



international association for

religious freedom

belief with integrity



“MY WALK COUNTS-2013”

RFYN -YOUTH INTER-FAITH PEACE RALLY

“For the Prevalence of Peace in the Divided World”

23rd January 2013 at Marina Beach, Chennai.



REPORT

893 -Participants (503 - Male & 390 -Female) | 35 -Colleges | 3 - Districts

Introduction

RFYN Youth Interfaith Peace Rally organized by the **IARF-SACC-RFYN** held on **23rd January 2013** at **Marina Beach** (The 2nd Longest Beach in the world after Miami Beach), Chennai Metro City, Tamil Nadu, India. The Rally was organized by **Mr. K. Ramachandran**, Vice-President, IARF-India Chapter and assisted by **Ms. Anbumani Arumugam**, President, RFYN-International and **Ms. Nithya**, Young Adult Leader.

The Rally was organized in view of expressing solidarity to **World Interfaith Harmony Week**, an annual event to be observed during the first week of February starting in 2011 proclaimed by United Nations. The UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/65/5, adopted on 20 October 2010,



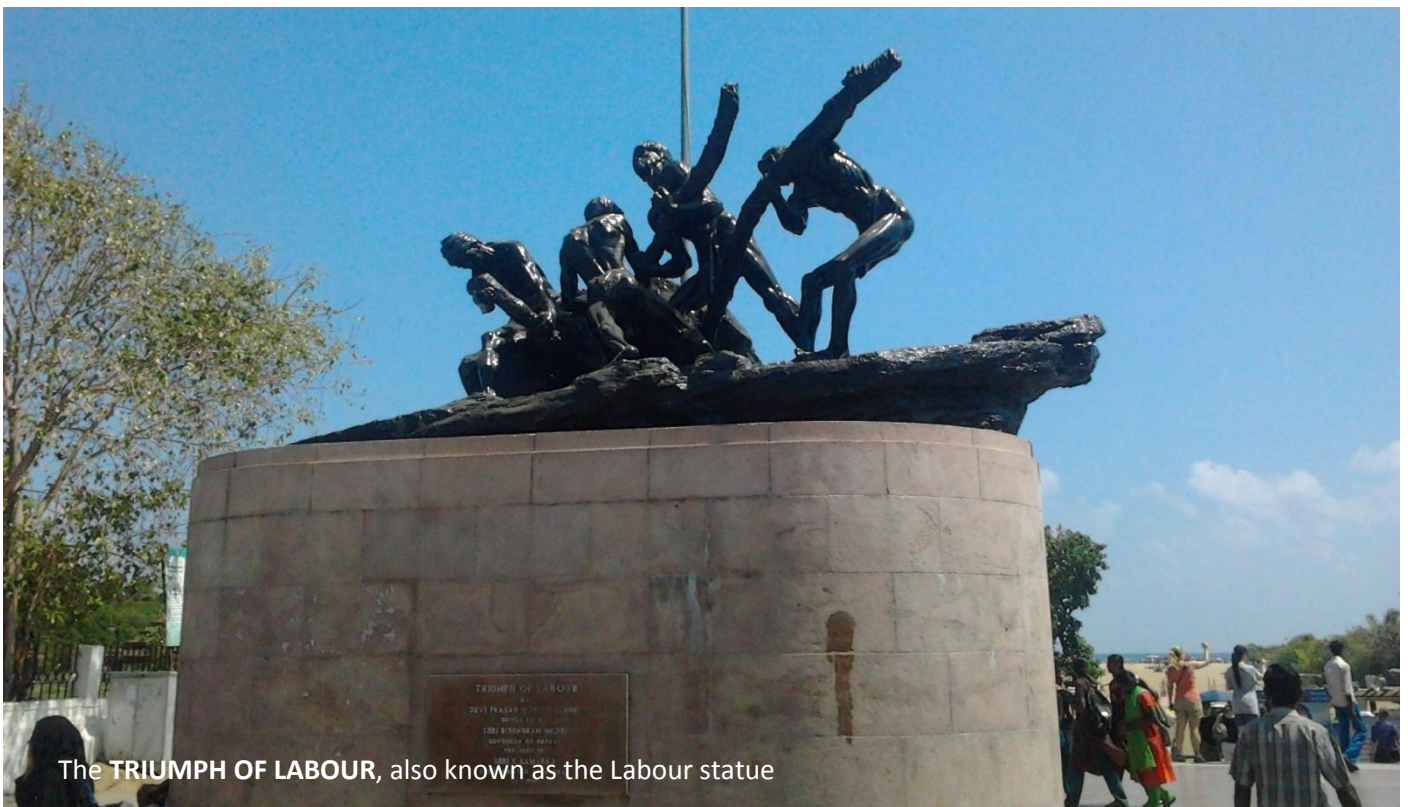
"Proclaims the first week of February every year the World Interfaith Harmony Week between all religions, faiths and beliefs." In the resolution, the General Assembly, points out that mutual understanding and inter-religious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace and establishes World Interfaith Harmony Week as a way to promote harmony between all people regardless of their faith. Recognizing the imperative need for dialogue among different faiths and religions to enhance mutual understanding, harmony and cooperation among people, the General Assembly encourages all States to support during that week the spread of the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in the world's churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship, on a voluntary basis and according to their own religious traditions or convictions.

