

Twenty Second Annual Report

2024 -25



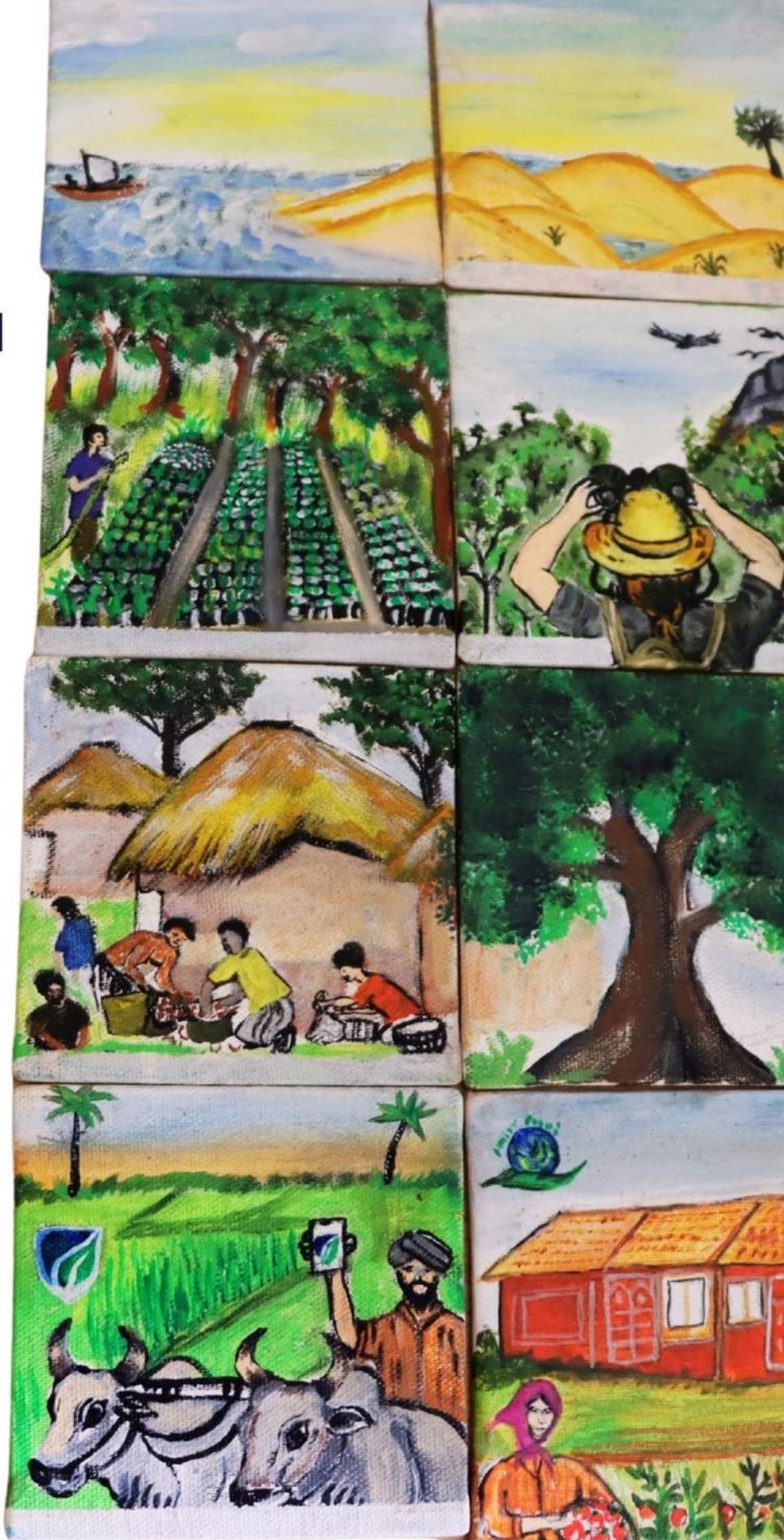
Species Research &
Conservation



Habitat Restoration &
Coastal Livelihoods



Tribal Welfare
Education & Livelihoods



அருளகம்
இயற்கை • மக்கள் • செழுமை



Arulagam

Nature • People • Prosperity



Credits

Creative and Overall Coordination: Martina Anandam & Nilitha R.

Content & Information Review: S. Bharathidasan

Pebble Art and associated photos: Santosh.

Photos: Arulagam Team



Arulagam Team & Associates

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Design & Layout: Naga Harshietha D
@harshi.designs

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President's Note:

It has been a remarkable journey of over two decades with Arulagam. I first met Mr. Bharathidasan around 20 years ago



when I was working in the private sector in Ooty. During that time, he often visited Ooty to meet his friend Mr. Arulmozhi, who was then working as a teacher. It was

through Arulmozhi that Bharathidasan's awareness and passion for nature and environmental conservation began to deepen. I came to know Bharathidasan through Arulmozhi, and from that moment, my association with both of them & with Arulagam began.

Since then, I have been privileged to serve as the President of Arulagam and to witness its inspiring growth over these years. Bharathidasan is a committed and passionate individual who has dedicated himself tirelessly to environmental causes.

We began our journey modestly, by establishing nurseries and distributing saplings to students as part of awareness programs on afforestation. Over time, Arulagam has grown immensely expanding its reach not only across Tamil Nadu but throughout South India.

Today, Arulagam's work goes far beyond tree planting. We are widely recognized for our pioneering efforts in vulture conservation, including monitoring nesting sites and protecting their habitats. Our initiatives have also extended to working with tribal communities on education and environmental awareness, addressing their unique challenges and aspirations.

Moreover, we have taken up coastal ecosystem restoration such as sand dune conservation and mangrove plantation in Rameswaram, where we have successfully covered more than two hectares. These achievements have been possible through the strong partnerships we have built with several NGOs and allied organizations who share our vision.

As I look back on our journey, I feel immensely proud and grateful to be part of Arulagam's mission. In today's times, when environmental consciousness is growing among youth and communities, Arulagam's work is more relevant than ever. Together, we continue to hope for a greener, safer, and more harmonious future for all.

