



ANNUAL REPORT – 2008- 2009 - NIZHAL

This year has seen an explosion of activities by Nizhal that have had far reaching impacts than ever before. Our Mission, Vision and Objectives have been formalized:

Vision

Nizhal's vision is to be an effective catalyst in greening, particularly in urban areas, with a special focus on regenerating biodiversity.

Mission

The Mission of Nizhal is to promote tree culture, particularly in urban areas, by creating awareness of the role of trees, planting the right kind of trees and caring for trees, through collaborative efforts.

Nizhal's Core Values

1 Nizhal is dedicated to conservation, because we believe that everyone has a responsibility towards the well being of the natural world.

2. Nizhal's three main goals are

- to preserve biodiversity*
- to strengthen the bond between people and nature*
- to promote awareness of trees, and sensitivity to the trees around us.*

3. Nizhal believes that real progress in nature conservation demands sincere partnerships based on mutual trust with local communities, organizations and citizens, especially young people.

LANDMARK INITIATIVES....

PWD Park, Kotturpuram

The PWD Tree Park in Kotturpuram was initiated early in 2008 as a joint project of PWD, Nizhal and Citizens Committee, to commemorate the 150th year of the PWD. More than 200 saplings have been planted in the first phase, and are regularly monitored by our volunteers. This will be a special tree park containing a large number of different species both indigenous, naturalised and special trees such as tropical, dry, evergreen forest trees common to the Coromandel Coast. The area has been mapped to show the name and location of the saplings.

The saplings have been planted by the students of AMM School, Anna University, Kids Central, the citizens of Kotturpuram and other corporate volunteers.



The Shramdaan idea suggested by a senior member, Mr Gowrishankar, is being carried out by college students of SRM Eswari and Sri Venkateshwara College of Engineering, volunteers from NGO Bhumi and employees of various corporate companies like GE Money, Scope International, TCS, CTS, Scope etc. This project has elicited a tremendous response from corporate volunteers and student communities alike.

Expert inputs –

- Govinda and Arun (experts in afforestation projects from Thiruvanamalai)
- Dr. Narasimhan (Madras Christian College)

Saplings from – Auroville

Educational institutions involved –

- AMM
- Anna University
- Kids Central
- SRM Eswari.

Corporates involved –

- GE Money
- Scope international
- TCS
- CTS.

Other NGOs involved - Bhumi

Siemens – Nizhal Project in Gandhi Nagar

The Siemens project which took off in the month of November 2008 in Gandhi Nagar has been a very significant step towards sensitive greening in the community. **We have connected with every school in this locality through presentations, tree walks, tree surveys, Free the Tree campaigns and planting.** Siemens has been a very cooperative and encouraging partner in this project. **There will be an ‘All Gandhi Nagar School meet’ in November to conclude this project and decide on a sustainable plan of action.**

We look forward to working on similar projects with other corporates too.

Educational Institutions involved –

- Kumara Rani Meena Muthiah School
- Kumara Rani Meena Muthiah College
- Bala Vidya Mandir
- Rani Meyyamai Higher Secondary School
- St. Michaels Higher Secondary School



- St. Louis School for the Blind
- St. Patricks Matriculation School
- St. Marks Primary School.

Puzhal - Sensitive Greening in the Prison Campus

Greening in the Puzhal Campus was initiated in March 2009, to green the campus with a diversity of appropriate species to beautify and create a cool and pleasant environment in and around. Methods of rain water harvesting, composting, and kitchen gardens are being introduced in a phase manner. A Horticulture Training Module as a certificate course will be offered with the help of experts for inmates as a livelihood option.

We have also received request from prisons across the state to initiate greening in their respective campuses. It has already been initiated in Madurai with the help of Mr. Vishwanathan.

Other Planting Projects

- Nizhal donated saplings to Botany Department, Nandanam Arts College.
- **Planting Program at Kendriya Vidyalaya, Island Grounds**, supervised by Dr. Dayanandam.
- **SCARF Mamallapuram Planting Program** - 50 saplings planted and sponsored by Rotary Club of Chennai Towers. Nizhal hopes to initiate horticulture training in SCARF.
- **Planting program in Golden Palm Army School in Nandambakkam** for 100 saplings sourced from the Irula Tribal Women's Cooperative was again sponsored by the Rotary Club of Chennai Towers.

Greening outside the MRTS

Greening of the area in front of Kasturba Nagar MRTS was supervised by Mr Raghavendra Rao and Dr Dayanandam in November 2008 supported by Satyam Foundation. Shramdaan and monitoring activities are being carried out regularly by Nizhal volunteers.

Nizhal sponsored the planting in front of the Kotturpuram MRTS station. The local community is also actively involved in tree care and maintenance.

Tree Walks



A number of tree walks were conducted in the last one year which saw a participation of more than 300 enthusiastic citizens, across the city. Open spaces covered include Nageshwara Rao Park, Panagal Park and Thiruvika Park, besides Theosophical society, Kalakshetra Foundation and Guindy National Park.