Theme & Rationale

The theme for the rally was **"My Walk Counts 2013"**. The rally was held for the prevalence of peace in today's divided world. It was organized in collaboration with the University of Madras National Service Scheme and 35 colleges from 3 districts (See [Annexure-1](#) for more details) in and around Chennai participated in the peace rally.

Rally Point

The rally was flagged off by the guests representing all major faiths of India. The Rally started from the **Labour Statue** in the Marina Beach (the 2nd Longest Beach in the world after Miami Beach). The 893 students and their coordinators from the 35 city and outstation colleges marched along the Beach Road and culminated near the **Gandhi Statue** between 3pm-4pm on 23rd Jan 2013. The reason for choosing the venue more specifically the start point of the rally is significant with a bit of Chennai's own history woven into it by young generation.



The TRIUMPH OF LABOUR, also known as the Labour statue

The **Triumph of Labour**, also known as the Labour statue, is a statue at the Marina Beach, Chennai, India. Erected at the northern end of the beach at the Anna Square opposite University of Madras, it is an important landmark of Chennai. The statue shows four men toiling to move a rock, depicting the hard work of the laboring class. It bears a semblance to the famed World War II photograph of the raising of the flag on Iwo Jima by the American Marines. The statue is the earliest one to be erected on the beach and is installed close to the site where the country's first commemoration of May Day was held.

Guests and Dignitaries

Some of the guests who graced the occasion were as follows:

- Brahma Kumari Neelima, Brahma Kumaris, Anna Nagar, Chennai
- Dr. Thomas Mathew, Chairman, SACC
- Ven. Mahanama Thero, Buddhist Monk, Chennai
- Ven. Gnana Vamsa, Buddhist Monk, Burma
- Swamani Shruthnithi, Jain Monk, Chennai
- Swami Buddhidanandaji, Sri Ramakrishna Mutt, Chennai
- Swami Sumithra Das, President, ISKCON Temple, Chennai
- Ms. Debbie, on behalf of Most Rev A.M. Chinnappa – Archbishop, Chennai
- Ven. Ishitani, Buddhist Monk (Japan, at present at World Peace Buddhist Temple, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu)
- Ven. Mouria Mettapala, Buddhist Monk, Chennai
- Ven. Nyanuttara, Buddhist Monk, Chennai
- Ven. Bahi Pala, Buddhist Monk, Madurai
- Dr. K. Yasmin, Asst. Professor, The Quaide Milleth College for Men, Medavakkam, Chennai & Program Officer, NSS.

Some other prominent personalities of Chennai from the education front who participated and graced the inauguration of the rally were:

