# ANNUAL REPORT

2021 - 2022



## Arulagam

'Arulagam' project activities contribute to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Government of India- Vulture Conservation Action Plan, 2020-25.



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION





AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

13 CLIMATE ACTION







## **WHO WE ARE**

Arulagam is a non-profit organization working to conserve flora and fauna in Southeast Asia with people's active participation (through field-based action, research, education, campaign and advocacy efforts).



#### **Vision**

A society that cares about the environment in order to protect and conserve nature to ensure "sustainable development"

#### Mission

Conserve nature through active and participatory civic engagement in awareness campaigns, field actions, research, and education.

# Problem statement

Our India is rich in Biodiversity. Nature provides us oxygen, regulates weather patterns, pollinates crops, produces our food, feed and fiber. The entire web of flora and fauna is symbiotic and vital to the human population.

But today nature is under an unprecedented amount of stress. According to United Nations statement, human activity has altered almost 75% of the earth's surface, squeezing wildlife and nature into an ever-smaller corner of the planet.

Around 1 million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction. The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever, affecting the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.

The on-going Covid-19 pandemic has taught us the value of conserving and living in harmony with nature. We at Arulagam are dedicated to protect our flora and fauna so that our future generations have a chance to witness our beautiful planet.







## **2022 AT A GLANCE**



Rs 1 cr 92 lakh



## Flora & fauna targeted

Critically endangered Vulture Species

Madras Hedgehog

Asian Elephant

Bat

Talipot palm, Corypha umbraculifera 82 Endemic plants and 64 Sacred plants



### **People impacted**

790 tribal families.
510 farmers and 40 farm labours
106 Cattle Owners
300 Rural women
2800 public,
18+ veterinary doctors,
40 forest frontline staff
400 students.

# Our core values









Field action

Research

**Education** 

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022**

We got chosen as a high-impact changemaker by the Edelgive Foundations's <u>Grow Fund</u>. They will support Arulagam for 24 months.



We partnered with the SAVE (Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinctions) and ASAP (Asian Species Action Group).





Played an active role during the pandemic. Relief material worth Rs 11,85,000 distributed to 790 vulnerable tribal families. More than 500 farmers were able to sell their produce because of our intervention.

Our work was covered by Nat Geo on a show <u>On The Brink.</u> https://www.hotstar.com/in/tv/on-the-brink/1260065225/vultures/126006608

Set up 10 tuition centers to prevent school dropouts.

A myth blamed bats and ant-eaters for causing Covid19. So we periodically sensitized villagers about protecting those species.

Eighty-two endemic trees, shrub species, and 2.5 lakh saplings were produced. Six rural women and a physically-challenged person were employed through our nurseries.

A coffee table book titled, 'In Search of Vulture' written by S. Bharathidasan, Secretary of Arulagam, was published.



## **FIELD ACTION**

#### Covid19 relief

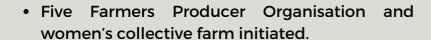
- We distributed goats to single mothers, and tribes.
- During the pandemic, we facilitated farmers to sell their produce directly to the urban consumers in Mysuru and Bengaluru. A group of vegetable and fruit farmers practicing natural farming carried their perishables directly to residential apartments.
- During Covid-19, Arulagam partnered with Amrita Bhoomi and hosted around 30 natural farming enthusiasts to practice and learn natural farming methods while maintaining social distance.
- Farmers Market Initiative: During lockdown in 2020 and 2021, perishables like vegetables and fruits could not reach the markets. Amrita Bhoomi, with Arulagam's support, started a helpline and worked with the district administration to facilitate farmers' market. Farmers were given rented vehicles to pick up the produce and set up farmers' market wherever possible. More than 500 farmers were able to sell their produce and earn their livelihood because of our intervention.



 Around 40 farm labors got free ration and support for livelihood during Covid19 lockdowns.

