



NI ZHAL

ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

The last year was a very busy and meaningful year for the Nizhal Team. We thank our friends from across government departments and corporates, and young and senior volunteers across Chennai, for supporting the activities that are part of this Report!

Green Prisons Program moves onto the next major step!

The ongoing **Green Prisons Program** has attained the next major step –an MoU has been signed with a private consultant who will help with marketing organic millets produced in the prison campus! The Prison Bazaars will be the outlets. Already, marketing of vermicompost generated and vegetables grown has become very popular across Chennai!

Vermicompost is available to the public at a very reasonable price at Prison Bazaars, from across central prisons. Despite many challenges, the Nizhal Team and the prison authorities have worked in a sustained manner towards making it a success.

Prison campuses are greener now, thanks to involvement of inmates and prison officials. Inmates are growing organic vegetables and fruits and now even millets in their kitchen gardens!

We are getting regular updates about work at Puzhal, Madurai, Palayankottai (which currently showcases an excellent integrated farming model), Coimbatore, Salem, Trichy, Pudukottai, Vellore and Cuddalore. Systematic feedback forms facilitate progress. We are grateful to our Advisors Dr N Dayanandam and Mr G Ramakrishnan for their support.

ADGP Prisons, Mr J.K.Tripathy's continued encouragement in this project has been our biggest support!

Green Schools across the City...*Palliyil Nizhal!*

Nizhal has been working with the Chennai Corporation to take the awareness campaign to sensitively green corporation schools, and to project one Model School in each of the 13 Zones across Chennai.

The idea is to get students interested in sensitive greening – **green campuses, tree care, composting leaf litter and raising organic vegetables.**

The schools currently in this "**PalliyilNizhal**" programs are

- *Corporation High School, Kottur*



- *Corporation High School, Thiruvanmiyur*
- *Corporation High School, Uthandi*
- *Corporation High School, Perungudi*

Chennai High School, Thiruvanmiyur, was adopted by Nizhal to create a model school "**Pasumai Palli**" for green project "**Nam satthu nam kaiyil**" for a year-long association.

The trees that were planted are being cared for by students who water them regularly. The staff took over watering duties during vacations. Nameboards have been put up to help students to identify trees. They harvest greens, radish, ladies finger and beans. This project was supported by Rotary Club of Madras-East.

There were also many awareness sessions conducted at the Chennai School, NS Garden, R.A.Puram where children were taken on a tree walk to Dharmambal Park. Similar programmes were also conducted for the Corporation High School at Nungambakkam.

Nizhal has also been involved with several other private schools across Chennai.

These include:

1. *NirmalaHr Sec School, Ashok Nagar*
2. *VelankanniHr Sec School, Ashok Nagar*
3. *NSN Hr Sec School, Chromepet and Chitlapakkam*
4. *NKT School. Hr Sec Triplicane*
5. *IIT Tech kids, IIT campus*
6. *Sharanalaya School*
7. *Wesley School, Royapettah*
8. *Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya*
9. *Karnataka Sangha School*
10. *Vidyodaya School*
11. *Vidya Matriculation School, Chetpet*
12. *L M Dadha School*
13. *Durga Matriculation*
14. *Holy Angels School*
15. *Kendriya Vidyalaya, Ashok Nagar*
16. *VanaVani, Adyar*
17. *APL Global*
18. *Vriksha Montessori*



19.Deeksha School

We are grateful to the Commissioner, Chennai Corporation, and teachers of schools for their continued support.

Outreach Presentations

Nizhal made presentations at the following venues

- 1. Corporation of Chennai officials, Ripon Building*
- 2. DakshinChitra Foundation*
- 3. Friends of DakshinChitra*
- 4. Mindtree*
- 5. Accenture*
- 6. Hindustan Institute of Engineering Technology*
- 7. Women's Association – Velachery*
- 8. Air Force Avadi– AFWA*
- 9. RR Donnelley*
- 10. Youth Health Mela in association with Cancer Institute*
- 11. Krishi Vigyan Kendra, TANUVAS, Kattupakkam*
- 12. Sri Parasakthi College for Women, Courtallam*
- 13. Arulmigu Senthil Andavar Polytechnic, Tenkasi*

Kotturpuram Tree Park becomes an inspiring model of Public Private Partnership!

There has been a steady flow of enthusiasts into the Tree Park and it is being recognised as a prime urban biodiversity area in Chennai! Nizhal, along with the Chennai Corporation and the Friends of Kotturpuram Tree Park (FKTP), a registered society, works at involving citizens who use the space to contribute and volunteer their efforts in preserving this special Community Biodiversity Park!

