

## ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

The proverbial 'lucky' thirteenth year saw many of Nizhal's greening projects take off ! At the outset we thank our dedicated team and all volunteers who continue to be part of our green journey.

We also wish to remember with fondness and gratitude, the guiding spirit of our Chief Advisor, the Late Mr. G Dattatri, and our Advisor Dr. Sekar Raghavan, who set us on this journey.

### GREENING OF PUBLIC SPACES

#### GREENING OF MRTS

MAndaveli, Chintadripet and Taramani are the three stations that have been added to the list of Green MRTS. Working with the permission of the Indian Railways, saplings were planted – around 20 in Mandaveli, 85 in Chintadripet and 75 in Taramani.

Nizhal has yet again found enthusiastic sponsors, members of the public and other volunteers to plant and nurture these green spaces.

The journey has just begun and the momentum seems to point to a green destination.

#### GREENING OF CANCER INSTITUTE

Bright flowering shrubs and tree to increase green cover were planted in the Cancer Institute premise in Adyar. Around 50 tree saplings and flowering shrubs were planted .A team and a plan is in place to care for these saplings.

#### WARD 176

Last year we [planned the roadside greening in Ward 176, Besant Nagar by conducting a survey to identify loss of green cover post-Vardah. This year suitable locations were earmarked and saplings were planted along the Besant Nagar beach promenade and Avvai Home stretch . The Nizhal team works with enthusiastic participation from the members of the public who have come forward to care for the saplings. The happy result is that the saplings are thriving well despite numerous challenges like water scarcity, vandalism, dumping of rubbish.....

#### VELACHERY ROADSIDE GREENING

Velachery is one of the areas chosen by Nizhal under the roadside greening projects. Its two year journey has been fraught with challenges.....lack of reliable water source, vandalism.

The dedicated team has held together through ups and downs and the saplings are doing well. This has spurred us on to our next phase. Around 25 saplings more were planted and are being nurtured by an enthusiastic group of volunteers.

#### GREENING OF PWD LAND

PWD land along the Buckingham Canal has been taken up in two phases. The first phase was completed with the planting and nurture of about 70 saplings, and plans are afoot for the second. The land which was being used as a dump, is being given new lease of life and will blossom into a model green lung space .

### **CHITLAPAKKAM NEER VANAM (CNV)**

#### **Greening and Eco restoration of Lakes, Rivers and Water Bodies**

Nizhal has pioneered a community driven program of eco restoration of waterbodies across Chennai with its flagship project at the **Chitlapakkam Lake on 3<sup>rd</sup> Main Road, Chitlapakkam**. The creation of the Nizhal Chitlapakkam **Neer Vanam** on the banks of this lake with local community involvement could be the best possible answer to the perennial problem of cleanup, restoration of water bodies.

The project, that has completed two years, is a result of Nizhal's collaboration with the Local Panchayat, PWD and groups like Chitlapakkam Rising. Garbage dumping, vandalism , grazing .... Have been the major hurdles and challenges faced . Undeterred, the dedicated team meets every weekend for a Pasumai Pani /Shramdaan session to nurture and protect them.

The involvement of the local community in caring for their own neighbourhood water bodies is the biggest success of this project. The second Nizhal CNV Day was celebrated with a tree planting, tree walk and art program by children from the local community.

### **KOTTURPURAM TREE PARK (KTP)**

Initiated in 2008 as a joint project of PWD, Nizhal, and Citizens Committee, to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> year of the PWD, this 5-acre rubbish dump has been converted into a biodiversity hotspot of indigenous flora and fauna! Home to not only more than 150 species of indigenous trees, it is also a home to diverse species of insects, birds, mammals and even deer!

Weekend Pasumai Pani/ Shramdaans (volunteering activity) get tremendous response from the general public, corporate volunteers and student communities.

Park Day was celebrated at Kotturpuram Tree Park #NizhalKTP, by Friends of Kotturpuram Tree Park (FKTP). Chief guest Smt. Santha Sheila Nair felicitated the volunteers and workers who contribute to making KTP the glorious public space it is!

Students from Chennai High School , Kottur, presented a song on trees and exchanged stories and experiences with the Chief Guest.

An indigenous saplings nursery is being set up with funding from KLA Tencor. A model pond ecosystem is being created with help of volunteers.

Several workshops , tree walks, Pasumai-Pani/ Shramdaan sessions, Corporate Volunteering sessions ..... make KTP a model tree park and a learning ground.

The Madhavaram Tree Park (MTP) is being cared for by Nizhal volunteers and TANUVAS, as a model of synergic partnership.

Our Community Parks across the city inspire visitors to start similar green hubs in their neighbourhoods!