#### **Community support**

- Revitalized traditional medicine centre in Conoor, in the Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu for the benefit of Alu Kurumbar community.
- 17 tribal families benefitted through Individual Forest Rights (IFRs) claims in Kottayamedu Grama Sabha, in Gudalur taluk, the Nilgiris district.



- A quick compensation process for cattle depredation by carnivores was taken forward in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve area by joining hands with Mariamma Charitable Trust. So far, 106 cattle owners benefitted.
- Established a honey processing centre in Gudalur, in the Nilgiris. Nine women and youth found employment.
- Our team pushed to get electricity to a remote village in the Nilgiris.
- Nilgiris Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group Federation (NPVTGF) facilitated and 16 houses were constructed by Tamil Nadu Government.
- Enrollment campaign conducted for the unorganized workers (painters); 28 persons were enrolled in the State unorganised sector welfare board.



#### **Afforestation**

- Eighty-two endemic tree and shrub species, and 2.5 lakh saplings were produced during this year. Six rural women and a physically-challenged person were employed. Thirteen greening teams across Tamil Nadu benefitted through our nurseries.
- Documented 65 iconic/ sacred trees.
- CAP- Conservation Action Plan -for the threatened "Madras Hedgehog" was submitted to the Chief Wildlife Warden, APCCF, Tamil Nadu to establish a Community Reserve.





## **FIELD ACTION**

## Forest Rights Act (FRA) Implementation

Objective 1: Filing Community
 Forest Right (CFR) claims

Gudalur block: Collected the gramasaba resolutions including supporting datas and printed all relevant documents. Filing 117 Individual Forest Rights (IFRs) claims and 2 CFRs claims in 2 villages in Gudalur block.

Objective 2: Community
 Organizing (identify the
 villages where communities
 are suitable for CFR claims in
 Nilgiris district.

**Gudalur block**: Active in 14 villages. First phase household

data and documents collected in five villages to fill up the CFR/ IFR claim form.

Conoor and Kotagiri block: Our team supported the bridge between government and community in 18 villages. Four grama Sabhas were renewed. Following IFR claims that had been subverted, followed up the survey. Team has effectively understood what is FRA, and can be strengthened with advocacy support.

Ooty block: Supporting Toda, Irular, and Kurumbar families (a total of 52 claims) that are stuck in process of land redistribution (not FRA). Also supporting the follow-up of pending IFR claims in Suloor Kokal. Government came and measured 66 claims (out of 72) in Suloor Kokal. The other 6 claims are reapplied. Working to get the title issued.

 Objective 3: Build village-level awareness of FRA in Nilgiris district through cultural communications and through advocacy with concerned government departments.

Wealth of our Forest: Video launched featuring collaboration with Nepalese and Indonesian youth.

Our forest Dreams book has been translated into 5 tribal languages (Bettakurumbar, Kattunayakar, Paniyar, Irular, Alu Kurumbar) and the audio recording is complete. The audio mastering is underway.

 Objective 4: Train the FRC members and community leaders on FRA, mapping, advocacy.

Thirty-four FRC members trained (more than half were women) in a one-day training, covering the benefits of FRA, how to do CFR mapping, how to do advocacy with government to ensure FRA implementation.

Objective 5: Train NPVTGF
 (Nilgiris Particularly
 Vulnerable Tribal Groups
 Federation) support network
 on paralegal work and GPS
 mapping (11 members).

Improved understanding of national-level status of FRA and focus on evictions. Reporting and follow-up state-level meeting held.

One-day meeting with FRA working team (8 NPVTGF staff) in Gudalur about to discuss the document collection and family details of claims on Sep, 2021–Results: FRA working team came up with a plan and was better equipped to implement it, despite overall complications of scheduling meetings during COVID.

Went to BR Hills for three days exposure visit to learn about successful claim of FRA in Tiger Reserve (first time in India). As follow up, had a FRC members training and organized a team and a follow-up plan.

Internal two-day FRA training conducted on April 28 about the local context.