Karthika Rajkumar L,
President

Vision & Mission

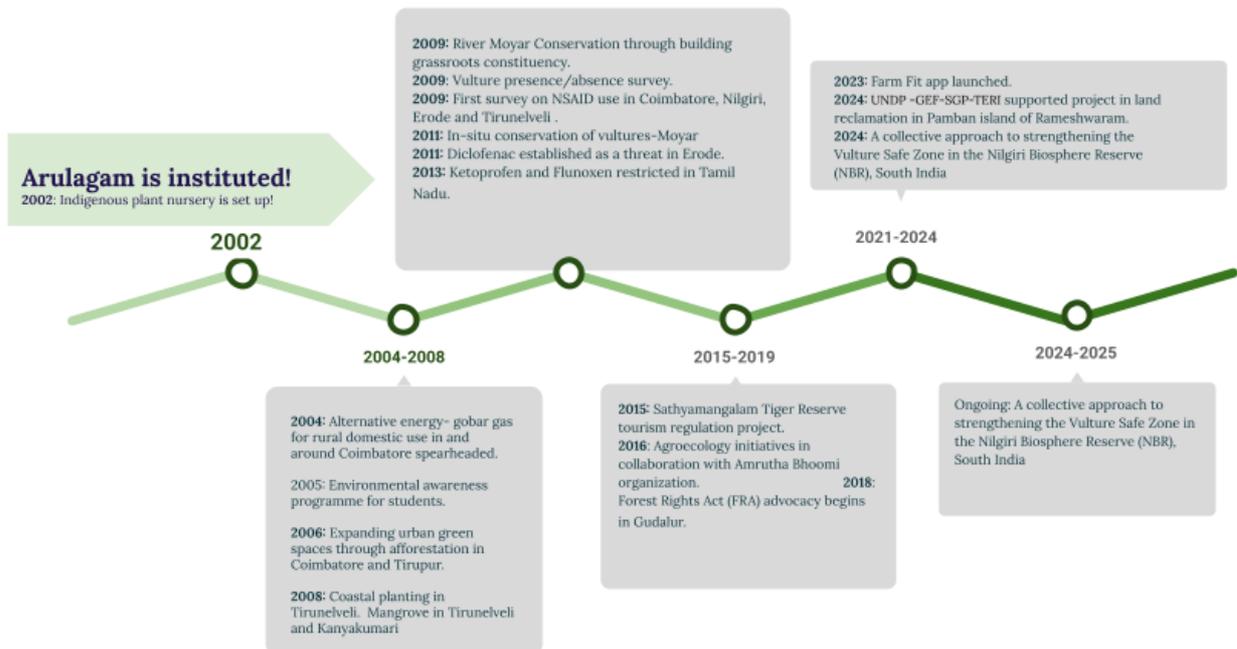
Our Vision

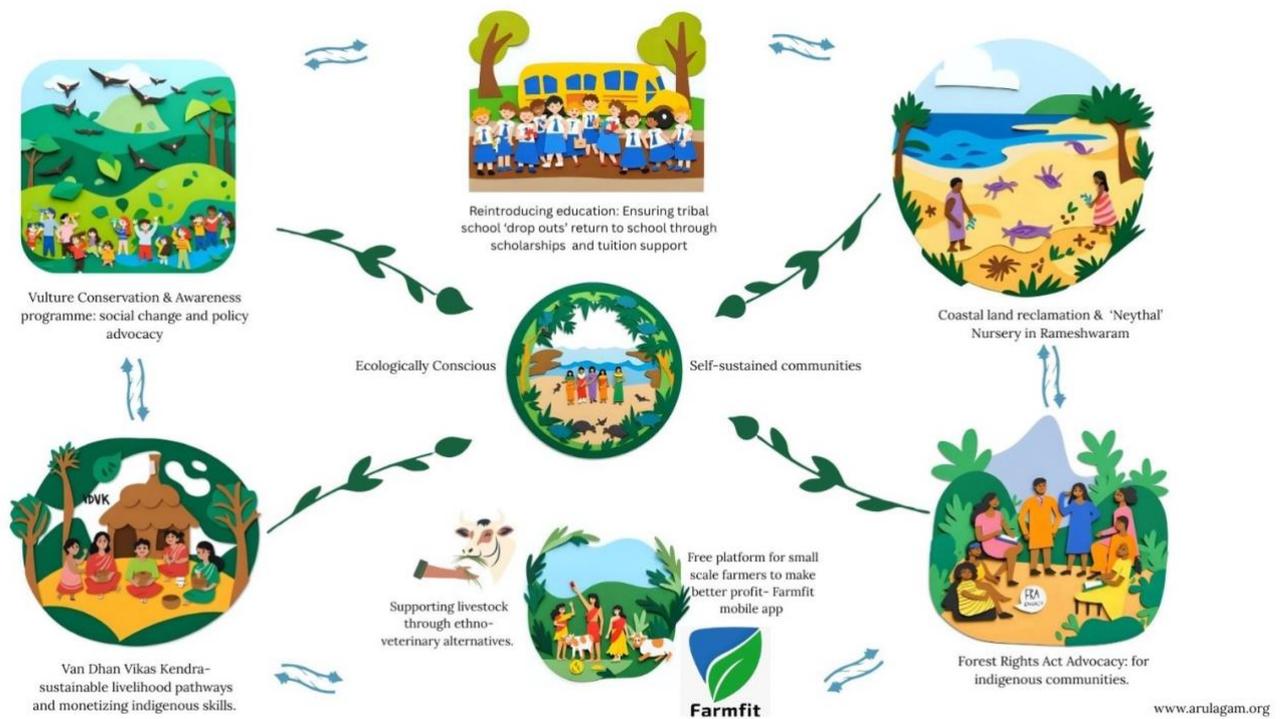
A world of ecologically conscious and self-sustained communities, living in harmony with nature.

Our Mission

Our mission is rooted in an integrative approach to biodiversity conservation, especially of the little known, neglected but endangered species through an integrated community-led process across multidisciplinary themes—from field biology, agroecology, education, to community rights, governance and cohesive sustainable development, proactively address the multidimensionality of conservation realities.

Arulagam project activities contribute to the following United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals :





Theory of Change depicting the interplay of various projects and programmes instituted and run by Arulagam in Tamil Nadu and feeding into the vision of the organization: A world of ecologically conscious and self-sustained communities living in harmony with nature.



#1: Integrated approach to vulture conservation: strengthening vulture safe zones through an interdisciplinary process bolstered by robust science, in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

Vultures occupy complicated landscapes in the Indian subcontinent- one where they are venerated as Gods while simultaneously detested as harbingers of death or as unclean oman due to their feeding preferences- vultures scavenge on dead carcasses. As diverse as their social perceptions are, Vultures are indispensable units of the ecosystem and are pivotal in sustaining the health and virility of the natural systems and in ultimately shaping humanity's future.



Pic 1: A magnificent Long-billed vulture, *Gyps indicus* is perched on a dying branch, in the NBR.

NSAIDs have been a persistent threat to vultures given their ubiquity in veterinary treatments. However, these NSAIDs proved to be lethal toxins to the vultures when they fed on carcasses of livestock treated with toxic NSAIDs (See [Galligan et al., 2022](#)). With Arulagam working to ban the drug, the endeavor led to understanding the complexity of the issue at hand and the multidimensionality of the solution necessary to address it.

Arulagam's approach is centered on a holistic conservation science for vultures, addressing research gaps, awareness-sensitization and policy necessities.

Ecology & Research:

Baseline distribution surveys and presence/absence mapping is crucial to establishing baseline data on biogeography, habitat quality, conservation threats etc., The field team conducted (n) number of field surveys, (n) number of interviews to determine the presence/absence, habitat preference, nest data and other baseline numbers on the vultures in (n) sites in the MTR and STR.



During the survey, observations were also made on the vegetation in the forest, as well as the behavior of animals, birds, and other wildlife. These observations provided additional ecological information to support the vulture monitoring work.

The field survey documented various vulture behaviors that would contribute towards our vulture conservation efforts. Observations included feeding behavior, flight patterns, roosting, perching, and nesting activities. Opportunistic surveys as they were, these data would be considered preliminary, giving us more impetus to develop theories and pave the path forward for robust and elaborate scientific studies.

In most cases, the White-rumped Vultures (*Gyps bengalensis*) were observed building their nests primarily on *Terminalia arjuna* trees. Nest monitoring was carried out every month to record and observe the development of juveniles and hatchlings. Regular observations helped to assess breeding success, chick growth, and nesting behavior in different stages of the breeding season. So far, Vultures have been identified in (5) sites: Further mapping and models will help determine preliminary understanding of vulture ecology in the Western Ghats.

S.No	Nesting Sites	Vulture Species	Nest Count
1	Jagalikadavu	WRV	16
2	Arakadavu	WRV	9
3	Mookuthipallam	WRV	16
4	Konamasi	WRV	14
5	Gavihalla	RHV	1
6	Ebbanadu	LBV	1
7	Allirani Kottai	LBV	3
8	Kazhugu Parai	LBV	2
			62

Tab 1: List of nesting sites in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.



Map 1: A google earth representation of all the nesting sites across the Nilgiri Biosphere, identified so far.

All social data was recorded using tools such as Kobo Collect. Additionally, the field team conducted vulture awareness programs in nearby communities to educate and involve locals in conservation efforts. These combined activities helped in monitoring vulture populations and promoting community participation in their protection.



Socio-economic surveys to understand livestock ownership and management practices helps under veterinary-driven conservation issues. Revathi, our researcher, is seen administering the survey.

Sustainable and eco-sensitive livestock management: ensuring conservation by way of addressing threats.

Use of NSAIDs in veterinary medicine and its direct relationship to vulture fatality has been a long-established fact. Diclofenac was banned nation-wide for use in veterinary medicine in 2006, followed by recent bans in Ketoprofen, Aceclofenac and Nimesulide. However to ensure that the ban is implemented and adhered to, and to encourage livestock owners to consider equally effective alternative ethno-medicines, Arulagam has been actively engaged in community outreach and awareness campaigns across the vulture habitat in the Nilgirs .These awareness campaigns engage various stakeholders and audiences on the importance of vultures to our ecosystem and wellbeing, alternative ethno-veterinary practices ensuring a safe environment for the vultures and sustainable living practices that could holistically help our environment, and consequently the vultures as well.