Every weekend, we have students and corporate volunteers from across the city volunteering their time and effort.

Chennai Trekking Club (CTC) and CREW volunteers have been regularly participating in *Shramdaan* here.



This year, we have 2 batches of students with special needs (ranging from 10 – 25 years) from V-Excel School working in the herbal garden as therapy. They waterplants, clear weeds, pack sapling packets and plant herbal saplings.

Nizhal is grateful to the Commissioner, Corporation of Chennai, for his warm hearted support for this cause, and his team of officials at the Zonal level who have extended their support in various ways!

Most wonderful is the fact that this Tree Park has now inspired Tree Parks in different areas in the city – Chitlappakkam (now onto the third tree park!), Madhavaram, Perungudi, Ashok Nagar, Porur etc.

Indigenous species nursery being nurtured!

Special seeds and saplings are currently being nurtured by volunteers, for planting in more Tree Parks!.

Unique Park Day celebration

Park Day was celebrated on 10th August 2014. The park looked really colourful and festive with lots and lots of children participating in painting and photography events. Treasure hunt and other games were organised to get the children observe the trees, learn and have fun. Students from St Luis School, Kottur School, V-Excel Academy and many neighbouring schools enjoyed the sight and sounds of this park.

Mr Babu Rajendran, Mr S. Ramaswamy and many other key people who helped in developing the park were there to share their experience and journey.

Park caretakers were given gift as a token of appreciation for their sincere work by FKTP President Nina Reddy.

Street Greening- Nizhal carried out greening of canal bank road Adyar. Nizhal was supported by Ramky Adyar zone in carrying out this project.

Facilitating Student Internship Programs

The Tree Park has also become a site for many valuable student internship programs. We have students from The School, KFI, Vivekananda College, Nandanam Arts and Science College and MCC, Tambaram, as participants.

Madhavaram Tree Park has been one of Nizhal's challenging tree parks, with around 200 saplings. During this year, the site faced many hurdles, but we have also been able to reach out to many more friends -Ganeshmurthy, Vignesh, Muthukumar, Dhiraj and corporate volunteers led by Krithiga and Anand of BeroeInc and volunteers from HCL and Dell. Special thanks are due to Beroe, Dell and HCL for their fund contributions towards fencing.

We have also forged close links with TANUVAS officials, Aavin officials and NCC team at site, and thank them deeply for their support.



Forging newer links with the Corporation of Chennai!

Tree Parks across all zones of the Chennai Corporation!

Nizhal, on invitation from Chennai Corporation, has suggested trees for planting in various tree parks in several zones. Plans are afoot to get them going, with Corporation support and community involvement.

Nizhal has visited Park areas in Zone 5, Zone 9, Zone 11, Zone 13, Zone 14 and Zone 15 and have drawn up plans for these parks. Grateful thanks are due to the Commissioner, Chennai Corporation and his Team.

Many Tree lovers across the city have written to Nizhal seeking help and advice in planting trees in their neighbourhood.

Nizhal is also working on the greening of Chitlapakkam lakeside.

Tree Mapping

In order to protect and make inventory of the trees in public places across Chennai, Corporation of Chennai (COC) was approached by Nizhal. CoC agreed to do that with Nizhal's support. In this regard, TEEMS India came forward to map the trees using GPS technology. As an initial step, Ward 176 was selected and mapped. This exercise is planned across Chennai with the help of TEEMS India in all 199 wards!

Exhibitions

- **"Youth Health Mela"** helped us connect with many young people across the city.
- **Science City** exhibition helped us connect with many schools and school children.

Tree Walks

This year, we had various novel Tree Walks. These include:

- Session with expert **"PoochiVenkat"** who took participants around KTP on an Insects and Trees Walk.
- A Floral Walk too, when many of our trees were blooming this summer
- **Special Musical Tree Walk** was held at Kalakshetra as a part of Madras week celebrations. **Musician R K Sriramkumar** along with his disciples rendered songs from Tamil hymns and literature where the names of various trees were mentioned.
- **Story Trails.** A special walk where Rajani told stories associated with trees in mythology and history.



- **An orientation program for students of Kalakshetra** to conduct walks in their campus.

Madras Day Celebration

Our thematic tree walks this year had great response. "Poochi" Venkat's insect walk at Nageswara Rao Park, Dr Abirami's Siddha Walk and RK Sriramkumar's musical treewalk – all of them were thoroughly enjoyed by participants. Dr.Babu also gave a talk on Coastal ecosystems organized by the MNS at Spaces.

We have had a number of venues this year for our walks.

