



ENVIS

Newsletter



on State of Environment

Supported by Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India

Vol. 9 No.2 September 2012

A quarterly issue

ISSN 0974 133x

GREENING TAMIL NADU

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GREENING TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu has an area of 22,877 sq. kms under forests which constitute 17.59% of the geographical area of the State as against 33.33% required under the National Forest Policy, 1988. The variability in climate, topography, soil, water resources, altitude and biotic influences has resulted in formation of different forest communities, commonly known as forest types.

The State has a spectrum of forest vegetation types ranging from wet evergreen forests to moist deciduous, dry deciduous, sholas, grass lands and scrub forests. Invaluable trees like Sandal, Teak and Rosewood and wildlife like tiger, elephant, lion-tailed macaque, grizzled giant squirrel and numerous rare species of fauna and innumerable species of flora including important medicinal plants are found in the forests of the State.

Tamil Nadu, therefore, has adopted a vision to inspire people to protect wilderness, the ecological diversity and species richness. The Tamil Nadu State Forest Act, 1882, The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and a host of rules formulated under these Acts are being implemented by the Forest Department. Adhering to the best scientific principles and incorporating traditional knowledge, new socio-economically and ecologically sound paradigms for managing forests and wildlife have been incorporated in the management strategies adopted by the department.

The National Forest Policy, 1988 sets the basic objectives, essentials and strategies of forest management. The principle aim of this policy is to ensure environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance, which is vital for sustenance of

all life forms, human, animal and plant. The derivation of direct economic benefit is to be subordinated to this principle aim. Ecological stabilization, protection of forests, wildlife conservation, conserving genetic resources maintenance of natural forests, enhancing forest productivity, enrichment of the forests' water resources and increasing the forest and tree cover in the state, constitute the main components of the State's Forest Policy.

The forest are managed by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department with the following objectives:

- Biodiversity and genetic resource conservation by protection of forests and wildlife.
- Augmentation of water resources in forest areas.
- Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded forests for improvement of forest cover.
- Enhancing tree cover outside forests for livelihood security and climate change mitigation.
- Welfare of Tribal and Forest fringe villagers to ensure economic prosperity and ecological stability.

Greening projects carried out by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department

1. Tamil Nadu Afforestation Project (TAP)

With the financial support from Japan Bank for International Co-operation, Tamil Nadu Afforestation Project (Phase I) was implemented from 1997-1998 to 2004-2005. Under this programme 4.8 lakhs ha. of degraded forests were restored.

TAP Phase-II is being implemented from 2005-2006 and will be completed by 2012-2013. The



project aims to restore the forest cover through soil and moisture conservation works, afforestation, and by providing alternate employment to the people living in forest fringe villages. 1.78 lakhs ha. of degraded forests around in 800 villages have been restored.

2. Tamil Nadu Bio-Diversity Conservation and Greening Project (TBGP)

The objective of the project is “to strengthen biodiversity conservation by improving the ecosystem and the management capacity as well as undertaking tree planting outside the recorded forest areas, thereby contributing to environmental conservation and harmonized socio-economic development of Tamil Nadu.”

a. Components and activities

This component aimed at restoring and enhancing biodiversity within the existing network of Protected Areas as well as in the Reserved Forests by strengthening scientific understanding and by upgrading technical capacity of Forest Department. The following categories of activities are to be taken up under this component.

- Habitat restoration, enhancement & management
- Reduction of human-animal conflict
- Ecologically sustainable development

b. Increasing the Natural Resource Base

Tree planting in private lands is being promoted on a large scale with an objective of contributing towards bringing 33% of geographical area under forest and tree cover. This will contribute

to increased supply of wood and non-wood products from private lands thereby reducing the pressure on natural forests. Tree based farming system will be developed as a viable economic enterprise to the farmers and their technical capacities will also be enhanced. Long rotation tree crops especially timber species will be planted up to a maximum of 70% of the target. Short rotation species such as casuarina will be planted up to a maximum of 30%. Financial incentives will also be paid to the farmers in the third financial year after planting. 1000 million seedlings will be planted in farm lands in 5 years. The following categories of activities are to be taken up under this component.