## **Field Action**

#### **Community economic initiatives**

**Established honey processing center in** Gudalur and employed nine women. Need to provide training. Out of 80 kgs honey they have sold 20 kgs honey. We sell the honey at Rs1000/kg (4-5x the regular rate). Using a community space. Next steps: secure FRA and establish outlet in a more commercial area. Our team supported the equipment expenditure, bottles, purchasing the raw material from honey harvesters. Our efforts reached government departments (Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihoods Mission) and secured media coverage from Doordarshan, coverage in Hindu newspaper.

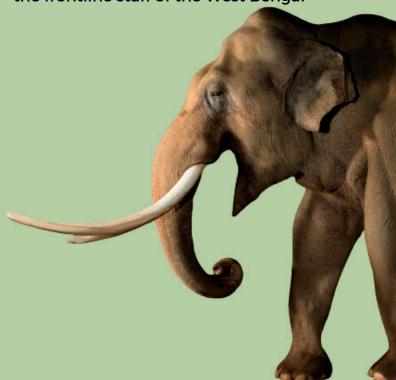
Revitalized traditional medicine center in Conoor Taluka (Alu Kurumbar community). Purchased equipments.

Managed by approximately 10 members, including both genders. Collecting the herbal medicine from the forest and minor forest produce. Make traditional ointments and oils. Marketing the medicine. Requires a bit more promotion and need an outlet.

## **Human-Elephant Coexistence** (HECx)

Pressing need for field equipment to mitigate human-elephant conflict at Gorumara National Park, Northern West Bengal, India.

We supplied 20 batteries and 60 units of searchlights exclusively designed as per the requirements of the locals' needs and the frontline staff of the West Bengal



Forest Department in (Mal, Binnaguri, Ramsai and Khunia) of Gorumara Forest division. The entire unit was assembled using the local experts and after a trial run it was handed over to the department.

Asian elephants in Gorumara National Park enter into human

## **Field Action**

habitations, particularly around harvest season that results in human casualty and also retaliated killing of elephants. The North Bengal Forest department is doing their best to keep the animal in the forested area by driving them away. The department and the frontline staff use these flood lights to keep the elephants away from human habitations

and cultivation. Arulagam takes this opportunity to thank Asian Elephant Support (AES) for their timely financial support. Our special thanks are due to Mr Manas Bhandu Majumdar for the research contribution to designing the equipment and for coordinating the entire activity at Jalpaiguri, Northern West Bengal. Special thanks to Dr B.A. Daniel, of Living In Fine Environment Trust - India (LIFE Trust-India)

#### **Nursery raising**

Eighty-two endemic tree and shrub species, 2.5 lakhs saplings were produced during this year and 13 greening teams across Tamil Nadu benefitted through our nursery activities. Six rural women and a physically-challenged person were employed.





## RESEARCH

#### **Agro Ecology Programme**

 Farmer to farmer knowledge transfer

Arulagam initiated horizontal knowledge sharing where farmers speak from their experiences regarding the way they produced a crop, best practices, the mistakes they made, how did they rectify it, what was the result later on, how did they market it, if they did value addition, how to increase sources of income in agriculture, nursery techniques in vegetables, flowers, grafting technology etc.

#### **Training**

 1 year course on zero budget natural farming - 50 farmers

- One day trainings for High school children on Agricultural Biodiversity and Herbarium and the importance of seed saving
- 22 One day Trainings on Vegetable Production, Dry land Horticulture,
- Package of Practice in Rainfed farming,
- System of Rice Intensification in Rice and Ragi;
- Nursery Techniques,
- Taking Care of Bulls and Cows
- Value addition from agricultural produces
- Experience sharing on different agro-ecological practices on different crops

### RESEARCH



**Beneficiaries:** 700 farmers from Farmers Producer Organizations, Companies, NGOs, Farmers form Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming. South Asian Regional Training on Agroecology.

