



All For WATER For All

WATER FESTIVAL 2016

Celebrating our deep connection with water

2nd February to 22nd March 2016 (7 weeks)

A Short Report

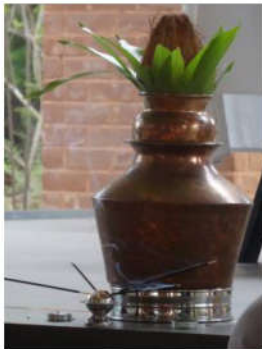


7 weeks through the PAVC bioregion

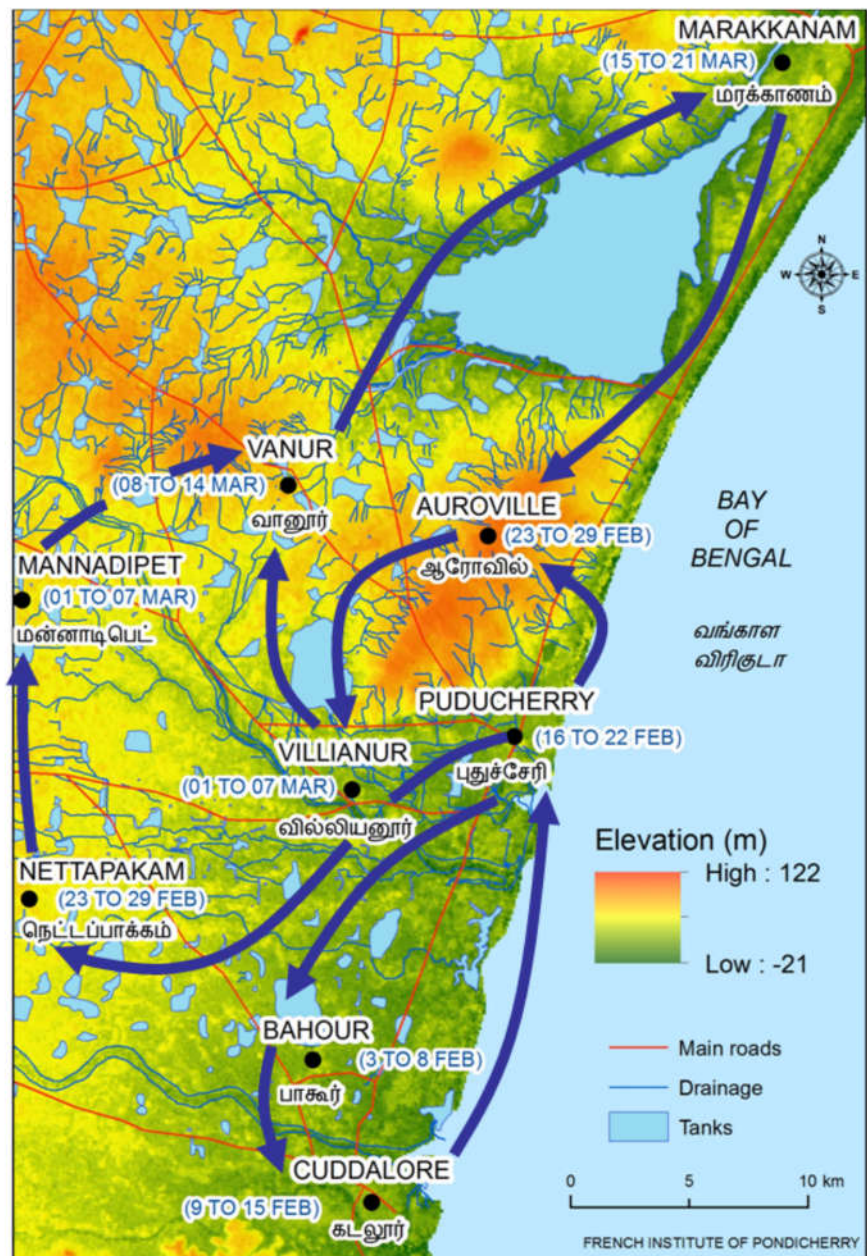
PAVC, a Distinct Bioregion: Pondicherry (part of the Union Territory of Puducherry), Auroville and the districts of Villupuram and Cuddalore (part of Tamilnadu state) situated along the Coromandel Coast form part of an integrated natural ecosystem which includes ponds, lakes, rivers, wetlands, beaches, estuaries, mangroves and forests. The PAVC bioregion is closely interconnected through natural resources, climate, cultural and historical linkages, tourism, trade and transportation. Policies and decisions adopted by one affect the others.