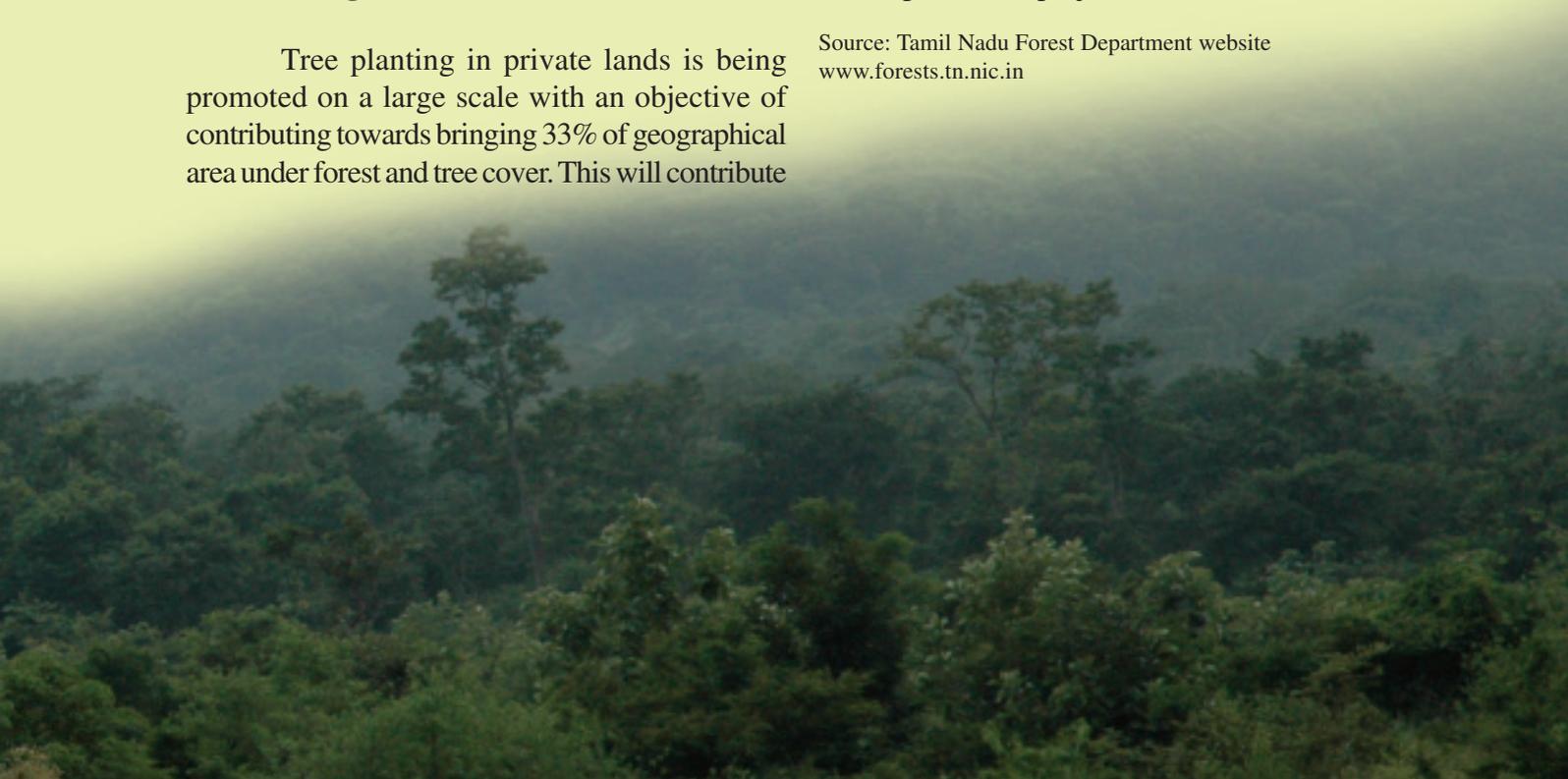
- Tree cultivation in private lands (TCPL)
- Research on production forestry/ agro-forestry/ farm forestry

c. Institutional Capacity Development

This component is aimed at developing the capacity of the staff for smooth implementation of the project, a series of capacity development programmes by way of trainings, workshops, study tours and consultative meetings are being held.