Kotturpuram Tree Park has been much sought after venue for our tree walks for several reasons, mainly:

- A.** for the variety of species it boasts of
- B.** for the story of its development - entirely by volunteers from concept to completion.
- C.** Turning into a healing space for many (we have received feedback from students of VExcelSchool saying that they really look forward to their trip to KTP as they are able to learn, enjoy as well as give back to nature. They find this space and working here very calming).

Besides Kotturpuram Tree Park, we have had walks at

1. *East Coast Road*
2. *IIT Campus*
3. *Kalakshetra*
4. *Nageswara Rao Park*
5. *Nanmangalam*
6. *Panagal Park*
7. *Sivan Park*
8. *Rostrevor garden*
9. *Nanganallur*
10. *St Thomas Mount*
11. *Chitlapakkam*
12. *Egmore Stadium*

Free the Tree Campaigns

Most of the "Free The Tree" (FTC) campaigns conducted around the city were led by our star volunteer Gajendra Kumar. He gathered his friends and inspired them to save trees from various forms of abuse. Some of the locations of FTC were:

1. Mandaveli
2. MRC Nagar
3. Ashok Nagar
4. Guindy
5. Shastri Nagar



6. R A Puram

FTCs in southern districts in TN soon!

Mr Arunkumar Jeyaseelan, a software engineer with Franklin Templeton, has been reaching out in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu! His repeated efforts have resulted in municipality's approval from Tenkasi and will get consent letter from Tuticorin Municipality very soon. This is a big leap!

Publications

Pidhana -Trees of Kalakshetra Campus, an extensive documentation of the 99acre campus of the Kalakshetra Foundation has been completed.

Trees as Heritage – Work on documenting landmark trees across Chennai is going this on.

Trees of Kotturpuram Tree Park – All the special tree species of the Kotturpuram Tree Park are being documented. A digital version was released on Park Day by students of V-Excel learning centre and received by students of Corporation School, Kottur.

We are grateful to Venkatesan R of Studiodescience and Narayanan of Lasertech Systems for the design and formatting support!

The hindu carries an article "**tree of the month**" contributed by nizhal volunteers. It describes one indigenous tree species.

Documentation of institutional campuses!

- Madras Club
- Kalakshetra Campus
- YWCA, Poonamallee
- Rostrevor Gardens, Teynampet
- Voluntary Health Services
- Wesley School
- Gill Adarsh School
- Crocodile Bank
- Valluvar Kottam
- Income Tax Department, Nungambakkam

Name boarding has been taken up at Valluvar Kottam and Rostrevor Garden and is underway at the Madras Club.

2014 Calendar on Indigenous Tree Species

Nizhal has come out with a desk calendar for the second consecutive year, designed by the Nizhal Team.



Connecting to Indian biodiversity portal!

Nizhal has become a contributor to India Biodiversity Portal. This will open up information to the large Internet enabled citizens of the country to connect, contribute and share biodiversity information from different geographies of the country and be a rich and open access repository of biodiversity information for India.

Green Railway Stations in Tamil Nadu soon!

A plan has been drawn for greening the busy Egmore Railway station and discussions are on for greening of other railway stations too. Nizhal has suggested steps to be taken for greening.

Nizhal in Media

Activities of Nizhal are periodically covered by the local media. FTCs, Tree walks, Tree talks, as well as outreach meetings with neighbourhoods are covered by media. We receive regular calls from across the State on issues of tree concern!

Our team and our work have featured in – “**Roudram Pazhagu**” programme in Puthiya Thalaimurai channel, and “**Nenjam Porukuthilaiyae**” on KTV. Also our work regarding the greening of prisons has been highlighted in the program “**Chuvadugal**” in Thanthi TV.

With Forest Department – Nizhal continues to be on the Steering Committee of the CAMPA, this year too!

Exceptional Volunteer Award... T Krishnarajan Memorial Award

Mr K Ramesh from Bangalore last year made a generous personal donation of Rs 50,000 in his father Mr.TKrishnarajan’s memory. An award has been instituted and the interest accrued from this fund will be given to outstanding volunteer/s who have been helping Nizhal selflessly in a committed and sustained way.

This year, the award with a citation and cash gift, is being given by Mrs Jaya Krishnarajan to T. Gajendran who has shown immense commitment and worked in a sustained manner for Nizhal’s cause of greening environment.

The Nizhal Team is deeply grateful for the extended volunteer network of friends and officials who support our work in various areas! Each effort is so special and much valued.

THANK YOU...FOR BEING A FRIEND WHO BELIEVES IN THIS MOVEMENT!