The water festival was launched on 2nd February 2016, World Wetlands' Day and concluded on 22nd March 2016, World Water Day. **Each week it focused on one or two sub regions.**

The festival had an unusual and wonderful concept of bringing together the waters of the seven sub regions and unifying them as a symbol of care, connect and change. The Neer Kudam (water pot) represented our deep connection with water and with each other. During the seven weeks, it travelled to all the sub regions, being filled with water from each of these regions.



The Neer Kudam



A Festival to foster collaborations and connect people

“All For WATER For All” is an initiative to involve all stakeholders for an integrated water resources management in our bioregion in terms of protection, restoration and enhancement. It is based on core principles of Social and Ecological Justice, Dignity, Equity, Transparency and Accountability, Inter-dependence and Interconnectedness.

The festival achieved the creation of a network of people and organizations that have shown keen interest to take this initiative forward for further action and results.



Top-Left - Politician, Farmers, NGO, carrying the Neer Kudam at the inaugural session on Feb. 2nd Thiru N. Rangasamy, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Puducherry, Thiru P. Rajavelu, Minister of Tourism, Govt of Puducherry, Thiru K. Lakshminarayanan, M.L.A Rajbhavan Constituency, Puducherry, Mr. Philippe Janvier-Kamiyama, Consul Top-Right: Water Tour, Pondicherry, on Feb. 13th

Bottom-Left: Bahour tank during the water tour on Feb. 6th, with kids, farmers, representatives, etc.

Bottom-Centre: Women pouring water into the Neer Kudam before interactive session with Shri Rajendra Singh at Sharanam, March 5th

Bottom-Right: Aayi Mandapam, Bharathi Park Pondicherry on Feb. 23rd

Left: the Neer Kudam at the valedictory function on March 22nd surrounded by water pots from all the sub-regions.

From Inaugural Function to the valedictory, the Neer Kudam travelled through the bio-region

Sharing knowledge, experiences and solutions

AllForWaterForAll worked on building a knowledge base, taking up research and studies, organizing consultation meetings and capacity building programs and looked into starting education curriculums in schools. During the festival, an **exhibition circulated in the bioregion, several seminars and meetings were organized.**



Travelling exhibition - Pondicherry Gandhi Thidal on Feb. 19th (left) and Cuddalore on Feb 9th (right)



At the inaugural Session, talks and group discussions on Feb. 2th

A one day meeting on 'The state of Lakes and Waterbodies of Southern India: Threats, Challenges and Opportunities' was held on 29 February, 2016, jointly organized with the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE). Experts from different parts of South India came together to discuss the reasons of major urban floods in India. This forum brought together around 70 participants from Pondicherry, Madurai, Nagarcoil, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Bengaluru to be a part of the event. They shared the view that lakes and waterbodies of India are in a poor state and dying under the threat of urbanization.



Meeting on The state of Lakes and Waterbodies of Southern India: Threats, Challenges and Opportunities', Feb. 29th

On March 5th, the festival welcomed **Shri Rajendra Singh, Waterman of India & Winner of the Stockholm Water Prize 2015**. He joined a team of bird watching in the morning around the Ousitteri Lake, the largest lake in Pondicherry. Later he interacted with the public at Sharanam near Ousitteri Lake. He promoted water conservation and traditional water management. He appreciated the efforts of the AllforWaterforAll collective and individual and collective efforts of Pondicherians in protecting its water resources.



Interactives session with Shri Rajendra Singh, March 5th



A **three-day Water sustainability and Fair Trade fair** was held at the Craft Bazaar at the Gandhi Thidal in Pondicherry (Feb. 19-21th). Teaming up with the Pondicherry-Auroville Fair Trade Twin Town initiative group, the AllforWaterforAll collective put together an impressive collection of 20 groups from Pondicherry, Auroville and across India who set up beautifully decorated colourful stalls to show their Fair Trade or sustainable products.

During the **valedictory function** (March 22th) in Auroville, at Bharat Nivas, the Indian Pavilion, there was a display of all the exhibitions that were shown through the festival; drawings by the children from the schools which participated in the festival; metres and of metres of Gada cloth with all the messages from participants. School children performed puppet shows and theater.



Valedictory function at Bharat Nivas, Auroville, on March 22nd, with Mrs. Aster Patel, Governing Board member of the Auroville Foundation, Mrs. Yamouna David (IDEF India and OIB), Dr. S. G. S. Swamy (executive secretary KSCST) and Mr. A. R. Shivakumar (senior scientist of KSCST), Mr. Janvier-Kamiayama, the Honorable French Consul in Pondicherry, Mr. Bhanu Neupane, UNESCO and all the AllforWaterforAll collective. Exhibition onf the Gada cloth (left), lighting the lamp (Middle), puppet show (right).