Enhanced outreach and environmental education will be a major activity which will effectively utilize the infrastructure in 30 Forest Extension Centers already created under Tamil Nadu Afforestation Project. Construction of Circle Offices, District Forest Offices, Range offices etc. will also form a part of this project.

Source: Tamil Nadu Forest Department website
www.forests.tn.nic.in



The visit of the Principal Secretary to Government, Environment and Forests Department to Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR) for inspecting the forest conservation initiatives

Principal Secretary to Government, Environment and Forests department, Thiru C.V. Sankar, I.A.S., visited Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve with a view to take up inspection of Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve which forms part of Agasthiyarmalai Biosphere Reserve on 3rd, 4th and 5th August 2012. The Principal Secretary was received by Dr. H. Malleshappa, I.F.S., Chief Conservator of Forests and Director of Environment at Mundanthurai, which is situated at 196 meter MSL, and the inspection was carried out. KMTR bears a large contiguous tract of about 400 sq.kms of wet



evergreen forests located away from the equatorial region. 2254 species of angiosperms have been recorded in this reserve of which 58 species are red-listed and 29 species are strictly endemic to Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve. This tiger reserve also supports a large number of mammalian fauna. All the 5 primates (Lion tailed Macaque, Bonnet Macaque, Nilgiri Langur, Common Langur and Slender Loris) of Peninsular India are found in KMTR. All the 14 endemic mammals of Western Ghats are found in KMTR. The inspection team went as high as 1567 mts. above MSL. The terrain was slippery, rough and rocky.

The inspection team saw tiger pugmarks, and panther scratches, etc. It was an indication of indirect sighting of carnivores in that area. The team also confirmed the presence of Tiger, Panther and other wild animals through the camera trap photos which were installed nearby. The Principal Secretary to Government appreciated action taken to ban the public visiting the Pothigai hills which would have definitely disturbed the virgin forest, landscape and also the wildlife. He further appreciated the works of the anti-poaching watchers who are committed to conservation and protection of Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve.



Awareness creation to school students on Wetland conservation

The Tholkapia poonga is conducting various awareness programmes for school students to create awareness on the need for conserving the wetland habitats. The Staff of the ENVIS centre, Department of Environment, participated in these programmes and created awareness among the school students by delivering lectures to the schools students on the need for wetland conservation.



One day training programme for NCG/ ECO club coordinators at Hosur



A one day training programme for NGC and Eco club coordinator was conducted by the NGC coordinators Thiru V. Balaji and Thiru Ravikumar at Adiyaman College, Hosur. The State coordinator Thiru. L. Durai, participated and delivered a speech about awareness creation. Nearly 250 NGC/Eco-club coordinators participated in this programme which was sponsored by the Titan Industries Ltd., Hosur.

GREEN DAYS

Vanamahotsava

Vanamahotsava is the festival of planting trees. It was started, as a campaign to save mother earth. The name Vanamahotsava (the festival of trees) originated in July 1947 after a successful tree-planting drive was undertaken in Delhi, in which national leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr Rajendra Prasad etc. participated. The concept of this great festival for the nature lovers was first initiated by (Late) Shri. K.M. Munshi, the Union Minister for Food & Agriculture in the year 1950. People celebrate vanamahotsava for a week during the month of July every year by planting trees in schools, offices, colleges, homes etc.

Department of Environment, Government of Tamil Nadu is the Pioneer in creating Environmental awareness. In Tamil Nadu the National Green Corps has been launched in 8000 schools and Eco-clubs have been launched in 5069 schools located in all the 32 districts. The main objectives of this programme is to create awareness about the environment and the urgent need for conservation. During vanamahotsava the main activity undertaken by the NGC school students is planting of trees in and around their school campus. Awareness programmes are also held at different levels. Novel programmes like free distribution of tree saplings are also taken up.