Speaking Vultures: awareness campaigns and community outreach

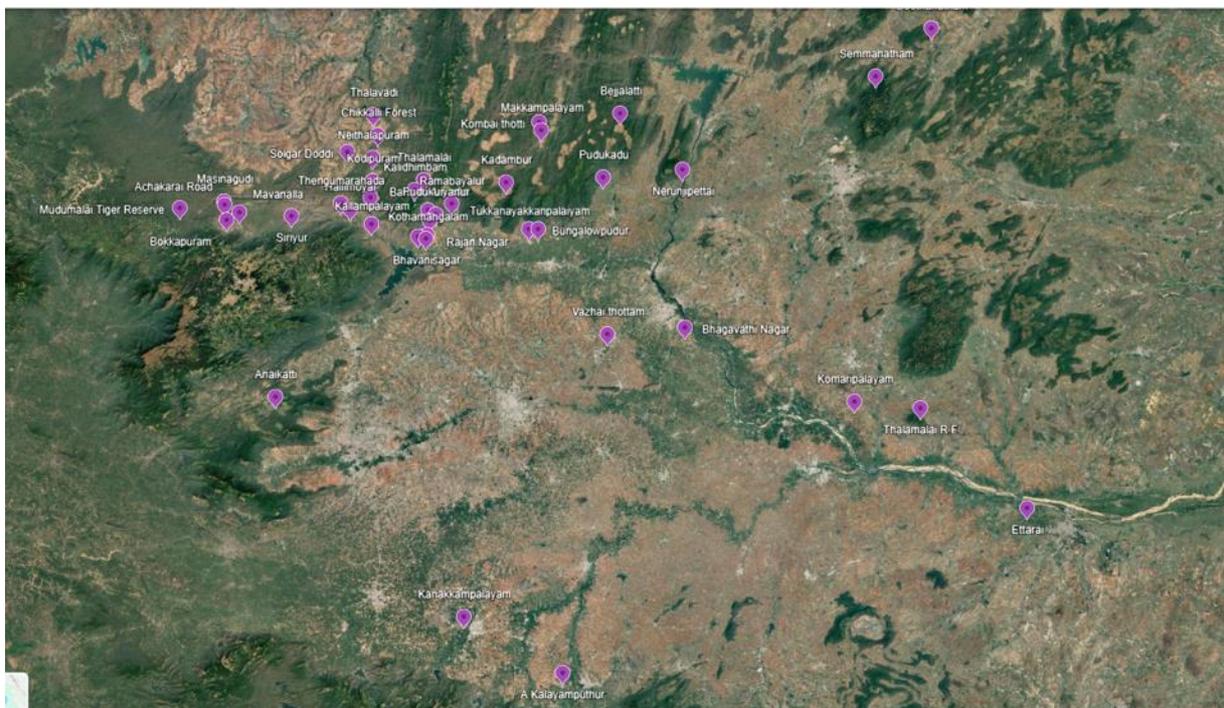
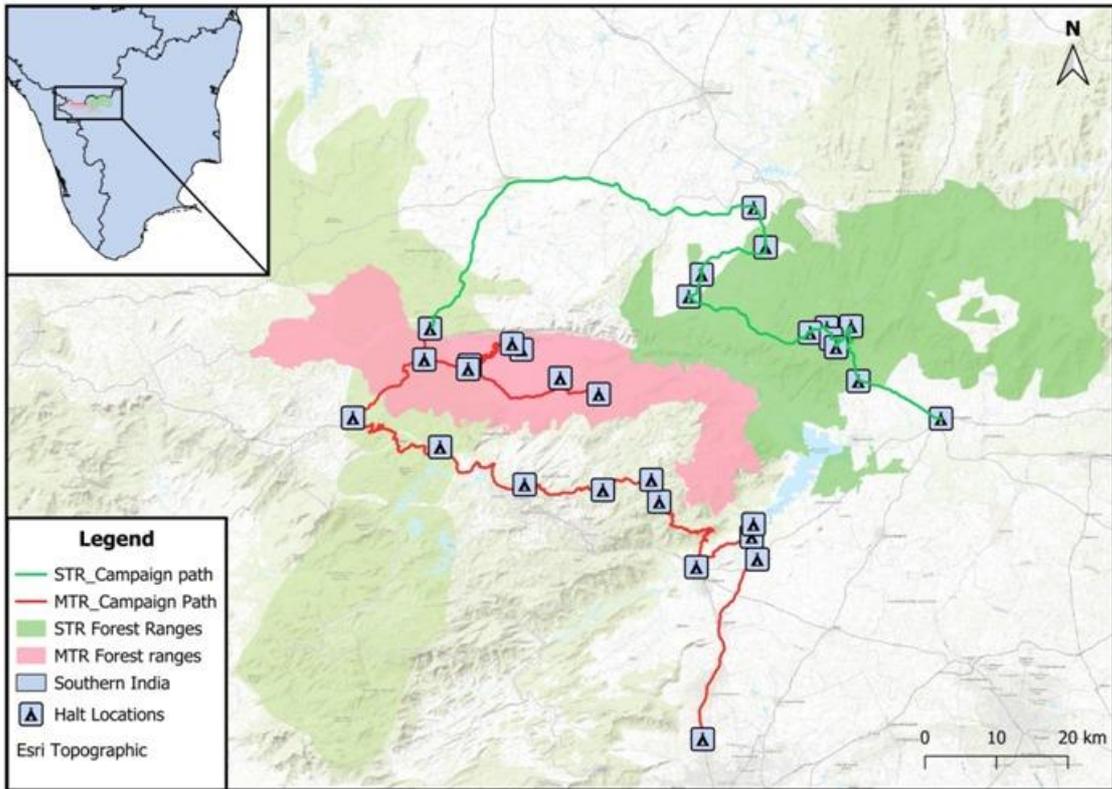
Arulagam appreciates the role of community cooperation, ownership and involvement in conservation. Recognizing the importance of informing and sensitizing the community on the ills of NSAID use, alternative veterinary medicines, and the importance of vultures to the health and happiness of our community.



Arulagam engages with the community through many relatable modes and medium such as folk art, mobile tableau shows on vultures, one-to-one conversations and campaigns etc., Over the period, Arulagam has managed to reach over 60 villages across the Satyamangalam and Mudumalai landscapes, making sure the word is spread in communities in every corner of the landscape.



Over the last year, Arulagam was able to reach over 50 sites in the Satyamangalam-Mudumalai ranges, in the Thalamalai Reserve Forest, and Thalavadi Taluka in Erode District.



Map 1: Map depicting the vulture awareness trail in the STR & MTR ranges, Talavadi in Erode and Talamalai Reserve Forest.

Ethno-veterinary camps:

Arulagam conducted a workshop on 'Livestock Management Practices during periods of stress: Awareness & Workshop on livestock management and its relationship with conserving vultures.', in Moyar, Masinagudi. The workshop also discussed how intricately intertwined these practices and philosophies were. The workshop was organized by Arulagam in partnership with its partner organizations.

Arulagam participated in other ethno-veterinary camps in Thalavadi, Soosaipuram, Simittahalli, Kalmandipuram, Solgar Doddi, Thottagajanur, Jora Hosur, and Kamanpuram. This was an opportunity to distribute leaflets and spread awareness on vultures and their importance to our health and ecology.



Training programmes:

The Secretary, Mr. S. Bharathidasan and our associate Dr. Daniel B. Ayyasamy were invited for a training programme on conservation and the environment, on 20 July 2024, organised by Bon Secours College for Women in Thanjavur for nuns and NSS cadets.

Arulagam participated in a three-day mapping workshop in Madurai, from 25th to 27th July 2024, organized by TERI as part of the GEF Small Grants initiative.

Arulagam organized a Vulture Meet in Coimbatore, on 4 August 2024, and hosted representatives, project associates and conservationists for a meet, greet and review of the status of vultures in southern India.

Exposure Visits was organized for the team members to Gujarat to attend a conference on National Symposium on Vulture Conservation, on the 29th of September 2024.







Fig 1: Theory of Change depicting the transformatory process of Arulagam’s multi-pronged conservation approach in vulture conservation.



#2: Coastal habitat restoration: sand dune ecology and community conservation in the Rameshwaram islands in Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu

The project focuses on restoring 51.3 hectares of coastal sand dune habitat on Rameswaram Island through community-led ecological restoration, native species plantation, awareness campaigns, and livelihood development. The initiative is grounded in robust science, traditional ecological knowledge and strong stakeholder collaboration. A dedicated *Neiythal Nursery* (translates to coastal landscapes) propagates native coastal (Island) species of plants to that effect, providing a platform to include the community as a livelihood opportunity and a collaborative endeavor. The project model is inexpensive, feasible, and is structured so as to be a scalable and replicable model for coastal conservation in Tamil Nadu, by combining scientific restoration practices and indigenous wisdom, while ensuring cultural revival and community stewardship.