Sharing knowledge and experience through art: dance, puppet show, music, theatre and movie showing. Beyond words, art provides visual narratives focusing on water crisis, human relationship to water or just the beauty of water. It contributes to raising awareness, promotes the sharing of experience and encourages people to take action.



Top: Puppet show by the ASN Government Middle School, Mudaliarpet and dance show by Satya Special school at the Fair on Feb 19th

Middle left: some movies screened during the festival in schools, at the Alliance Française of Pondicherry and in Cinema Paradisio in Auroville. The film screenings were systematically followed by discussions with participants; Middle right: specially choreographed Bharata Natyam dance on the theme of water including the pledge by Krithiga at the Gandhi Thidal on Feb 19th

Bottom: Show by Pondicherry University students on March 20th (left) and drawing exhibition at Barhat Nivas on March 22nd (right)



Raising awareness and involving youth from 39 schools

We had a massive outreach program to create an effective awareness about water in the entire bioregion. In 39 schools, Teachers and AllforWaterforAll members addressed the kids and carried out activities: drawing, painting, puppet show, drama, movie showing, singing etc. The children were so energetic, aware of the issues related to water and they were **READY** and prepared to act.



Ariankuppam, Feb. 16th (up left) ; Koravall, writing on the gada cloth, Feb. 4th (up right) ; Katterikuppam, March 2nd (middle left); Drawing competition in Uruvaiyar, March 3rd (middle right); Puppet show in Keezhparikkalpet, Feb. 8th (down left), Movie show in Nesal, Vanur, March 10th (down right)

A festival to foster commitment: Pledge for water and signature campaign



Pledge for water read in English and Tamil on many occasions, at the Water Sustainability and Fair Trade market Gandhi Thidal on Feb. 19th (left) and with children in Bahour on Feb. 5th (right)

THE PLEDGE FOR WATER

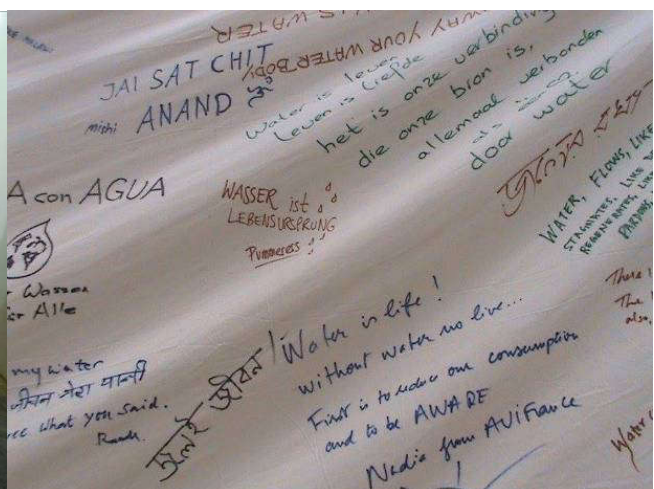
“This I know - WATER is LIFE; its source and support.

It drops like blessings from the heavens / Replenishes and purifies our water resources /
Flows joyfully on its journey sustaining life on earth, / Then evaporates, feeling
accomplished, to restart its course.

I know that my body is made mostly of WATER / That clean water is vital to my
wellbeing & health. / It's the most precious & irreplaceable gift of Nature / Which I will
ever treasure as WATER is WEALTH.

I PLEDGE that I'll treat water with love and compassion / Never waste or pollute it, or
encroach on its space / I'll never abuse it myself or allow others to do so / But strive to
keep water clean, abundant and safe.

Thank you wonderful WATER, I will be more conscious of you.”



People shared their thoughts and points of view on water with varieties of messages and drawings on the gada cloth at the Water sustainability and Fair Trade market at Gandhi Thidal on Feb. 19th (left) ; the Gada Cloth, with inscriptions cherishing water in a multitude of languages (right)

A festival to foster collective action



Tank Cleaning in the Bahour sub-region Feb 7th (Left) and one of “Our” irrigation Channel (right)

The water resources in the PAVC bioregion face a host of serious threats all of which are caused primarily by human activity: pollution from urban, industrial and other waste, decreasing ground water recharge due to conversion of agricultural lands for other uses, encroachment of water bodies due to population growth, salt water intrusion into ground water due to coastal erosion and over extraction, exploitation & commercialization of water by private companies and the impacts of climate change, to name a few.

Rehabilitation and maintenance of the water bodies is a big challenge. **Local community and AllforWaterAll collective carried out tank cleaning in several places during the festival.**



Pond cleaning in Nadukuppam, on March 20th for the Happiness day, co-organized with IDEF India with the participation of the General Consul of France and artists (right) and in Thengathittu Feb 22th (left)

We thank all the participants, partners and funders who made this festival possible!!