International Day for Preservation of the Ozone Layer

Since 1995, on 16th of September every year, the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer is celebrated. The theme for the year 2012 is “Protecting our atmosphere for generations to come”. This date has been designated by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 49/114, to commemorate the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

The International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer is being celebrated by the Department of Environment in all the 32 districts of Tamil Nadu with the help of school students from various schools. Awareness programmes such as street plays, human chains and rally with banners and placards are also organised by the school students. In addition to this, Ozone day celebrations are organized by the Department of Environment in collaboration with Exnora Green Pammal. The celebrations include, planting of trees, awareness rallies etc. highlighting the need for conserving the ozone layer. Dr. H. Malleshappa, I.F.S., Director of Environment, addressed the gathering and flagged off the awareness rally.



Awareness activities carried out by the Department of Environment

Environmental awareness programme at Shanthi School for the Deaf, Sivasilam, Tirunelveli district

Dr. H. Malleshappa, I.F.S., Director of Environment, participated in an awareness programme conducted at Shanthi School for the Deaf, Sivasailam (Unit of Gandhigram Trust, Avvai Ashram) on 22nd July 2012. The welcome address given by Mr. V. Saravanan, Headmaster, Shanthi School



for Deaf. The Director of Environment delivered the Presidential address and he interacted with the NGC students and elaborated on why and how the NGC students should create environmental awareness. Dr.G.S. Vijayalakshmi, NGC Coordinator, Tirunelveli District outlined the various activities undertaken in the district. The Director of Environment planted a tree sapling in the school campus to mark the need for conservation of green cover.



One day seminar for the National Green Corps (NGC) district co-coordinators at Guindy Children's park, Chennai

The Department of Environment, Government of Tamil Nadu conducted a one day seminar for NGC district coordinators at Guindy National Park on 27th July 2012. The Director of Environment, Dr. H. Malleshappa, I.F.S., welcomed the Principal Secretary to Government, the resource persons and the participants. He informed the present status of NGC activities in Tamil Nadu and also emphasized that “every child should be involved in environmental conservation”. The Principal Secretary to Government Thiru C. V. Sankar, I.A.S., delivered the key-note address



and highlighted the need for basic environmental awareness among the school children. He also asked the participants to discuss the ways to improve the functioning of the NGC programme in the future, and give suggestions.



He exhorted the participating coordinators to find ways of adding value to waste during waste management, just like it is done in the production of Bio-gas. He also asked coordinators to increase awareness about the environment among the general public by carrying out campaigns during important festivals and days. An exhibition on NGC activities was put up by the ENVIS centre.

Awareness programme at Sacred Mariannai Higher Secondary School, Madurai

Dr. H. Malleshappa, I.F.S., Director of Environment, participated in an awareness programme conducted at Sacred Mariannai Higher Secondary School, Madurai on 1st September 2012. He flagged off a rally and interacted with the school students and explained the need for environmental awareness and the role of the NGC programme. He also planted tree sapling in the school campus to create awareness on the importance of trees.



More than 250 NGC and eco clubs teacher coordinators participated in the programme.



One day seminar for Enviro-Club students at in Guru Sri Shanthi Vijay Jain College, Veppery, Chennai

The Enviro-club of Guru Sri Shanthi Vijay Jain College, Veppery, Chennai conducted a one day seminar on “Green Initiatives” on 7th September 2012. Dr. M.K. Malathy, Principal of the Jain College gave the welcome address and Shri P. Gautam Vaid, Secretary, addressed the students and spoke about the importance of biodiversity conservation. Dr. H. Malleshappa, I.F.S., Director, Department of Environment delivered the Inaugural address. In his speech, he highlighted that about 4000 metric tones of municipal solid waste was generated daily in Chennai. He also spoke about the need to conserve the rivers Coovam and Adyar from pollution as they are the two major rivers in the city and requested the students to educate the next generation on the various environmental issues and the need for environmental conservation.