So far, the initiative has managed to:

- Restore 22 hectares of coastal habitat.
- Reclaim 30 hectares under improved management practices.
- 90,565 native saplings propagated in the Neiythal Nursery.
- Formation of School, Youth, and a Village 'Sand Dune Saviours Committees (SSCs)'.
- Employment generation for local women and men- about 9 so far.
- Introduce the free Farm Fit app to 57 farmers for livelihood improvement.
- Thousands of stakeholders through large-scale awareness, training, and plantation drives.

The initiatives key achievements can be summarized as:

I. Community Engagement & Stakeholder Coordination:



- Sand Dune Saviours Committees (SSCs) organized in:
 - School SSCs: Mobilized students for conservation learning and plantation drives.
 - Youth SSCs: Engaged young volunteers in restoration and outreach activities.
 - Village SSCs: Enabled local leadership in site monitoring and maintenance.



- Policy Advocacy:

- o Sand dune conservation formally included in Pamban & Thangachimadam Panchayat Grama Sabha resolutions.
- o Collaboration with MGNREGA workers for sand dune plantation activities.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Active liaison with HR&CE, Tourism, Forest, Education, Judiciary, District Administration, and NGOs.
- Regular Meetings: Progress reviews with UNDP/TERI, community leaders, and SSC members

II. Nursery Development – Neiythal Nursery

- Location: Mugammathiyar Puram, Kunthukkal, Pamban.
- Purpose: Exclusive nursery for native and rare sand dune species threatened by anthropogenic pressures.



- Sapling Production:
 - o 99,565 saplings grown from 55,800 seeds and 43,765 cuttings (42 species).
 - o Key species: *Spinifex littoreus*, *Pandanus fascicularis*, and mangrove-associated plants.
- Employment: 6 full-time (5 women, 1 man) and 3 part-time workers from local communities.
- Knowledge Hub:
 - o Visited by students, teachers, elected representatives, NGOs, and officials.
 - o Used for hands-on training in nursery techniques and sand dune ecology.

III. Plantation Activities

- Sand Dune Plantation: 20,000+ saplings planted over 22 hectares, with community and departmental support.
- Mangrove Plantation: 2,400 saplings planted at Kunthukkal during Mangrove Day 2024 with Forest Dept., NGOs, EDC members, and students.
- Campus & Household Plantation: Plantations in government schools, judicial campus, college grounds, and private lands totaling 7 hectares.



IV. Maintenance:

- o 20,495 saplings regularly watered, mulched, and fenced.
- o 1,112 saplings were replaced due to mortality from grazing or extreme weather.
- Site Preparation: Prosopis clearance, pit digging, fencing (group and individual), and mulching carried out at all plantation sites.



V. Awareness & Outreach

- International Sand Dune Day: Celebrated in June 2024 & 2025; over 1,200 students and local communities participated in 2025.
- World Water Day: Social media campaigns highlighting sand dunes' role in groundwater recharge reached 18,500+ people.

- World Environment Day: 586 students participated in school-based plantation drives.
- Door-to-Door Campaigns: Targeted farmers and fisherfolk for awareness.
- Art-based Outreach:
 - Folk art and FGD in 5 villages with 200+ women participants.
 - Used traditional storytelling to convey conservation messages.
- Media: Local newspaper coverage and Kadalosai FM radio broadcasts.
- IEC Materials: Tamil-language posters released on International Sand Dune Day 2024.
- Plantation Drive: Annai Scholastica College, Pamban – 500 saplings planted by students and team.

VI. Training & Capacity Building



- Exposure Visits: Aaranya Forest & Pichavaram Mangrove Forest – 18 participants (7 women, 11 men).
- School Workshops: 31 students trained in dune and mangrove plantation techniques.
- Internship: One volunteer trained in sand dune habitat assessment and community engagement.

VII. Livelihood Improvement – Farm Fit Integration



- Farmers Linked: 57 farmers from Thangachimadam and Pamban Panchayats.
- Benefits: Market linkage, agricultural advice, crop planning support.

- Technology: Mobile app developed by farmers, enabling produce sales and market access.

VIII. Additional Activities

- Coastal cleanup drives involving 48 volunteers.
- Awareness on Olive Ridley Turtle protection.
- Environment Day celebrations (2024 & 2025).



IX. Policy Impact

- Alignment: Tamil Nadu Climate Smart Villages Initiative.
- Contribution: Potential Tamil Nadu Sand Dune Safeguarding Programme.
- Integration: Sand dune protection included in panchayat development plans.

X. Employment & Livelihoods

- Direct Employment: 8 local workers (7 women, 1 man) engaged in nursery and plantation maintenance.
- Indirect Livelihood Benefits: Farmers linked to Farm Fit for improved income

The first year of the project has demonstrated significant progress in ecological restoration, community mobilization, and livelihood support. By restoring 22 hectares of coastal habitat, raising over 90,000 native saplings, and empowering local committees, the project lays the foundation for sustainable sand dune conservation in Tamil Nadu. The integration of traditional knowledge, scientific techniques, and strong stakeholder collaboration ensures that the benefits will extend well beyond the project's duration. Looking forward, the initiative is looking to expand its reach across the Gulf of Mannar stretch.



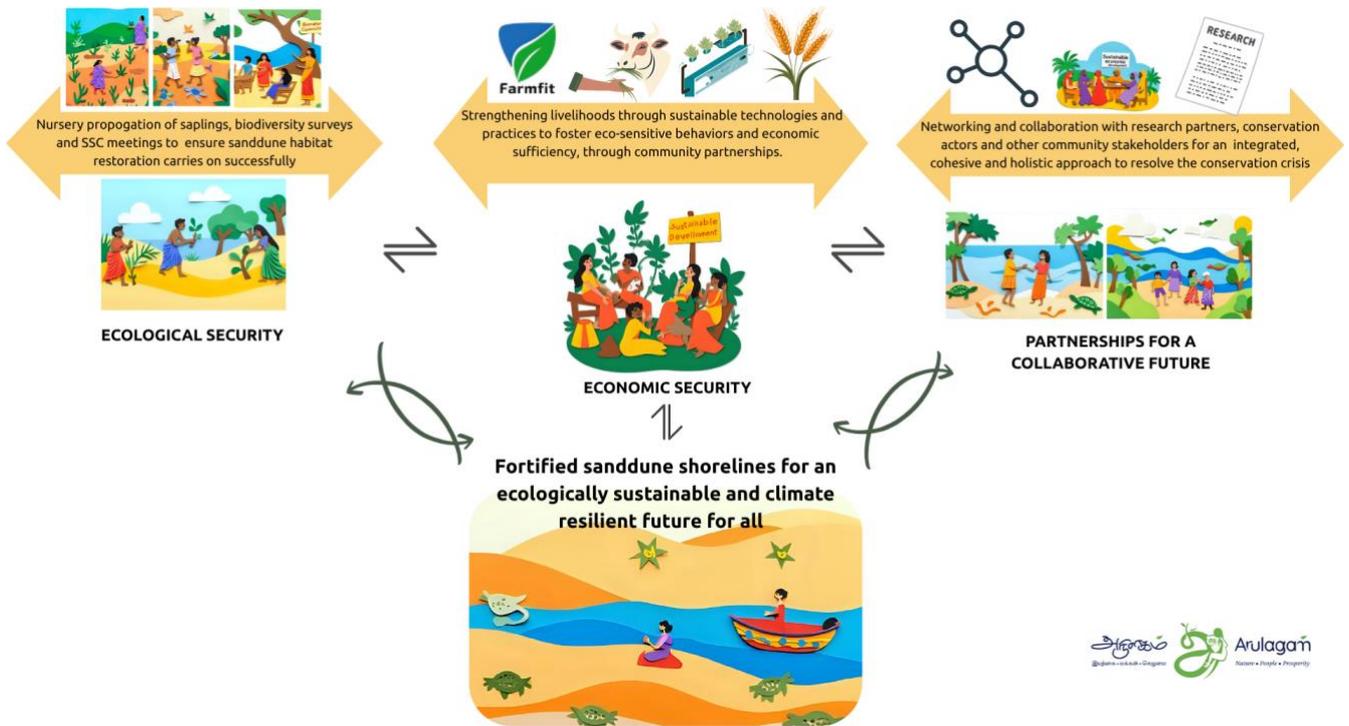


Fig 1: Theory of Change depicting the interplay of various elements in building a cohesive and sustainable approach to coastal reclamation and habitat restoration, with focus on sand dunes.

