



Nizhal : An outfit to promote tree culture

Nizhal was formed in Sept 2005 to spread awareness about tree issues in urban areas. 'Plant, care for and protect trees' is the slogan of our NGO with special emphasis on care and protection of trees. Nizhal completed a fruitful and busy first year in 2006, and celebrated its first anniversary on the 7th Oct 2006.

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 focus on sensitive greening 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:

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

Nizhal's Trustees - Kamakshi Subramaniyan, Shobha Menon, Sundararaman M and Pattammal Chandrasekhar.

Nizhal Projects/Activities undertaken –

1.GREENING OF KATTUPALLI

Kaattupalli, - The Kattupalli Bioshield Project sponsored by the Wetlands International, officially ended in May 2007, but members of Nizhal continue to visit the Kuppam to ensure that the trees/plants are surviving and also offer support to the women of the village. About 300 of the planted saplings are thriving, along with the 63 households' individual kitchen gardens.

Awareness programmes have been conducted for women and children with a focus on key issues in the environment.

2.PROMOTION OF SENSITIVE GREENING PROJECTS.

Police Battalion areas at Avadi, over 150 acres - Plan submitted by the Nizhal Team for around 4000 trees with the enthusiastic support of the battalion commandants and their Chief, Mr Tripathy has already been initiated.

Inputs have been given to Highways Department – State and National Highways - on Medians within the city and outside city limits.

Inputs on trees to be planted on Temple Lands to the HR and CE Department, on request of the Commissioner.

3.MAKING THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS – for sensitive greening

A major area embarked on this year has been connecting Institutions with large areas to be greened with Sponsors willing to take up such projects, with a focus on sensitive greening and care of the planted saplings at least for one year. Nizhal plays both a Facilitator's role and a monitoring role in the whole process.



- **Armed Forces Area** – A 98 acre area...a plan to put in place around 4000 trees.
- **YMCA Nandanam**, with the Rotary Club of Madras Central Aadhitya, 100 + trees across the campus
- **MRTS area Landscaping** – a proposal from Satyam Foundation that is going to begin shortly, opposite the Tidel Park area.

4. TREE PLANTING – Velachery, Nanganallur, YMCA.

Planting has happened along the Velachery Bye-Pass Road, Nanganallur, and YMCA, Nandanam and Valmiki Nagar.

Nizhal has also submitted plans for a planting and gardening activity in the Royapuram Government Boys' Home.

Our technical experts who offer their unstinted cooperation are Mr. Raghavendra Rao, Mr Natesan, Mr Harish, Mr Krishnan and Mr Raghuraman. .

5. TREE WALKS – a smashing hit with everyone

*Walks- A number of tree awareness walks have been conducted in the past one year. They have been of two kinds – area walks to sensitize people about trees in residential areas - in **Shastri Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Kodambakkam, Anna Nagar, Panagal Park, Alwarpet, R.A. Puram..***

*Walks in parks and protected areas like the **Theosophical Society, Guindy National Park, Natesan Park, Nageswara Rao Park, Museum Grounds, etc.** have also been conducted.*

6.TREE SURVEYS – An effective step towards documentation

Tree surveys- The results of the Valmiki Nagar tree survey done by the Ford foundation was cross checked by a bunch of enthusiastic volunteers and then compiled into an interactive map by Mr. Murugan of the TTK Maps.

The Sathyam Foundation, which also conducted tree surveys in the Gandhi Nagar area in Adyar, have submitted their data for compilation and analysis. Students of the Bala Vidya Mandir have also completed a survey of trees near their school under the guidance of their ES teacher, Mrs Mahalakshmi.



Children of classes 10 and 12 of Vidyasagar, school for special children are doing a tree survey in Kotturpuram. They hope to work closely with the corporation in caring for the trees of that area.

7.ACTIVITIES AND AWARENESS WORKSHOPS FOR SCHOOLS

Activities and workshops for schools / children – Nizhal conducted its first ever workshop for children at Treasure Island a library /activity Center in Kodambakkam.

Nizhal has been approached by a number of schools to help plan / conduct activities

8.ADVOCACY – working closely with the Chennai Corporation for sensible urban greening

With the Chennai Corporation as the NGO representative of Tree Committee to work on plans for sensitive urban greening.

With the State Highways Department, to revise its Manual to incorporate sensitive planting and care of trees(it was last updated sometime in the 1950's).

With the National Highways Association of India.

A Talking Point Presentation on ‘Tree Issues and Care’..in Tamil and English, put together by the Nizhal Team has been a major step. An easy to understand module, it can be propagated by anyone who wishes to disseminate information on sensitive greening.

A set of three posters on trees and the environment was brought out in June 2007.

A booklet , ‘How to raise a Tree’ and its Tamil version has also been published.

9.TREE ABUSE – finally trees gaining recognition

Anti nailing campaigns on trees have been initiated in different localities, with the help of Friends of Trees networks –auto drivers and school students, along with the community.

Nizhal is actively exhorting people to prevent the nailing of boards and hanging wires on trees. This is being given adequate recognition at Corporation Level and their staff directed to provide necessary assistance for Nizhal.



Valmiki Nagar Tree Care and Maintenance Programme is in progress with the collaboration of the Chennai Corporation.

10.TREE SURVEY

Pilot Projects

Valmiki Nagar (complete)

Tiruvanmiyur (in progress)

Gandhi Nagar (in progress)

11.TREE NETWORKS

Corporate tie-ups with

a)Ford Business Services

b)Satyam Foundation

With several NGOs in greening.....

12. A DATABASE 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.

13.. YOUTH WING TAKES ON INITIATIVES



New members and the Youth Wing- Nizhal's Youth wing came into being in February 2007, with the involvement of vibrant young members who in spite of their busy schedules manage to take time off to participate / initiate tree walks, planting and monitoring of saplings.

14. LOOKING AHEAD

- *To have more active volunteers committed to Nizhal's ideas and action programme, and increase volunteer workforce in schools /colleges across the city.*
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- *To conduct Tree Walks for people from all walks of life across the city.*
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- *More presentations on sensitive greening practices in neighbourhoods /communities.*
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- *To press for laws for protecting trees.*
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- *To work for sensitive greening getting prominence in the Master Plan of Chennai and other cities.*
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- *To actively network with NGOs within Chennai and other cities working in the sphere of greening/ tree issues in urban areas.*

Other Activities in progress

An active Yahoo Group with 150 + members at this point

A Library on Books on Trees

Website : www.nizhaltn.org

E Mail : nizhal.shade@gmail.com

Contact : 504 A, Riverdale Apartments, IV Main Road Extension, Kotturpuram, Chennai 85.