



INQUA HaBCom Training Workshop: Methods and Challenges for Quantitative Palynology and Paleoecology in South Asia

January 29th to February 4th 2018

The INQUA-HaBCom (International Union for Quaternary Research – [Humans and the Biosphere Commission](#)) Workshop cum Training Programme in the framework of the ongoing project *Enhancing quantitative reconstruction skills in South Asian Palynology and Paleoecology*, is being organized by the French Institute of Pondicherry (www.ifpindia.org) from 29th January to 4th February 2018.

Considering the importance of the “Anthropocene” in the academia and its close link to the study of past environments, human and natural – the core of the subject of this INQUA workshop - we are happy to organize a [debate](#) on this subject the evening of 2nd February 2018, open to the public, thanks to the support of the ongoing Bonjour India platform of the French Embassy in India.

Pollen is one of the best available (microscopic) proxies to reconstruct the past vegetation and climate history and to delineate the role of “human impacts” of recent (historic) and the prehistoric past. By their very nature, pollen data are also more amenable to quantification vis a vis the landcover (vegetation) that produced them at a local-regional scale.

Such quantification to reconstruct vegetation history from the Quaternary, especially Holocene, records using model applications such as the LRA (Landcover Reconstruction Algorithm) are now widely applied in temperate areas where there has been much progress in putting together comprehensive pollen databases (PD) such as the EPD (European) and NAPD (North American).

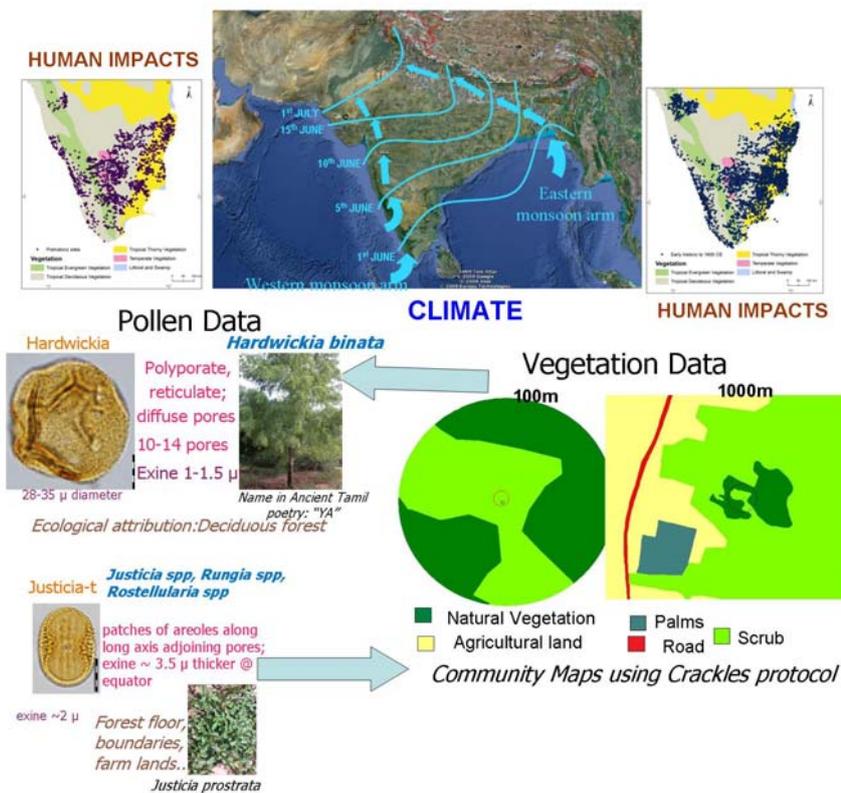
Yet, in areas such as South Asia, home to a large proportion of tropical vegetation and pivotal in the monsoon system, this remains a challenge. Climatic and vegetation gradients in South Asia are striking – equally so, the length of “human” occupation and subsequent modification of these places. Very limited reliable pollen datasets exist to obtain a quantitative translation, validation and calibration of paleoenvironmental reconstruction in this part of the world. South Asia lacks a comprehensive pollen database of the kinds available elsewhere including in the neotropics (Latin American).

The larger aim of the ongoing project is to address this lacuna in two steps – the first, to try to create a south Asian pollen database and second, to equip palynologists here with the tools necessary to reconstruct past (anthropogenic) land cover quantitatively.

One way of doing this is to provide a common platform for researchers from South Asia and other experts in pollen-based quantitative reconstructions to interact together – this is the aim of this first workshop in 2018. The workshop is organized in such a way as to provide the space for both theoretical reflections on the underlying philosophy of pollen analysis and what its application in tropical South Asia can bring to the science of climate, landcover and landuse change, and also providing a hands-on experience in doing it, using the experience of the project leaders and invited experts from France and Sweden.

The workshop activities will seek to provide the selected trainees and participants a mix of talks/lectures and hands-on practicals, in laboratory, field methodologies that would seek to homogenize data collection methods. Given the context of a definite lack of a pollen database for this region, such an activity would provide the basis for developing one using updated protocols. Specifically, one of the issues central to the development of a database is a uniform definition of pollen taxa at a regional scale.

Graphical presentation of the project



1. Project Leader(s):

Dr. K. Anupama

Research Scientist, Laboratory of Palynology & Paleoecology, Department of Ecology, French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP), Pondicherry, India.

anupama.k@ifpindia.org

Dr. T. Rathnasiri Premathilake

Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology (PGIAR), 407, Baudhdhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

premathilake@hotmail.com

Mr. S. Prasad, Pollen Analyst, Laboratory of Palynology & Paleoecology, Department of Ecology, French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP), Pondicherry, India.

prasad.s@ifpindia.org

2. Experts & Resource Persons:

Prof. Marie-Jose Gaillard Lemdhal, Linnaeus University, Kalmar, Sweden

Dr. Florence Mazier, GEODE UMR 5602, CNRS-University of Toulouse, France

Prof Kathleen Morrison, University of Pennsylvania (tbc)

Dr. Anjum Farooqui, BSIP, Lucknow

Dr. Ruta Limaye, ARI Pune

Prof. Pramod Singh, Department of Earth Sciences, Pondicherry University, Pondicherry

Prof Shanti Pappu, Sharma Centre for Heritage Education, Chennai

Dr. Kumar Akhilesh, Sharma Centre for Heritage Education, Chennai

Dr. B. R. Ramesh, IFP

Dr. Christophe Proisy, IFP

Dr. G. Muthusankar, IFP

Dr. N. Balachandran

Ms. Navya Reghu, PhD Student, IFP

...and others