

LocaTREE



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1. Introduction

In every state, the municipal administration, the railways, Metro Rail corporations, city development authorities, corporate houses and Non-Government Organisations (NGO) spend lot of money in “greening” the city. However, there is no concrete information available in public about the location of the saplings planted, their species and how many of them survived. Such information is available only in the records of administration which is difficult to access by general public and impossible to reconcile with the reality on the ground.

In July 2014, the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India gave out a draft guideline for conservation, development and management of urban greens. It is about the protection of existing green trees by carrying out tree census periodically. It suggests surveying the trees once in every five years with the participation of concerned departments, civil society/ citizens, schools, NGOs and suitable institutions. “It will be appropriate to make use of GIS for mapping urban greens and trees, which along with census data should be placed on websites for general information,” the draft says. This could not be materialised and is still remaining on papers in the country.

2. Description

LocaTREE is a mobile application which stands for “*Locate a tree*”. The purpose is to locate any tree in the neighbourhood by citizens and make it secure against illegal cutting/uprooting or chopping. This app can record the position of the tree along with its picture, which can be later confirmed by other citizens as verification. Later, the users of the app can always report its development by adding pictures for latest happening.

The LocaTREE enables its users (registered with the app) to use its following features:

- i. Any users can locate a tree through this app by placing its picture and position (on Google map).
- ii. Users may confirm its location as a part of verification.

iii. Any happening with the tree can be posted, which becomes a record and can be tracked anytime by any user.

iv. ‘Alerts at a Glance’ will maintain record of planting of sapling in any locality, provided the users locate it on the app.

v. Similarly, ‘Alert at a Glance’ will record any happening with trees which can be easily accessed by the users.

3. Purpose

Trees are cut for agricultural purposes, wood and fuel. They are uprooted to clear the land for houses, schools, roads, factories, shopping malls, etc. Several saplings die of diseases, animals eat them or were not rooted properly. The illegal cutting of the tree is normally done in connivance with the Government authorities. Even if the government claims to plant trees, nobody knows where these saplings are planted and whether they are surviving. So, the role of the local community is utmost important. We need to create awareness amongst community members that they can locate any tree and secure it.

Locating trees in local area will help people to know the number of trees, their exact location and health. Any eventuality with the tree can be recorded on the app which will be helpful for local citizens to protect the tree as well as can be considered as a ready record for the local administration.

The residents are never involved in tracking the trees but by this app they will team up in saving the environment. It will strengthen the distinctive character of a place and encourage local pride. Humanity has always exploited the benevolence of nature. It’s high time to realise that trees are an important part of every community. They should be regularly planted and taken care of to save the mankind and animal world. Materialistic things can be useless in certain point of times. Materialistic items and activities give us temporary pleasure. But nature, trees and plants give us amazing human life to live.

We all have to support and protect trees for the sake of saving environment for future generations!