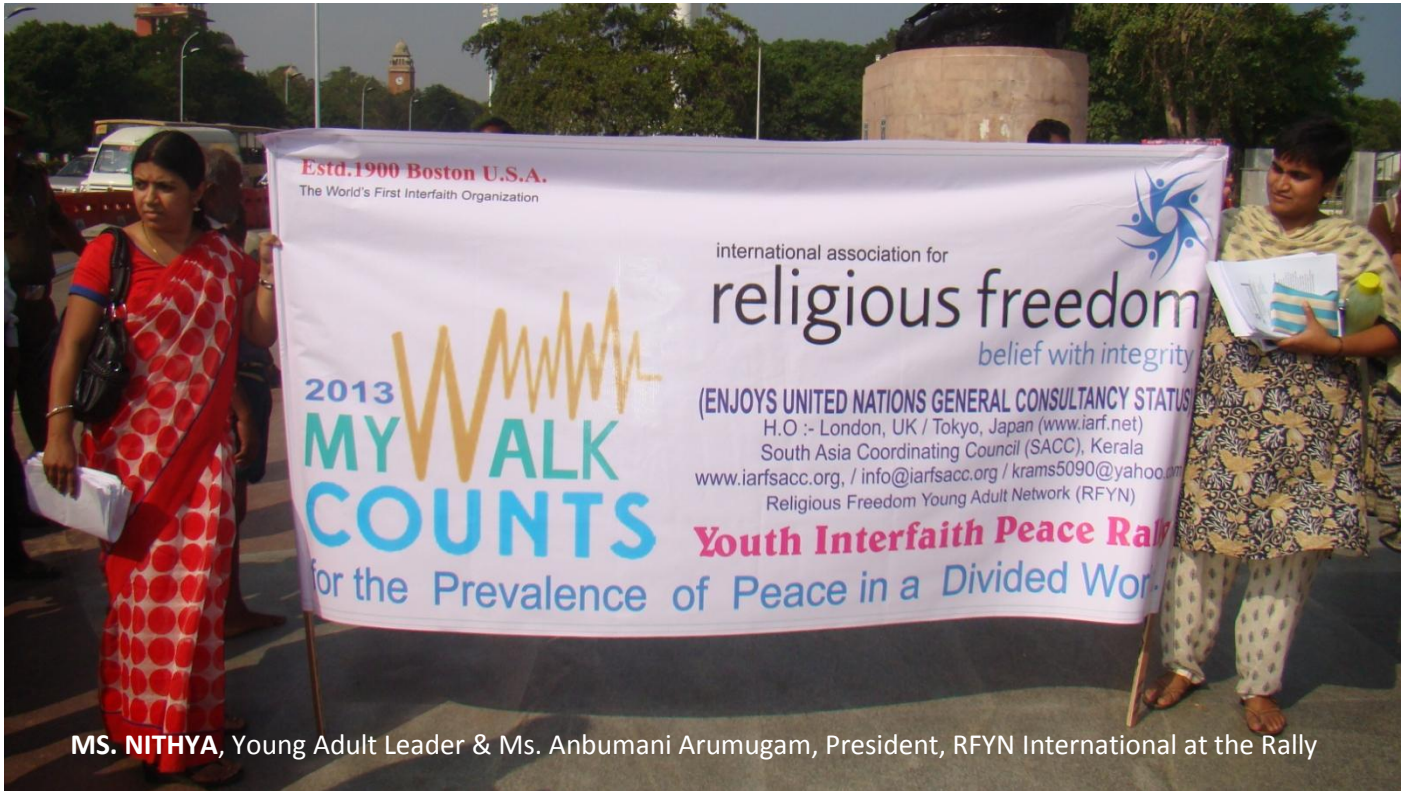
- Arun Kumar Bagga, Co-Chariman, Punjab Association
- Harish Mehta Jain, University of Madras, Senate Member
- Kailash Mull Dugar, Secretary, Forum of Minority Institutions and Associations
- Sugulchand Jain, Managing Trustee, Bhagwan Mahaveer Foundation



DIGNITARIES AT THE FLAGGING OFF OF THE RALLY: Brahma Kumari Neelima, Swami Buddhidanandaji of Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, Mr. Ramachandran, Vice-President, IARF-IC, Dr. Thomas Mathew, Chairman, SACC, Burmese Monks, Dr. G. Bhaskaran, NSS Coordinator, University of Madras, Samani Shruthnithi and other Jain Monks, Dr. K. Yasmin, Asst. Professor, The Quaide Milleth College for Men, Medavakkam, Chennai & Program Officer, NSS, Ms. Debbie, representative of the Archbishop of Santhome Chennai are seen

Young Adults who made their walk count

The rally was a huge success in terms of sheer numbers. On the whole 893 young adults participated in the rally. They came from the length and breadth of **Chennai** city's colleges and the neighboring **Thiruvallur** and **Thiruttani** District Colleges. In all, the participation was from 35 colleges. The number **male** student was **503** and the number of **female** students was **390**. The religion wise breakup is as follows with **Hindus - 810**; **Muslims- 40**; and **Christians-43**. The program deeply attracted lots of public who were gathered in the beach and Media, especially TV channels. Under the scorching heat youths and religious leaders walked three kilometers at the cause of interfaith and world peace.



MS. NITHYA, Young Adult Leader & Ms. Anbumani Arumugam, President, RFYN International at the Rally



YOUNG ADULTS actively participating in the Rally

My Walk Counts 2013

The rally was organized by **K. Ramachandran**, HRE Facilitator, and Vice-President, IARF-IC in order to highlight the need to spread the message of peace in today's divided world.

Throughout the rally all the students walked in utmost silence to the awe of everyone watching them. Their walk did count was the message that came through after the hour-an-half rally which culminated in the Gandhi Statue, Marina Beach, Chennai. Again, for youngsters it was only a gentle reminder about another soul who like Swami Vivekananda, the men sculpted into stone in the Triumph of Labour Statue and Mahatma Gandhi all sacrificed their life for the well-being and betterment of their fellow human beings.

We are happy to take IARF-SACC-RFYN into this new path and hopes this may form part of many more such successful propagations in the future.