#3: Inclusive development for holistic futures: Education, Community Building & Livelihoods of indigenous communities in and around the Western Ghats.

Arulagam is deeply committed to conserving nature and empowering the indigenous communities who we consider as pivotal to any conservation endeavor. We help empower these communities through education, advocacy, and sustainable livelihood initiatives. Arulagam primarily works with communities in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, specifically in Gudalur in Nilgiri District and the Thalavady Taluk of the Erode District.

Arulagam's interventions are poised at bridging social and economic gaps, usually the remnants of decades of conventional social injustices often incompletely addressed by constitutional remedies, and in building communities up for a sustainable and more equitable future. Arulagam works at the education and livelihoods front, ensuring that these fundamental rights are accessible for marginalized groups, such as our tribal communities in and around Tamil Nadu. To this end, Arulagam works in Gudalur in the Nilgiris district and Talavadi in the Erode District of Tamil Nadu state.

In Gudalur, Arulagam runs 12 evening education centers for over 150 tribal children from grades 1 to 12. These centers offer two hours of teaching daily, Monday to Saturday, in the children's native language. On Mondays and Fridays, we provide a nutritious health mix drink made in-house with 25 natural ingredients and no preservatives to support their well-being.





On the livelihood front, recognizing the importance of empowering women, Arulagam has set up a training center for Paniyar women, and over 30 participants are trained in both machine and hand embroidery. This program is aimed at enhancing economic resilience and improving their standard of living. The Arulagam team is also actively involved in providing essential community services such as conducting surveys to identify and support indigenous tribal individuals who lack basic documentation, such as Aadhaar card and Public Distribution Cards and assisting them through the application process.

Led by our Field Coordinator Madhan, the team engages closely with the local indigenous population. During one such survey, several community members suffered leaky roofs. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Arulagam initiated a housing support project to repair and reinforce these homes. Through this initiative, 50 households are being assisted with essential plastering and structural repairs, carried out by masons using quality cement. This effort not only improves living conditions but also reinforces Arulagam's commitment to supporting the dignity and well-being of the communities it works with.



The Thalavadi Block, located in Erode district of Tamil Nadu, comprises 19 tribal hamlets with an estimated population of 1,500 people, most living in extreme poverty. The region is home to economically marginalized tribal communities who depend on cattle rearing, minor forest produce collection, and agriculture.

Arulagam, in collaboration with the Thalavady Farmers Foundation, is supporting children, women, and school dropouts and livelihood of the community; this initiative is enabling a generation to rise beyond survival and move towards opportunity.

The tribal communities of Thalavady have long faced challenges related to education, poverty, and survival. Recognizing this, Arulagam and Thalavady Farmers Foundation

team jointly took the initiative to study the ground reality in these hamlets. He closely examined why children were not attending school, why dropout rates were high, and how families were surviving mostly through daily wage labour or forest-based livelihoods. Recognizing an opportunity for Arulagam, we were introduced to the situation, leading to a meaningful collaboration between Arulagam and the Thalavady Farmers Foundation. Together, we began working to support school dropouts, especially indigenous youth and girls, by helping them access school and higher education. Currently, ten students are continuing their education thanks to this initiative.





Among them are:

- A student in her first year of B.Sc. Computer Technology at KG College of Arts and Science in Coimbatore.
- Two students joining the B.Sc. Computer Science course at TSA College arts and science college in Coimbatore.
- A student enrolling in the Diploma in General Nursing and Midwifery (DGNM) at a nursing school in Coimbatore.
- A single mother who returned to education, completed her SSLC, is preparing to join +1, and is aiming to take the TNPSC Group 4 exam.
- Four students from the Solagardoddi tribal hamlet, who had previously dropped out of school, are now rejoining and enrolling in 9th standard at a higher secondary school in Aruvankadu, Coonoor, in the Nilgiris district.
- Two students preparing to join +1 higher secondary education.

To ensure children don't drop out due to lack of proper transport, bicycles were distributed to tribal students from Solagardoddi.



Arulagam, with the support of State Street volunteers, also built a community hall now named the Thalavady Indigenous Women's Association. This space serves as a storage area for forest produce collected by tribal women and also

stands as a symbol of community empowerment. Together, these efforts represent a vital step toward improving education access, economic resilience, and long-term well-being in Thalavady's tribal village.

At Arulagam, conservation goes hand in hand with community empowerment—because when people thrive, nature does too.



#4 Towards ecological resilience and balance: Lantana Plant Removal Project (2024–2025)

To address the ecological disruption caused by the invasive *Lantana camara*, Arulagam implemented a 45-day lantana removal project, in collaboration with Shola Trust, in Moyar Village. The initiative aimed to restore wildlife corridors, enhance community safety, and promote habitat restoration in a region frequently visited by tigers, leopards, elephants, and deer.

A team of 15–20 volunteers worked daily to manually and mechanically clear 11 hectares (27 acres) of forest land, over a two-month period from 19 December 2024 to 8 February 2025. The project provided local employment opportunities, with volunteers receiving an honorarium of ₹500/day. Essential equipment such as two tractors and one shredder machine were utilized for plant removal and eco-friendly disposal.



Despite challenges like unpredictable weather, difficult terrain, and wildlife sightings, the project was successfully completed under the supervision of Arulagam's Project Coordinator. The cleared areas now support safer wildlife movement, visibility and therefore reduced human-wildlife conflict.



The initiative received overwhelming appreciation from the local community, particularly for it allowing for an improved agricultural condition and in restoring native vegetation. Arulagam expresses sincere gratitude to Shola Trust, especially Mr. Vishnu, Mr. Tharesh and Mr. Madhu, for their technical guidance and support through the provision of essential equipment.

This collaborative effort highlights the importance of partnership-based conservation initiatives in controlling invasive species and safeguarding the Nilgiris' rich biodiversity.





#5 Van Dhan Vikas Kendra: Arulagam starts its journey into mainstreaming tribal livelihoods.

What is Van Dhan Vikas Kendra (VDVK)?

Van Dhan Vikas Kendra (VDVK) is a key component of the Van Dhan Yojana, aimed at improving tribal livelihoods through entrepreneurship and value addition. VDVKs are community-owned centers set up in forested tribal areas to help tribal gatherers process, package, and market Minor Forest Produce (MFP). They provide skill development, working capital, and market linkages to transform gatherers into entrepreneurs. By enabling value addition at the local level, VDVKs enhance product quality and increase incomes, while reducing exploitation by middlemen. The initiative creates a sustainable value chain for forest-based enterprises, promoting self-reliance among tribal communities.

Background

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, popularly known as the Forest Rights Act (FRA), is a transformative legislation that aims to undo historical injustices faced by forest-dependent communities in India. In Tamil Nadu, the FRA is particularly significant for empowering tribal populations across districts such as Coimbatore, Erode, Theni, Nilgiris, Dharmapuri, and Tiruvannamalai.



The FRA recognizes both individual rights over forest land for habitation and cultivation, and community rights over forest resources such as minor forest produce (MFP), water bodies, traditional grazing areas, and rights to conserve and manage forest areas.

In Coimbatore and Erode districts, tribal communities such as the Irula, Kurumba, Hindu Oorali Sholiga, and Malasar have historically depended on forests for their survival. The FRA has provided legal recognition to their land and livelihood practices, protecting them from eviction and displacement, and helping them secure a more stable future.

Furthermore, by recognizing Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights, the FRA offers tribes in Coimbatore and Erode a pathway to manage and conserve their forests, aligning with traditional ecological knowledge and reinforcing sustainable practices. The FRA has also enhanced tribal participation in governance through empowered Gram Sabhas, which play a crucial role in the rights recognition process.

For Coimbatore and Erode's tribal communities, effective implementation of FRA represents not only land security but also livelihood assurance, cultural preservation, and a more dignified role in forest conservation and rural development.