**Aim**: Doubling women's income by valueaddition of agriculture produce

#### **Objectives**;

To equip and enhance the skills of women in value addition of agro products. To utilize locally available products to generate jobs. To improve the standard of living and social dignity among the women's community

#### **Women's Collective Farming:**

Collective farming by Women on four acres with eight women. Six out of ten women in the collective farming are single women and from part of the Dalit community.

All these women work collectively on planning the crops, land preparation, sowing, transplanting, pest and disease management, Harvesting and market their produce directly to the consumers. This is a model being experimented on the Amrita Bhoomi farm to assess the viability of the model in terms of land use ratio, productivity ratio, possibility of increasing the income level of the women farmers involved, also to take care of nutritional security of the women themselves and their families as well.

Institutional support is given on all the infrastructural support like the ploughing of land, bed preparation,



## **Field Action**

installation of irrigation system, seeds, ingredients required for Jeevamrutha (Bio-stimulant). ingredients required for biopesticides and insecticides. pheromone traps, womenfriendly agri-tools etc. Vehicle for marketing as women lack the capacity of investing. Amrita **Bhoomi Agroecology School** provides training and hand holding for women for two years from land preparation to marketing and Women invested their labor in producing the crops.

Vegetables and Greens very successfully produced and marketed the produce in their own villages themselves every evenings. However, the first Covid lockdown affected their participation in a very big very. Since Women were not allowed to go out of their villages for more than a month, it affected their crop production. The project was restarted after the second lockdown.

B:- Covid Relief Activities:-Beneficiaries: 300 people

During Covid, we facilitated farmers to sell their produce directly to consumers in urban areas like Mysuru and Bengaluru. A group of vegetable and fruit farmers who are practising Natural Farming carried their perishables in the big apartment buildings directly to the consumers.

This work has led us to systematise marketing and a team has been set to research and on different ways of marketing soon a Farmer Producer Company is going to be registered.

During Covid-19 Amrita Bhoomi with the support of Arulugam hosted around thirty Natural Farming Enthusiasts to practice and learn natural farming methods while maintaining distance.

Other Covid Relief Activities: Around forty people who work on the farm got free ration and small support for livelihood during covid lockdowns.

Conservation of local varieties of seeds is crucial to Natural Farming.

**Beneficiaries: 200 women** 

Farming starts with seeds. Every year a crop is adopted to conserve its varieties.



So far we have been able to save more than 400 varieties in total and distributed free seed packets for the nutritional gardens in their backyards.

Plantation activities:

Beneficiaries: 300 farmers and 6 schools
Horticulture Plantation
Distributed free saplings of Guava, Jackfruit,
Mango, Jamun, Fig, to six Government Schools
and 300 farmers.

#### Documenting heritage and sacred tress

'Arulagam' joined hands with a like-minded organisation for documenting the heritage and sacred trees in and around Coimbatore and Tirupur districts. So far we have documented 65 iconic trees.

## Legal strategy development to address land alienation

 Objective 1: Work with Tribal Development Council to recover land

Collected land surveys for 2 tribal villages (Thenvayal, and marthommanagar). By analysing the land records, our team found

available land where they could build houses and submitted information to government. Government surveyed the land and provided the titles. 16 houses were constructed, facilitated by NPVTGF. As of Sept 2022, Facilitating to get 8 acres of land claimed.

Erani land alienated cases follow up and the case files are collected from the lawyers and sent letter to the government to take action against the land grabber. In April 7, 2022, NPVTGF visited to expedite the process. We divided the land in three and the three sisters will do agricultural development work in their land. Our team went to court in August 2022.

1. Forty-five acres land was taken for community land. This Community land was encroached by a non tribe. This land was recovered in 2021.



