

# Percussion Instruments Made of Trash

Children from rural area near Auroville form Trash Percussion Band with guidance of team from Mohanam Culture Centre

by Debjani Dutta

**Puducherry:** Giving a new definition to trash management, teenaged children from villages around Auroville have formed a Trash Percussion band with the assistance of Mohanam Cultural Centre at Sanjeevi Nagar near Auroville.

The band uses almost any thing that is disposed off as trash ranging from cardboard boxes to glass-bottles to metal articles to plastic items to create sounds and blend them into music.

These children, who hail from the lower economic strata of society are exposed to the creative world of music with unconventional instruments.

This is not only an opportunity to get more creative but also a vehicle to uplift themselves, says Balasundaram Ponnusamy, Founder of Mo-

hanam Cultural Centre.

At a time when the trash is being seen as a nuisance, this novel venture is a way of showing that trash can be used in many useful ways. Apart from keeping the surroundings clean, this also aids the efforts of the government in its Swachh Bharat Campaign, adds Balasundaram.

Though it has just been two months since the group was formed with 12 children aged 13-16, they have already performed at Dakshinachitra, the Puducherry Heritage Festival and the Village Festival at Auroville.

It all started when the team of Elumalai, Madhu, Anand and Murugan spotted a group of unruly boys playing together in the villages, says Balasundaram.

It was then that he along with his team gradually started motivating them to visit this centre after school



Village children from Auroville performing with percussion instruments made from trash | © PATRICK MAN

hours. Initially they resisted, but with persistence and encouragement from parents they started coming to the centre.

The centre, which was started in 2001 under the Auroville Village Action Trust, has been working to provide the rural youth an

opportunity to concentrate on extracurricular activities, which will help them find an identity and aid in connecting them to their

own culture, in the face of tremendous change in the globalisation process.

Soon these boys from government schools were taught to play music with their novel instruments and they practiced together and developed their own style, said Balasundaram. After school hours and during weekends, they would visit the centre and practice together and compose music. Not only their energy has been channelised, but it has also sparked off the creativity in them. "We are also aiming to make it self sustainable", he said.

Now, we propose to take the band to schools and colleges to perform and raise awareness on being creative apart from highlighting how trash could be put to productive use, Balasundaram said.

Efforts are also being made to make the band self sustainable.