A note on the tribal communities of in Erode, Nilgiris, and Coimbatore

Tamil Nadu's western districts—Erode, Nilgiris, and Coimbatore—are home to some of the most ancient and distinct tribal communities in South India. These tribes have inhabited the Western Ghats and adjacent forested plains for centuries, maintaining unique ways of life shaped by deep-rooted cultural traditions, ecological knowledge, and spiritual beliefs.

Some of the prominent tribal groups in these districts include:

Irula (found in all three districts), Kurumba (primarily in Nilgiris and Coimbatore), Kota (Nilgiris), Toda (Nilgiris), Paniya (Nilgiris), Hindu Oorali Sholiga (Erode and Coimbatore), Malasar (Coimbatore), Kattunayakan (Nilgiris and parts of Erode)

These communities are classified as Scheduled Tribes under the Indian Constitution and are recognized for their distinct language dialects, subsistence patterns, kinship systems, and religious practices.

Why VDVK? Van Dhan Vikas Kendra (VDVK): An Initiative of Ministry of Tribal Affairs

The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, was enacted to recognize the rights of tribal and forest-dwelling communities over land and forest resources they have traditionally depended upon. Among these rights, the Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights and rights over Minor Forest Produce (MFP) are crucial for ensuring tribal livelihoods and autonomy.

However, despite legal recognition, tribal communities often face economic exploitation from middlemen who purchase MFPs like honey, tamarind, Gooseberry, and resins at unfair prices, only to resell them at a significant profit. This undermines the intent of the FRA and keeps tribal families trapped in poverty.

To address this gap, the Government of India launched the Van Dhan Vikas Kendra (VDVK) scheme through TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India), as an extension of FRA's livelihood provisions. The VDVK initiative aims to empower tribal gatherers by promoting value addition, enterprise development, and direct market access.



Each VDK acts as a hub of value addition and skill development, where tribal self-help groups are trained to clean, process, package, and market MFPs. This not only increases income but also eliminates dependency on middlemen. By forming producer groups and establishing linkages with larger buyers and e-commerce platforms, tribals are able to retain a higher share of profits from their forest produce.

In states like Tamil Nadu, including districts such as Coimbatore, Erode, Nilgiris, and Theni VDKs complement FRA implementation by providing economic empowerment, livelihood security, and market justice to tribal communities.



Together, FRA and VDVK are transforming tribal forest dwellers from passive resource users into forest entrepreneurs and custodians of sustainable development.





#6: Of Tarantulas and why we need them:

Dr. B.A. Daniel, our Subject Expert and Associate Researcher speaks of his education and outreach project on the importance of Tarantulas.

The primary objective of the project is to create awareness within local communities, addressing the lack of understanding and education about the spider. About 20 villages were identified to conduct awareness in Rameswaram Island. Pre-visit was conducted. Educational materials, including pamphlets, fact sheets, banners, and spider-themed materials, were designed. These materials were aligned with the conservation goals and catered to the three target groups. As part of the Dieren Park-supported project, a total of 20 awareness programmes were successfully conducted across various educational institutions and community settings on Rameswaram Island. Wall paintings and informational signboards were installed at four prominent locations to enhance public engagement and visibility. These included Thangachimadam School and Pudu Road School, where educational wall art was created to engage students and the local community. Additionally, signboards were strategically placed at the Kunthukal Eco-tourism Spot and near the Thangachimadam Forest Range Office to provide conservation messages and promote ecological responsibility among visitors and local residents.





#7 Amritha Bhoomi International Center for Sustainable Development Learnings.

Our collaborative partner in our agro-ecology interests, Amritha Bhoomi has long remained Arulagam's trusted associate. The agro-ecology activity and outputs are reviewed herewith.

1. Empowering Farmers with Natural Farming & Agroecology

- Training & Outreach: Amritha Bhoomi organized 5 training workshops and residential programs, reaching a total of 175 farmers from 5 districts across Karnataka.
- Key Topics: Our trainings focused on a holistic approach to natural farming, including:
 - sustainable natural farming practices techniques.
 - Compost and natural fertilizer preparation (JeevAmritha, Ghan JeevAmritha,compost).
 - Integrated pest management using herbal concoctions (Agnihastra, Brahmastra, SRN dravana).
 - Seed saving and conservation of indigenous crop varieties.
 - Basics of soil Health Management (live mulching dead mulching humus creation)
- Impact: The number of farmers adopting sustainable natural farming in our network grew by 30% this year.



2. Educating and Empowering Tribal Adolescent Girls in Kalludoddi.

- Program Overview: Our program for adolescent girls in the tribal communities of Kalludoddi focuses on holistic development, combining academic support with practical life skills and environmental education through Open Learning act (OLA).
- Key Activities:
 - Educational Support: Providing tutoring and mentorship to help girls excel in their studies and prevent school dropouts.
 - Agroecology & Life Skills: Conducting hands-on workshops on kitchen gardening, herbal medicine, sanitation, and sustainable living practices.
 - Leadership & Empowerment: Encouraging girls to become community leaders and advocates for sustainable practices within their own families and villages.
- Impact: "We worked directly with 40 girls this year, and 95% of them successfully transitioned to the next academic grade.

3. Water Management & Sustainable Practices

- Rainwater Harvesting Borewell Recharge:

We successfully implemented rainwater harvesting systems by recharging the borewell in Amrithaboomi, which had been dry for 3 years, reviving critical water sources and

mitigating the effects of drought, this directly benefiting 50 acres of agricultural land by improving water availability for irrigation.

- **Training and Advocacy:** We conducted 5 training sessions on water conservation and sustainable water management practices for farmers and village communities with the collaboration of JSS college students (NSS Camp).
- **Impact:** The borewell recharge projects led to a rise in the groundwater table in the area by an average of 100 feet, providing a more secure water supply for farming.
- **Community and Education:**
 - **Adolescent Girls' Education:** Provided year-round agro-ecology and sustainable development education to 50 adolescent girls from the tribal communities of Kalludoddi by “Mandal”.
 - **Farmers' Training:** Organized 5 workshops and training sessions on natural farming, agro-ecology, and water management, attended by over 175 farmers from across Karnataka.





- Sustainable Infrastructure and Practices:
 - Borewell Recharge Pit: Successfully installed 1 borewell recharge pits, which have led to a visible increase in the local groundwater table.
 - Solar Power: Fully transitioned to a sustainable energy model by installing 15 KVA solar power to meet our operational energy needs.
 - Solar Fencing: Secured our 15-acre farm with a solar fence, protecting our crops from wildlife and ensuring the safety of our agricultural assets.

- Ghana Jeevamruta Shed: Constructed a dedicated shed for the production of Ghana Jeevamruta, enhancing our capacity to produce high-quality organic fertilizer for our farm and for sale to other farmers.



- Farm Production and Value Creation:
 - Seed Conservation: Preserved and propagated 50 varieties of indigenous seeds, contributing to agricultural biodiversity and food security.
 - Natural Farming: Applied 100% natural farming techniques across our 75 acres, resulting in healthy soil and pesticide-free produce.
 - Animal Husbandry: Maintained a healthy livestock population, with 39 cows and 150 other animals, integrating them into our farming system for manure and milk production.
 - Vegetable Cultivation: Produced 2,400 kg of diverse, natural vegetables, which were supplied to more than 500 customers through “**Namdu**” marketing partner institution and “Sante” direct” markets.
 - Value Addition: Initiated value-added product lines, including jackfruit products, amla powder, millet rice, banana chips, which have generated 10% of our revenue.

4. Looking Ahead: Our Goals for 2025-2026



- **Our Team Expansion:** We plan to expand our training programs to 3 Regions and reach an additional 300 farmers. Aim to train an additional 50 farmers intensively in natural farming practices, with a focus on women farmers.
- **New Value-Added Products:** Introduce 10 new value-added products, such as pickles, ready to eat products, millets product, healthy mix, cold cold-pressed oils, to enhance our financial self-sufficiency.
- **Water Management Initiative:** Scale up our water management efforts by constructing an additional 5 borewell recharge pits and a new check dam.

- Community Development: Launch a new program focused on developing a local seed bank, setting up community cooperative Agri clinics in our region.
- Research & Documentation: Begin documenting our natural farming model to create a comprehensive manual that can be shared widely.
- Deepening Impact: We will launch a new Seed Bank & Distribution Program" "Community led Agri learning center" and equip Women-led Value-Added Products Unit to create new livelihood opportunities and community engagement.
- Infrastructure: We aim to build new residential facilities at our training center to accommodate more participants, aim to build a new manure and natural pesticide centre to accommodate more farmers' access to natural methods of pest controls and soil Health Management.
- Advocacy: We will continue to advocate for policy changes that support natural farming and protect the rights of small-scale farmers and indigenous communities.



