

DECCAN Chronicle

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VERNAL EQUINOX DAY

SCHOOL STUDENTS MEASURE CIRCUMFERENCE OF EARTH

DC CORRESPONDENT
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Over 130 students from the city schools participated in the science experiment conducted by SPACE Chennai for measuring the circumference of the earth on Vernal Equinox day of March 20 and 21.

On these two days, night and days are exactly the same lengths of 12 hours. To observe Vernal Equinox day, the SPACE Chennai organisation conducted a flagship programme called 'Project Paridhi'.

Students from various schools including KRM Public School, Perambur, Chennai government girls high school, Don Bosco Matriculation, Perambur have participated in the Project Paridhi.

Sivasakthi Balan, principal of KRM Public School inaugurated the event. Tamil Nadu Astronomical Society President Vijayakumar was the chief guest on the program.

"Students were marking the shadow of the sun using Gnomon stick as a vertical object to find the shortest shadow, measure

the sun angle and using simple maths arrived at the circumference of the earth. Many students calculated with an accuracy level of 99.9%," said Prabhakaran, astronomy educator.

The actual circumference of earth is 40,075 km. Many students arrived at the circumference as 40,070 km. "This experiment of measuring circumference of the earth conducted to replicate the experiment done by Greek Astronomer Eratosthenes some 2,300 years ago," he said.

Kavitha Peter, teacher of Gateway International School, said, "It is an excellent programme, enriching students knowledge on space science. It is great that it is conducted on equinox day helping students to gain mastery".

"The March equinox occurs the moment when the Sun crosses the celestial equator, the imaginary line in the sky above the earth's equator, from north to south. On the equinox night and day are nearly exactly the same lengths of 12 hours all over the world," Prabhakaran said.