Go green- Walkathon 2012

On 8th September 2012, a Walkathon Rally – in the theme “Go Green” was conducted by Sutherland Global Systems. The Walkathon was held at Marina Beach to create awareness about global warming and propagate the message of Go Green. The Walkathon started from the lighthouse at 6.00 A.M and ended at the labour statue. Dr. H. Malleshappa, I.F.S., Director, Department of Environment addressed the gathering and highlighted the importance of reducing one’s carbon foot print in the mitigation of Climate



Change and its impacts. He later flagged off the rally. ENVIS Centre of the Department of Environment also took part in this rally and spread awareness. Around 1000 people participated in the rally.

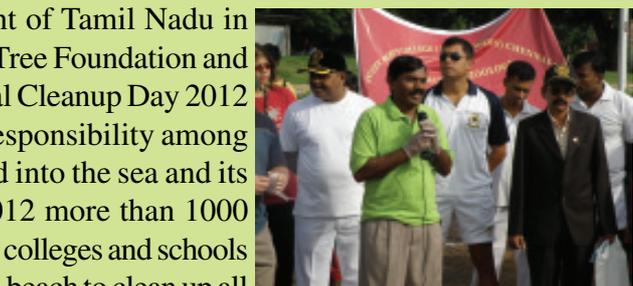
International Coastal Cleanup Day 2012

Department of Environment, Government of Tamil Nadu in collaboration with the Indian Coast Guard (East), Tree Foundation and Loyola College conducted the International Coastal Cleanup Day 2012 that is celebrated world over to instill a sense of responsibility among general public on the problem of garbage dumped into the sea and its effects on marine life. On the 15th September 2012 more than 1000 volunteers from the Indian Coast Guard, various city colleges and schools gathered at the Marina beach to clean up all



the waste from the beach. Dr. H. Malleshappa, I.F.S., Director of Environment, Dr. R. Gunasekaran, I.F.S., Chief Wildlife Warden, Tamil Nadu Forest Department along with officials from the Indian Coast Guard and Australian Consulate flagged off the Coastal

Clean up. ENVIS Centre of the Department of Environment also took part in this rally and spread awareness.



National Evaluation workshop of ENVIS Centres at Bhopal

The National Interaction-cum-Evaluation Workshop for ENVIS Centre's was held on August 29th – 30th, 2012. The workshop was organized by Disaster management institute (DMI), Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh and supported by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. As presentations were delivered one after the others, the expert members reviewed each ENVIS centre and gave their valuable suggestions and recommendations. The workshop was summed up by a session with members of the Ministry and the participants with a discussion on the constraints, issues and problems faced by the ENVIS centres and ways to resolve them. Staff of the ENVIS Centre, Department of Environment, Government of Tamil Nadu, participated in the Evaluation workshop.



Nostalgic notes on forest conservation in Singampatti Zamindari Forests



“From the exhibits field on the side of the Zamindari, one of them which may still be traceable I remember having gone through with great interest. According to that deposition, my great-great-grandfather Sami Ayya loaded provisions on mules and rode into the Hill tracts for three days and three nights in order to verify that trees were actually dead before having them cut down by a forest contractor. That is how the Singampatti Zamindari Forest was cared for, looked after and preserved.

My grandfather was the twenty ninth ruler in the lineage of Singampatti Zamindari dynasty, which is almost one millennium old. As far as I could perceive from the records of the Samasthanam he was a staunch environmentalist who had imposed a fine of Rs. 1/- each for the plucking of seven teak leaves when a sovereign cost only Rs. 5/-. When he was compelled to lease out eight thousand acres in the Zamindari Forests to a British based company, M/s. Bombay Burma Trading Corporation, I was told that he spent sleepless nights and did not eat for several days. Whilst he witnessed the felling of trees in the process of clearing the land for the planting of tea, he wept.

Written by
T.N.S.Murugadoss Theerthapathy,
Rajah of Singampatti

Other events participated by the Director of Environment

- Training programme for IAS probationers, at Anna Institute of Management on 5th July.
- Workshop on ICZM Plan for the Tamil Nadu, at IIT Madras on 16th July.
- Innauguration of Regional Convention on Eastern Ghats at SRM University on 30th July.
- Induction Programme for the 1st year students of Venkateshwara College on 3rd September.
- Teachers Day function at MCC school Chetpet on 5th September.

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