#8: Empowering Farmers, Sustaining Future Towards Smart Agriculture - Thalavady Farmers Foundation & Farmfit

Thalavady Farmers Foundation envisions a self-sufficient and resilient agricultural community, where enhanced productivity and sustainable practices make farming a viable and rewarding livelihood. The Foundation is committed to safeguarding farmers' interests, ensuring food and nutritional security, and strengthening Thalavady's agricultural economy.

Our mission is to achieve targeted growth in the agriculture sector through the effective implementation of various initiatives and schemes. We strive to protect farmers from risks through appropriate management measures, prevent unfair trade practices, and promote investment in agriculture. The Foundation also ensures the safety and quality of agricultural products by facilitating access to reliable inputs from quality seeds to sustainable farming resources. Furthermore, Environmental conservation and natural resource protection remain central to our approach, as we encourage the adoption of eco-friendly and sustainable agricultural practices across Thalavady.

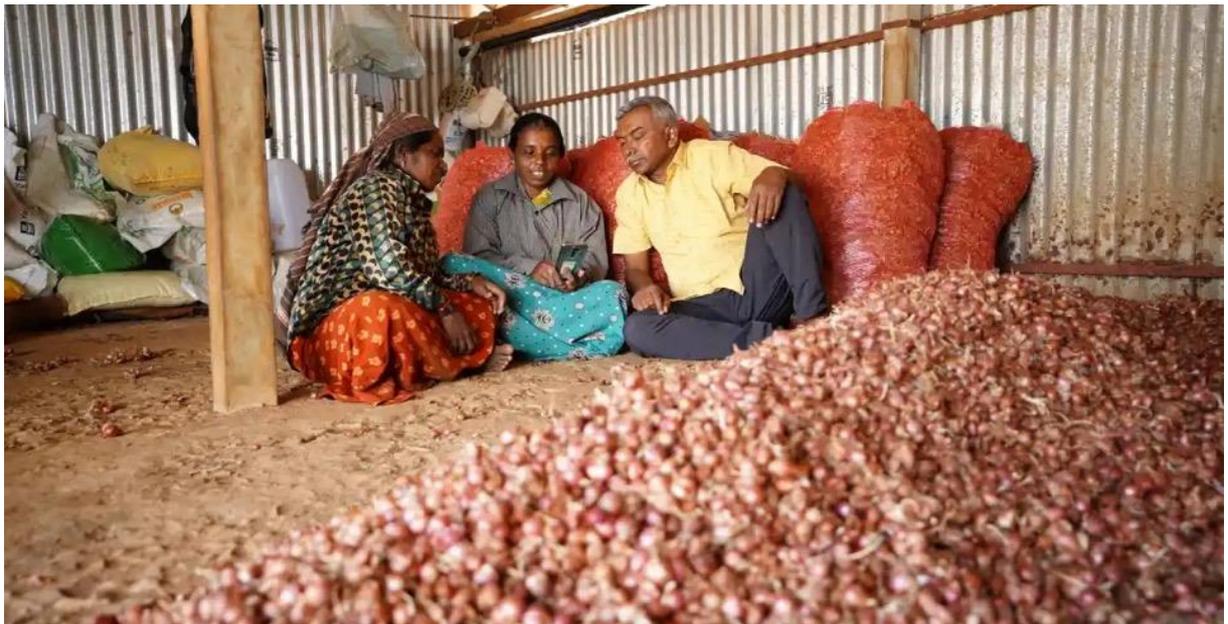


Farmfit: Empowering Farmers Through Technology

An Initiative by Arulagam and Thalavady Farmers Foundation

As part of our continuous effort to integrate technology into agriculture, the Foundation, in collaboration with Arulagam, launched **Farmfit**, a **smartphone** application developed *by farmers, for farmers*.

Farmfit connects agricultural stakeholders and expands market access, enabling farmers to sell their produce directly to buyers. Farmers can easily list their products, mentioning quantity, asking price, and contact details. Buyers can browse listings, post inquiries, place bids, and build direct trade connections—ensuring transparency and fair value for both parties.





Farmfit also provides **crop advisory and technical guidance**, helping farmers enhance productivity and adopt improved agricultural practices. The initiative represents a significant step toward building a digitally inclusive and sustainable agricultural ecosystem in Thalavady.

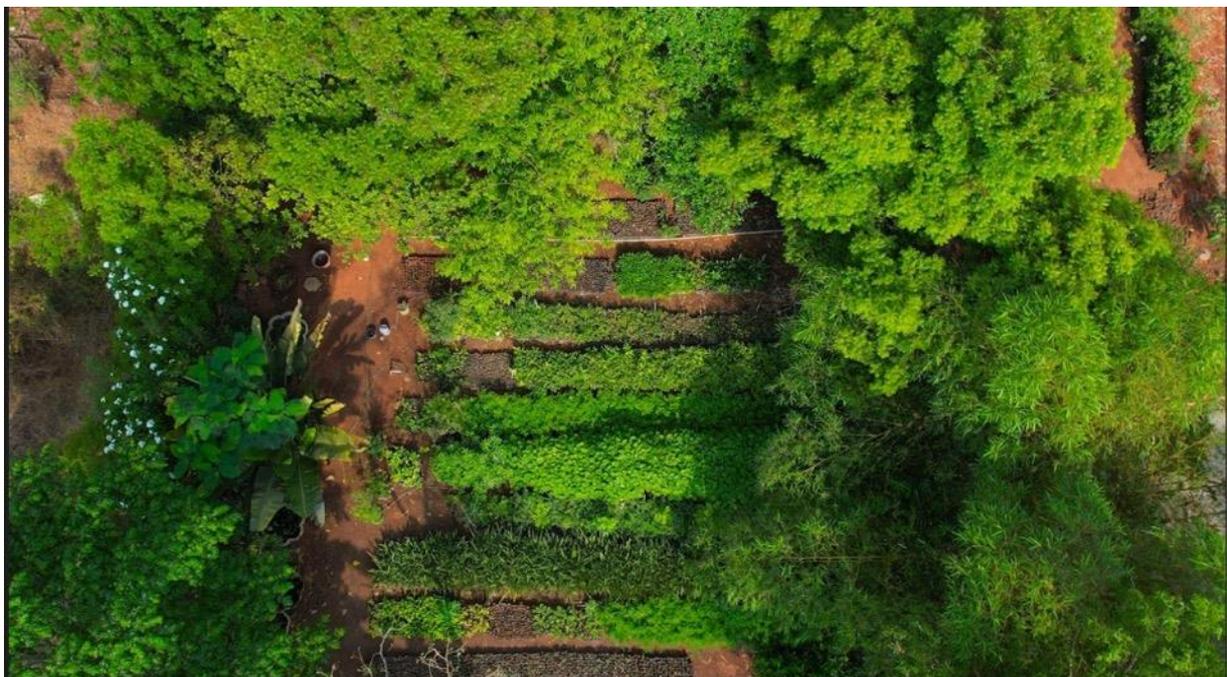




#9: Poonthalir Nursery- dedicated to native plants and a healthy biodiversity

With the sprawling interest for hybrid and exotic plants that were (still are) held to be esthetically supreme, and the lack of interest or understanding of native species for ecology and biodiversity health, Arulagam found a niche and necessity in propagating native plants with the message on biodiversity health.

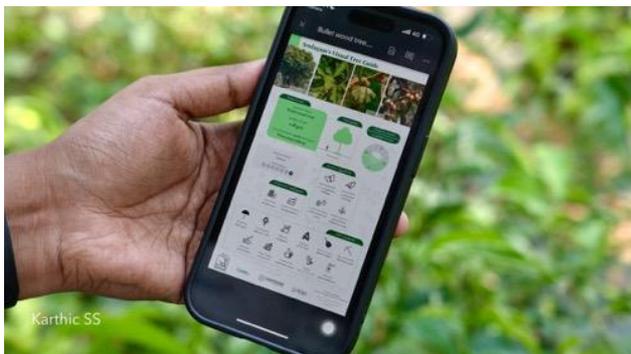
Since its inception in 2002, the Poonthalir Nursery has been committed to spreading the importance of indigenous biodiversity using the nursery as a platform for biologically-sensitive change. Arulagam now runs nurseries for indigenous plants in Moyar and Rameshwaram, apart from the two branches in Ganeshapuram and KCT Campus in Coimbatore.