MR. K. RAMACHANDRAN with Ms. Debbie, Representative of Most Rev A.M. Chinnappa, Archbishop, Chennai



JAIN NUNS interacting with participants

Outcome of the Rally

- Mobilization of large number of young adults was possible.
- A platform for highlighting IARF and its inter-faith goals.
- The rally attracted the students and their coordinators to communicate with us in the near future for more programs of HRE or other inter-faith activities.
- Students were eager to know more about IARF as an organization.
- They were also very interested in knowing about opportunities to be part of RFYN within their college environment and outside.
- IARF brochures have been distributed to the colleges for future collaborations.
- On the whole the rally was a fruitful and purposeful exercise.



View Photos of the Rally (Follow the link given below to view photos of the Rally)

<https://picasaweb.google.com/106048874172816275704/MYWALKCOUNTSIARFSACCRFYN?authkey=Gv1sRgCon3tJG2g-f5Jg>

Annexure-1

List of Colleges Participated in the Rally

Total Number Colleges	:	35
Total Number of Students	:	893
Gender Breakup	:	Male - 503, Female - 390
Religious Representation	:	Hindu - 810, Muslim -40 & Christian - 43

District	#	Name of College	# Students	Gender		Religion		
				Male	Female	Hindu	Muslim	Christian
Chennai South & North District	1	The Presidency College , Chennai	15	15	-	15	-	-
	2	Government Arts College, Nandanam	22	22	-	21	1	-
	3	D. G. Vaishnav College, Chennai.	21	14	7	21	-	-
	4	Guru Nanak College, Chennai.	17	17	-	16	1	-
	5	National Service Scheme Unit, University of Madras	25	20	5	25	-	-
	6	Sir Thyagaraya College, Chennai	28	7	21	27	-	1
	7	KCS Kasi Nadar College of Arts & Science, Chennai	31	31	-	29	1	1
	8	Justice Basheer Ahmed Syed College for Women, Chennai	12	-	12	5	7	-
	9	Ethiraj College for Women, Chennai	32	-	32	32	-	-
	10	Bharathi Women's Colege, Chennai	21	-	21	19	1	1
	11	Chevalier T. Thomas Elizabeth College for Women, Chennai	12	-	12	11	-	1
	12	Women's Christian College, Chennai	26	-	26	18	1	7
	13	Valliammal College for Women, Chennai	21	-	21	20	-	1
	14	Kumararani Meena Muthiah College for Arts & Science, Chennai	20	10	10	20	-	-
	15	Dr. M.G.R. Janaki College for Arts & Science for Women, Chennai	17	-	17	17	-	-
	16	Meenakshi Women's College, Chennai	18	-	18	15	-	3
	17	Annai Vellankanni College, Chennai	50	-	50	47	1	2
	18	Stella Maris College	17	-	17	6	3	8
Thiruvallur District	19	Sri Subramaniaswamy Government Arts College, Thiruttani	22	18	4	22	-	-
	20	Jaya College of Arts & Science, Thiruninravur	99	79	20	87	1	1
	21	Sri Chandrabrabhu Jain College, Minjur, Thiruvallur	20	20	-	16	2	2
	22	Sriram College of Arts & Science, Veppampattu, Thiruvallur	25	20	5	20	3	2
	23	Dr. Sir ALM College, Vengal Village, Thiruvallur	11	11	-	11	-	-
eepur am Distric	24	Mahalakshmi College of Arts & Science, Paruthipattu, Chennai	19	-	19	17	-	2
	25	Soka Ekkada College of Arts & Science	20	-	20	17	1	2
	26	Chennai National College, Avadi	21	21	-	21	-	-
	27	Nazareth College of Arts & Science, Kannadapalayam, Thriuvallur District	20	16	4	19	1	-
	28	Vel Sri Ranga Sanku College, Avadi	20	20	-	18	2	-
	29	John Bosco Arts & Science College	25	11	14	23	2	-
eepur am Distric	30	A.M. Jain College, Meenambakkam	38	28	10	35	1	2
	31	Quaid-e-Millat College for Men, Medavakkam	30	14	16	23	6	1

32	Mohammed Sathak Coolege of Arts & Science	20	11	9	14	4	2
33	Rajeswari Vedhachalam Government Arts College, Chengalpet	13	13	-	13	-	-
34	Professor Dhanapalan College for Women, Kelambakkam	60	60	-	57	2	1
35	Joseph College of Arts & Science, Kovur, Kancheepuram	25	25	-	22	-	3

The Report is prepared by **Mr. K. Ramachandran** (HRE Facilitator), **Prof. Anbumani Arumugam** (President, RFYN International) and **Ms. Nithya Natraj** (Young Adult leader) in association with **IARF [SACC](#) Office**.