Our presence in conducting Heritage Walks during the Madras Week celebrations was appreciated.

Nizhal walks during Madras Heritage Week (August 2009)–

- May Day Park
- My Ladye's Garden.

A Tree Walk every Month!

This idea was initiated six months ago so as to create more awareness about trees in the neighbourhood in different areas. **Walks are organized the first Sunday of every month across the city by our area coordinators.** Such walks have been conducted in areas that include Mylapore, Kilpauk, Adyar, T Nagar, Anna Nagar, K K Nagar, Ashok Nagar, besides others.

Walks for Educational Institutions –

- Guru Nanak College
- Anna University
- MGR Janaki College for Women
- Stella Maris College
- Hari Shri Vidyalaya
- AMM School (Kotturpuram)
- Roots Montessori School
- Campus School (Tambaram),
- 9 schools/colleges in Gandhi Nagar as part of the Siemens project.

Outreach

Our outreach to the general public and young people has been through a multilevel approach.

- A talk was given during a teacher training program at KFI.
- A discussion on environmental issues with teachers at Alpha school.
- Participated in
 - The Science City Fest in Anna University Campus,
 - TERI Exhibition for World Environment.
- Organized a talk by well known botanist, Dr. P. Dayanandan as part of the Madras Week celebrations.
- Talking Point Presentation in a residential colony in Anna Nagar (Kambar Colony).



Beyond borders

- *Nizhal in Kerala* – An interactive power point presentation in Kottayam for the Members of Rotary Club of Kottayam East. A tree list which would introduce more biodiversity has also been furnished.
- *Greening in Madurai prison campus*

Free the Tree Campaigns

Nizhal's Free the Tree Campaigns have been immensely popular among young and old volunteers. It has been an important tool in reaching out to communities to save trees.

Areas involved –

- Alwarpet
- Velachery
- Indra Nagar
- Nandanam
- T Nagar
- Pandy Bazar
- Anna Nagar
- K K Nagar
- Ashok Nagar.

Facilitating greening

- Mr Raghavendra Rao advised people in Anakaputhur on greening the colony.
- Advised Mrs. Radha Padmanabhan, a retired professor on planting procedures and species to plant in her village Tekkalur.

School Program

- Awareness program on tree relevant issues were conducted in
 - VIII std students of Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan, T Nagar
 - AMM School, Kotturpuram
 - RamaKrishna Mission School, T Nagar
 - Bhavan's Vidyashram, Anna Nagar
 - Kendriya Vidyalaya, Island Grounds



- Poster event in ICI school pre-KG to Class 8, Anna Nagar
- Kids Central, Kotturpuram - Three day program – field visit to Pallikaranai Marsh, and planting and creative movement exercise in the PWD Park
- Kids Central, Kotturpuram – an awareness program for 13 weeks (Sept to Dec) – After school hours.

College Outreach

- Interaction with Youth Red Cross members from various city colleges at Anna University on ‘sensitive greening and care of trees’.
- Tree sensitisation project in MGR Janaki College - trained students to lead tree walks inside campus – for the Biochemistry and Bioinformatics Department.

Working with the Corporation of Chennai

- **Landmark Tree Care and Maintenance Workshop conducted by Nizhal in Zone 5 with the help of a corporate trainer from Excel People on 14th February '09.**
- Nizhal volunteers work with Zonal Officers across the city, wherever possible, to initiate activities for tree care in their own zones.
- Sent recommendations to the Commissioner, Chennai Corporation and the Deputy Chief Minister, M K Stalin on the issue of falling trees in the city.

With the Government of Tamil Nadu

- Nizhal was invited to a meeting of the State Forest Commission as a follow up on the idea of instituting a Tree Authority for Chennai and a Tree Act in TN.
- Recommended tree species list sent to Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board to circulate to industries applying for renewal of licenses.
- Nizhal was invited to a meeting with the Director, School Education, organized by Forest Department for suggestions in comprehensive greening of schools.

Media coverage...

- Jaya TV Kalai Malar – calls from people from Kanchipuram, Chengulpet, Royapuram and Padikuppam.



- Other articles in TOI, Deccan Chronicle, The Hindu, Dinamani, Makkal Kural, etc have started to focus on careful choice of tree species for greening in urban areas.

It's happening....

- Our website has now been refurbished with new look, thanks to the painstaking efforts taken by our Website Development Committee.
- A Music CD with lively Tamil and Hindi songs on trees and nature sung by young people will be released.
- A Comprehensive Tree Identification Booklet for easy identification of common trees in Chennai is in progress.

THE WAY AHEAD

- Proactive efforts to reach out to schools and colleges across Chennai through awareness programs and campaigns.
- Sensitizing local bodies and concerned government departments on issues of tree care and maintenance.
- Facilitating the setting up of nurseries with saplings that help the regeneration of local biodiversity across the city.
- Documentation of Flora of institutions across Chennai – colleges, others etc.
- To enable more Friends of Trees networks in different areas of the city, to speak for trees around them.