Keeping in tune with the overall orientation of the organization, Poonthalir also plays an important role in community participation, by employing members of the community in nursery maintenance and management and in developing a skill-based talent pool. The nurseries in Moyar and Rameshwaram play a crucial role in habitat restoration and reclamation process.

Poonthalir houses a richly diverse taxonomy of indigenous plants, with each playing a vital ecological role in ensuring the health and virility of the sub-tropical ecosystems.





Recognitions in 2024



1. The Secretary, Mr. Bharathidasan, was selected as one of the inaugural Communities and Conservation Fellows, offered by Global Diversity Foundation. The fellowship is a rare opportunity for grassroots leaders from around the world to commune and discuss the challenges for leading conservation action and of fundraising for change. Only 24 community leaders from around the world are selected for the fellowship each year and it offers both an in-person and an online engagement opportunity for conservation leaders to meet, interact, share and address each other's conservation challenges while engaging in a nuanced peer-to-peer learning opportunity.

2. Environment Award from DMK: Arulagam was awarded a commendation for its contribution to the larger environmental cause in Tamil Nadu by the elected party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK).

3. The Tribal Welfare Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu has empaneled Arulagam to implement government-initiated programs in Coimbatore District.



NGOs train farmers on ethnobot medicine

It will help treat ailments in livestock to save cultures in Nagarahole and Bandipur Tiger Reserves

By Lakshminarayana S Gowda

Between one and three thousand people of different ethnicities live in the forest areas of Nagarahole and Bandipur Tiger Reserves. Many of them are engaged in agriculture, which provides their main source of income. A group of NGOs, including the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University (KVAFSU) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), have taken an initiative to train these farmers on ethnobot medicine. The idea is to help them use local plants and herbs to treat ailments in their livestock, which is a common practice in the region. The training sessions are being held in the forest areas, where the farmers can learn from the local experts. The NGOs are providing them with the necessary information and resources to carry out the training. The farmers are also being encouraged to share their knowledge with their neighbours. This initiative is expected to help the farmers improve their livelihoods and protect the rich biodiversity of the tiger reserves.

Pregnant tribal woman fearing hospital birth remains untraceable

S.P. Saravanan
ERODE

A week after a 25-year-old pregnant tribal woman from Solagar Dhoddi in the Thalavadi Hills of Erode district refused hospitalisation for delivery and evaded health officials, a police complain has been lodged seeking assistance in tracing her.



Health department officials at the residence of Shevanthi at Solagar Dhoddi in the Thalavadi Hills of Erode. SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

Shevanthi, wife of Chandran, was scheduled to be admitted to hospital for delivery on July 7. However, when a health team visited her residence to escort her to the hospital for institutional delivery, she and her family members could not be traced.

Although the family initially maintained contact with staff at the Government Primary Health Centre (PHC) in Bynapuram, they later switched off their mobile phones, and their whereabouts remain unknown. Relatives and neighbours reportedly gave conflicting statements regarding her location.

Despite multiple visits and sustained efforts by the health team to assure the family that Shevanthi would only be taken to the Thalavadi Government Upgraded PHC—with full transportation and medical support to ensure the safety of both mother and child—the family refused to cooperate or reveal her whereabouts.

During a follow-up visit on Monday (July 14), Village Health Nurse P. Jothi was told by a family member, "Shevanthi is fine, but we do not know where she is."

With all efforts to trace

her proving unsuccessful, the health team lodged a complaint at Thalavadi police station. Officers visited the house and conducted inquiries. Police sources said efforts are underway to trace mobile numbers and gather leads through investigation.

S. Kannaiyan, president of the Thalavadi Farmers' Federation, commended the health team's persistent efforts and said misconceptions surrounding institutional deliveries among tribal communities should be addressed through awareness campaigns in hilly areas.



கனியை கர்ப்பம் அறி கர்ப்பம்

வயதாக் வயுசீவி நுகைதணியில் 60 ஊழி கர்புகனாரும் 20 காதிவ கர்புகனாரும்

கனியு • வயதான வயுசீவி நுகைதணியில் 60 ஊழி கர்புகனாரும் 20 காதிவ கர்புகனாரும்

தமிழகம் முழுவதும் நுகைதணியில் 60 ஊழி கர்புகனாரும் 20 காதிவ கர்புகனாரும்

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நிழலியாய் மருந்திற்கு தடை

புறவைகள் பாதுகாப்பு அமைப்பு வரவேற்பு

கோவை, ஜூன் 31: நிழலியாய் என்ற மருந்து கால் வலி, மூட்டு வலி, தீவிர காய்ச்சல், உடல் வலி மற்றும் பிறவற்றை உடனடி மருந்து பாதுகாப்பு அமைப்பு உள்நாட்டில் பயன்படுத்தப்பட்டு வருகிறது. இந்த மருந்தின் உட்கொள்வதால் உடல் நலக்குறைவு மற்றும் பிறவற்றை உட்கொள்வதால் பாதுகாப்பு அமைப்பு உள்நாட்டில் பயன்படுத்தப்பட்டு வருகிறது. இந்த மருந்தின் உட்கொள்வதால் உடல் நலக்குறைவு மற்றும் பிறவற்றை உட்கொள்வதால் பாதுகாப்பு அமைப்பு உள்நாட்டில் பயன்படுத்தப்பட்டு வருகிறது.

இந்த நிலையில் கால் நடைகள் பயன்பாட்டிற்காக நிழலியாய் மருந்தின் தயாரித்தல், விற்பனை செய்தல் மற்றும் பயன்படுத்துதல் என அனைத்து வகையிலும் உத்தரவிட்டுள்ளது. ஒன்றிய அரசின் இந்த நடவடிக்கைக்கு அருளகம் உள்ளிட்ட புறவைகள் பாதுகாப்பு அமைப்புகள் வரவேற்பு தெரிவித்துள்ளது.

இது குறித்து அருளகம் அமைப்பின் செயலாளர் பாரதிதாசன் கூறுகையில், "விலங்குகளின் சடவங்களை வரும் அமுதிய பொருட்களையும் உட்கொண்டு இயற்கையில்



Lone vulture flies 4,000km to reach TN from Maharashtra

The Maharashtra government has announced that a lone vulture was spotted in the state of Tamil Nadu, India, after flying 4,000 km from Maharashtra. The bird was found in the forest area of the state. The government is taking steps to protect the bird and its habitat. The lone vulture is a rare species and its presence in Tamil Nadu is a significant event. The government is working to ensure the bird's safety and to study its migration patterns. The lone vulture is a symbol of the rich biodiversity of the region and its presence is a cause for celebration.

Audit Statement

ARULAGAM
No. 12/483, Masakavundanputhur, Ellappalayam Post, Annur, Coimbatore - 641 697
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT
Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March 2025

Particulars	Sch. No.	31.03.2025	31.03.2024
Income :			
FC Grants	19	31946828.89	38806116.00
LC Donations	20	7508006.46	6208000.00
Bank Interest - SB A/c	21	648588.00	369884.00
Bank Interest - FD	22	530616.00	194117.00
Other Income Received	23	915001.00	1757917.40
Closing Stock - Nursery Sapplings		1061600.00	2400000.00
		42610640.35	49736034.40
Expenditure :			
Opening Stock - Nursery Sapplings		2400000.00	2362500.00
Programme Expenses	24	33375117.23	16676580.82
Programme Expenses - LC	25	6255387.92	4922296.70
Administration Expenses	26	306675.52	106753.63
		42337180.67	24068131.15
Depreciation	27	457847.00	444684.00
		42795027.67	24512815.15
Excess of Income /Expenditure Tr.to GF		-184387.32	25223219.25



The Schedule referred to above form an integral part of the financial Statement

For Arulagam

[Signature]

Secretary

Place : Coimbatore
Date : 30.08.2025



" To be read with our report of even date annexed "

For ALWIN ERIC & CO.,
Chartered Accountants,
Firm's Regn No. 011294S

[Signature]

P.Alwin Eric
Proprietor

Membership No. 217071
UDIN : 25217071BMIGTE7840

Our Donors





Arulagam Team



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இயற்கை • மக்கள் • செழுமை



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