Meanwhile, Greater Chennai Corporation has handed over the care of two parks in the city, to Nizhal. One is the Kotturpuram Tree Park (KTP) and the other, the historic Maadi Poonga in Royapuram. Work goes on in full swing at the KTP with the support of Nizhal volunteers, FKTP, members of local community and even teams from the Officers Training Academy (OTA) and various Corporate organizations .

At Maadi Poonga, Nizhal is planning the next phase of rejuvenation.

### **GREEN PRISONS PROGRAM**

Initiated in November 2009 in Puzhal Central Prison, Chennai, the Nizhal- Green Prisons program is active across Tamil Nadu - Cuddalore, Trichy, Pudukottai, Vellore, Salem, Madurai, Coimbatore and Palayamkottai Central Prisons.

The Nizhal team continues to interact with the ADGP in office, for fresh strategies to rejuvenate the green project.

### **TREE MAPPING IN PARKS**

Did you know that Natesan Park has 314 trees and Panagal Park has 218? Parks in the city are the first casualties of development. The expansion of CMRL has instilled a fear among the residents of loss of precious green lung space in their neighbourhoods.

Nizhal teamed up with TEEMS India, using GIS to map trees in these two parks which could face imminent threat. Students from Ramakrishna Mission School were roped into conduct the survey. Location, girth, height, species of all the trees in the two parks were recorded. This census will give the public an idea of the number of trees. A record of their existence/ destruction will help in creating awareness and protecting our green cover.

### **YUVA AND JUNIOR YUVA PROGRAMS**

YuVa, Youth Leadership program grooms young leaders to work for the environment and fosters communication skills in the youth through action/ awareness programs. The youth brigade conducts FTCs (Free the Tree Campaigns) and Shramdaans. FTCs were held in Kodambakkam . Plans are afoot to hold regular FTCs across the city.

Junior YuVa for children is inspiring young minds to think green. Hands on sessions help them to understand and celebrate trees and nature. Experts and knowledgeable enthusiasts from various fields share their skill and ideas with the children, linking greenery to different aspects of life.

### **TREE WALKS**

Madras day tree walks, monthly neighbourhood walks, walks for students, Corporate groups.....tree walks are becoming a popular way to reach out and bring more folks under the Nizhal umbrella.

Some walks held the past year include:

Madras Day Walks at Besant nagar, Chintadripet, Mandaveli, IMH Kilpauk, Nizhal CNV at Chitlapakkam, and KTP. Flower Trails walk at KTP. Monthly walks at -Prithvi Avenue-RA Puram, Keshava Perumal Puram, Sastri Nagar-Adyar, Shenoy Nagar, Mandavelipakkam.

Walks and students' program at KTP for the following Educational Institutions-

1. Madhuram Narayanan Trust students did multiple sessions at KTP
2. The Indian Public School
3. HID Global
4. Sprouts Montessori
5. Kalpavriksha Montessori

### **CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING AND COMMITMENT**

Partnering with Corporate bodies in our projects has now become a regular feature of our greening efforts. Some of them sponsor the saplings, tree guards, fencing or tools, under their CSR programs.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of KLA Tencor, who have supported the following projects

1. Greening of Tambaram Sanatorium
2. Greening at IMH, Kilpauk
3. MRTS greening at Chintadripet and Taramani
4. Sapling Nursery at KTP.

Vijaya Bank were sponsors of Ward 176 greening.

TEEMS India partnered in the mapping at Natesan and Panagal Parks.

M/S Willington sponsored the greening of Womens' ward at IMH.

Husqvarna sponsored power tools for KTP.

M/S Freshworks sponsored the PWD site planting along OMR-Buckingham canal.

We also have employees volunteering in our Pasumai Pani / Shramdaan sessions, or attending our awareness programs.

Some of the groups that have volunteered this year are:

Jnanadri Technologies, Technip, Chai Point, Royal Bank of Scotland.

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Nizhal was awarded the Champions of Chennai 2017 award by the KSA Trust, under the social initiative category. The logo and trophy, representing the cross section of a conch, 'reflect evolution and growth just like the journey of the Champions with their ups and downs'.

The award was presented at a function held in the city.

The Nizhal team is deeply grateful for this recognition of our work.

Founder Trustee of Nizhal Ms. Shobha Menon, was one of the five special awardees at the Homepreneur Award 2018 recognised for being an inspiration.

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Nizhal has an active presence in Social media. All our planting sites have a WhatsApp group to monitor the wellness of the saplings on a daily basis. We also reach out via Facebook, Google & Yahoo groups and Twitter. Our website is currently being restructured to reach a wider audience.