoring and follow up of country-wide and locale-specific programmes in EE. In addition to supporting the core activities of the Centre, they generate a wide range of new projects and initiatives in their region. Field offices carry out EE programmes in specific situations and give an opportunity to field test approaches and solutions.

[www.ceeindia.org](http://www.ceeindia.org)