- 2. Kota land 12 acre that was recovered from the government and using it for the kota community.
- 3) Water catchment area (community land-12 acres) was encroached by the government for public supply of water. The community submitted land documents to the government,, to secure the land back for the community.
- 4) Through information from the government record, we noted that for the past 50 years at least 1080 acres of Kota land have been alienated to non-Adivasis. Data collection is ongoing and the follow up would be to reclaim the land through the legislation.
- Objective 2: Continue legal review of laws that prohibit Adivasi land being alienated or sold to non-AdivasisFiled a writ petition which resulted in order to get electricity supply to 7 villages in Conoor reserve forests. The government has given electricity to 1 village but the remaining six villages are working on it.
- Objective 3: Paralegal training for NPVTGF on land alienation
   Attended and learned about Prevention of Atrocities Act. Objective 4: Data collection and analysis
   Started collecting data on landless families in Gudalur which will continue throughout the year. Finished 100 out of 350 villages. Need to consider whether the team needs a consultant researcher to do analysis as well as knowledge management.



## CAMPAIGN & ADVOCACY



#### **Campaign To Save Vultures**

Vultures are one of the most effective sanitary engineer and they can consume the carcasses which are infected by the virus and bacteria, and thus indirectly control the spreading of diseases . Vulture Safe Zone (VSZ) work is taken forward by 'Arulagam' in Tamil Nadu with the support of the Rufford Foundation, Trident Pneumatics and Van Tien Hoven Foundation. Various activities were conducted and the campaign activities reached 2800 public, 18+ veterinary doctors, 40 forest frontline staff and 400 students.

Even though the Covid pandemic restricted mobility, 'Arulagam' continued its campaign and spread awareness among the various stakeholders through webinars and Clubhouse.

On the eve of the Centenary death anniversary of legendary poet and freedom fighter Subramania Bharathi, the 'Arulagam' organisation commemorates his memory by linking it with vulture conservation. A multilingual board was erected at Government Museum for spreading the message among tourists on vulture conservation. It was well received by tourists from across the country. More than 6000 people listened to the audio message.

We observed that the poisoning bait issue is also one of the major issues in the project area. Agitated cattle owners target problematic animals and get rid of them by using poison-ladened carcasses.







Eventually, the non-target animals also got victimised. Especially carcass feeding animals like, vultures and hyenas are got killed. For minimising the tension among them, we initiated the compensation facilitation with the support of WWF -India and Mariamma Trust. During the project period, 106 cattle owners received the immediate consolation of Indian Rupees 5000. Community members welcomed this activity.

Campaign against Lead paint

- Tamil Nadu State
   Government Pollution
   Control Board (TNPCB) took
   action for ensuring lead-free
   paint.
- Lead free Paint Awareness has reached 6000 target audience

#### Mahatma Gandhi, Clean India Campaign, Vultures & Tree Planting programme

Father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi is the torch bearer of the Clean India campaign. Cleanliness drives have been gathering pace in cities by spending huge amounts of money and advertising by involving celebrities. But at the same time, cleanliness work is effectively done in the forests by 'Vultures' and other nature sanitary workers.

Driven by a deep sense of gratitude to these birds, and to commemorate the 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi', a plantation drive was initiated by 'Arulagam' at Segur river banks in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve on October 2nd, 2021.

Mr.K.K.Kaushal. Additional **Principal Chief Conservator of** Forest and Field Director. Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) inaugurated the event by planting the saplings in presence of Mr.L.C.S. Srikanth, Deputy Director, MTR, Mr S.Murali, Segur Ranger, Dr.B.Ramakrishnan. Assistant Professor. Government Arts College, Udhagamandalam and 'Arulagam' volunteers. S. Bharathidasan. Secretary. "Arulagam" said that 150 saplings were planted in the memory of Gandhi on the Segur river bank. And other potential areas will be covered in the next phase. He further added that this kind of event is organised to break the negative connotation of vultures and spread conservation messages among the public.

### **Book review**

## Nursing 'sanitary workers' of nature back to health

Tracing the story of the revival of vultures, who have become the centrepiece of a conservation campaign in Tamil Nadu

## CAMPAIGN & ADVOCACY

#### Gender

May 27, 2022 - Gudalur Paniyar Pengal Nala Sangam (Gudalur Paniyar Women Welfare group). A spinoff organization of NPVTGF which has the purpose of facilitating Panivar community to take initiative to address their own issue. Paniyar community is facing issues such as early marriage, alcoholism and related health issues, bonded labor, child mortality, suicide.

