



## **Nizhal : An outfit to promote tree culture**

It was sometime in June 2005 that the first stirrings of a new movement for trees began in Chennai. A few of us who felt a need for an organization to speak for trees, joined together to form **Nizhal** (Shade), a Trust to promote concern for trees in the city, in September 2005.

The idea was to bring about an awareness on the role and utility of trees in our lives and on the need to plant, propagate and care for trees for the benefit of all. This would help in developing knowledge on trees, including the laws relating to trees in the urban setting.

Advocacy as an instrument - with governmental and non-governmental agencies - to raise more trees is a major focus of Nizhal. Each kind of site calls for different treatment with respect to tree planting, and the characteristics of indigenous and exotic trees have to be understood before saplings are chosen for planting. **Nizhal** hopes to provide such knowledge through its data bank and with the help of experts in the field.

**Nizhal** sees its role, as a resource centre and facilitator for those seeking information on trees. **Nizhal's** broad areas of activity to promote the tree culture include the following:

1. Direct Planting Initiatives
2. School Awareness Programmes
3. Tree Walks
4. Resourcing of saplings
5. Information Brochures
6. Posters
7. Pamphlets
8. Documentation/website
9. Developing a Tree Protection Code
10. Tree Surveys
11. Assistance in Planning Eco-projects

### **Nizhal's advisory board comprises of:**

Dattatri.G, formerly Chief Urban Planner, CMDA



Sekhar Raghavan, Director, Rain Centre, Chennai

S.Theodore Baskaran, former Chief Postmaster General, Writer and Naturalist

Dr. P. Dayanandan, former HOD, Botany, Madras Christian College

Natesan S, Organic Farmer, Karanodai

M Gnana Muthu, formerly Environmental Officer, TNPCB

**Nizhal's Trustees :**

Harish K.

Kamakshi Subramaniyan

Shobha Menon

Sundararaman M

Pattammal Chandrasekhar

**Funds** for Nizhal in the last year have been through contributions from tree lovers, friends, of about Rs 24,000. All contributions have 80 G exemption. Many enthusiasts gave of their valuable time, and others support in the form of printing advice, pamphlets etc.

**Nizhal's activities over the past year have included the following :**

**TREE PLANTING**

Kottur -- About 100 tree saplings have been planted in and around the Kottur area in September 2005, with the support of the Corporation of Chennai. About 90 survive, mainly because of personal monitoring has been ensured and also community involvement.



Cancer Institute, Adyar –10 saplings planted around the Children's Ward of the Cancer Institute are doing well because of personal monitoring and motivation of their caretakers.

Velacherry, Saidapet – 3-4 saplings are planted every week, whenever possible, with a group of young volunteers.

MICO Colony, Besant Nagar –About 40 saplings along IV Avenue, Besant Nagar, with Corporation support.

Greames Road, Egmore –50 saplings were planted beside the Coom, with Corporation tie up and students from Saligramam, the Youth Organisation for the Underprivileged group. On monitoring, we found adequate care had not been taken to nurture the saplings and it was brought to the notice of the Corporation.

## **RESOURCING SAPLINGS**

From Forest Nursery, Velachery and Anna Nagar, Corporation Nursery, Pattinampakkam and Private Nurseries...

### **Sourced to :**

Every school where Awareness Programmes have been conducted (at least 3 –4)

50 saplings for Sevalaya

40 saplings to Pammal Municipality

20 saplings to St Louis' Deaf and Dumb School, Gandhi Nagar

12 saplings to Bala Mandir Trust, for the Satyamurthy School

15 saplings to the Sanskrit College, Mylapore

100s of saplings to tree lovers - Puvarasu and Pungam , Konnai saplings -in Kottur and Besant Nagar.

A proposed 500 saplings for Chinmaya Organisation for Rural Development (CORD) for their campus at Thamaraiykkam.



## **TREEGUARD**

Propagation of novel idea of guarding saplings with Cycle Tubes introduced by Pandiyan, one of Nizhal's volunteers.

## **GREENING PROJECT**

**Kattupalli Bio Shield and Greening Project** to be executed in the next 9 months, through a 2.5 lakh Project Grant awarded as part of the Green Coast Project managed by Wetlands International.

## **SCHOOL**

## **PROGRAMMES**

M.C.T.M., Purasawalkam, for NSS Camp at Maduravayal

St John's Matriculation Hr Sec School, Besant Nagar

Arignar Anna Hr Sec School, Besant Nagar

Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram, Kilpauk ( we started with a 2-hr interaction, and continue to work with a teacher coordinator charting out the year's nature programmes for 200 + children of the 8<sup>th</sup> Std)

Gill Adarsh, Royapettah

Sirudavur Higher Elementary School, Sirudavur

Roots Montessori, Tiruvanmiyur

## **TREE WALKS**

The purpose of the Tree Walks organized by Nizhal is to make people familiar with trees, their names and their role in environment, in an enjoyable manner.



## **Where:**

Besant Nagar

Theosophical Society (around 15 Walks conducted so far on weekends)

Guindy National Park (2 Walks to date...)

Pushpa Gardens, Maduravoyal, to be included soon.

Plans to include IIT Campus and other green, college campuses (MCC, Tambaram has recently given permission)...and also identify areas in other parts of the city soon.

## **TREE SURVEY**

### **Pilot Projects**

Valmiki Nagar (complete)

Tiruvanmiyur (in progress)

Gandhi Nagar (in progress)

## **TREE ADVICE**

Y.M.C.A

Kalakshetra

Namma Mylapore

National Maritime Academy, Ministry of Shipping, Government of India

## **TREE NETWORKS**

Corporate tie-ups with

a)Ford Business Services

b)Satyam Foundation



With several NGOs in greening

**In progress :**

A Database of Resource Persons who can help in facilitating knowledge on trees, will include

- a) Botany Professors across the city
- b) Botany Students who will volunteer for Tree Surveys and Tree Walks
- c) sensitive horticulturists/landscape designers who encourage eco friendly methods of greening.

**Other Activities in progress**

An active Yahoo Group with 70 + members at this point

A Library on Books on Trees

Website : [www.nizhaltn.org](http://www.nizhaltn.org)

**Nizhal is grateful for the tremendous support of our volunteers and friends. Without their help this movement would not have been possible.**

**And we look forward to widening this active network gradually, across the city of Chennai!**