This organization will identify 30 young adolescent girls to work for their own community for 1 year, so that they can establish a future plan. The 30 girls will also receive training on their skills, starting micro entrepreneurship, direct marketing of community

#### **Publications**

- A coffee table book. 'In Search of Vulture' written by S. Bharathidasan, Arulagam Secy was released in January 2022. The book was reviewed by most of the leading daily magazines in India. The book speaks about various topics and including conservation measures.
- The wealth of our forest: Video launched featuring a collaboration with Nepal and Indonesia youth.
- 'Our forest Dreams' book has been translated into 5 languages (Bettakurumbar, Kattunayakar, Paniyar, Irular, Alu Kurumbar) and the audio recording is completed.

## **CAMPAIGN & ADVOCACY**

## Conservation of Lesser known mammals, 'Madras Hedgehog'

Goal; Promoting Community Reserve initiative for Hedgehog and initiating research.

#### Objectives;

To promote Community Reserve for conserving Hedgehog
To conduct a field survey to estimate the population's existing habitats and safeguard

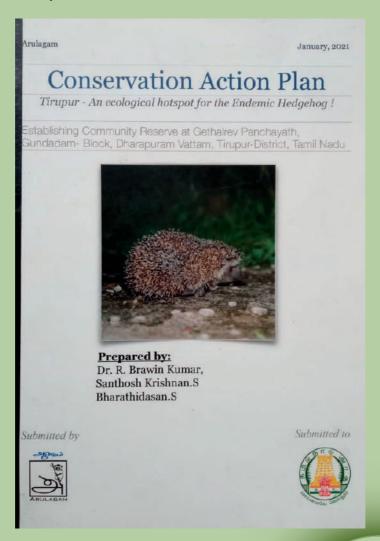


To conduct an innovative conservation education programme among the different stakeholders

To eliminate the ongoing threats and increase the population Outcome

CAP- Conservation Action Plan -for the threatened ``Madras Hedgehog" was submitted to the Chief Wildlife Warden, APCCF, Tamil Nadu. Further work is in progress

**Getting along with Elephants** 





### **EDUCATION**

#### **Culturally appropriate education**

We observed school drop outs in post-COVID; we started a census on all of the government residential schools – Decided to run evening tuition center in these schools and also in selected villages. One warden has appointed to take care.

April 2022: Ms. Shobha, Participated in Fact Finding team to investigate child abuse in Ekalavya residential tribal school in Ooty run by Tribal Research Center.

- 11th June, 2022: Attended meeting in Chennai about status of tribal education organized by PALAM and Loyola college.
- May-June, 2022: Initiated a survey about the GTR school status in Gudalur block (how many teacher? Children? Condition? Hostels?). Report prepared and submitted to the director, Department of tribal welfare, Government of Tamil Nadu. Based on the report, Government sent a team to upgrade the status.



# Collaboration and Partners for the year 2020-21















# Thousand Currents



## RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR 2021-22

Receipts Particulars	Income Cost (₹)	Payments Particulars		Expenditure Cost (₹)	
Grants from Donors	15,00,4055	Programme expenses	₹	159,39,464	
Donations	36,58,757	Nursery Activities	₹	17,77,068	
Members' subscription	3,200	Administrative expenses	₹	9,37,554	
Bank Interest	6,16,229	Capital expenses	₹	6,35,046	
Other Source	6,891				
Total	1,92,89,132		₹	1,92,89,132	

(Balance amount will be carried forward to ongoing project. Detailed audit report can be availed by requesting, Auditor: John Peter Raj)

Arulagam is registered Under Tamil Nadu Societies Registration act 1975, Regn No; 156/02, Regd u/s 12A, 80G of the IT Act; Regd under FCRA to accept foreign donations

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