



புதுச்சேரியின் உணவுப்பழக்கம்

**Local food system of Pondicherry:
A discussion on food sovereignty and agro-ecology transition**

**January 22nd to 25th 2020
Second Edition**

Organized by the French Institute of Pondicherry

In coordination with the Agriculture Department of Pondicherry



Objectives of the workshop

The objective is to introduce a discussion on the concept of “local food systems”. How can it apply to Pondicherry, at the local scale, and make sense for a diversity of actors? By planning this event every year in January, we wish to put this question on the political agenda.

We propose to take on the challenge of how we can create a *collaborative network* that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, and consumption in order to enhance environmental, economic, and social health in the particular context of Pondicherry. This *platform should permit collectively thinking, discussing and suggesting specific actions on what are the ‘food priorities’* of the Pondicherry communities?

We are organizing a 4-day workshop with different activities and modalities of interaction: i) talks and debates (from January 22nd to 23rd) on the concept of “City-region food system” and around **three controversies** with researchers, urban and rural citizens, farmers, food processors and urban consumers, ii) site visits to organic farms (January 24th), iii) an organic food exhibition (January 25th) in the street adjacent to IFP (with food stands and food-sharing to raise awareness and the desire to get involved in changing practices).

The three controversies and the objectives of the debates are:

- Despite the agricultural modernization of the Green Revolution, India has preserved, in certain contexts, a diversity of production around native and indigenous seeds. The preservation of these seeds is a political struggle led by social movements (which may include urban consumers), peasant organisations, NGOs and activists, united around the movement for agroecology. How to build bridges with urban consumers to shape a political alliance and shake up public policies in favor of agroecology?



- PDS is in India a unique system of food redistribution to combat food insecurity. The transition to a monetary distribution upsets the foundations of the agreement with the society. Feminist movements have mobilized against these changes in Pondicherry. The aim of the debate is to reflect on the implications of this proposal of direct cash transfer and to discuss the arguments for and against because this is a major societal debate around food justice.
- The changes in production systems analysed during the first debate have effects on changes in food systems, at the family level in particular and consequently on public health. What are the projects that enhance the food quality of rural and urban households, while preserving biodiversity and natural resources such as water, and improving livelihood conditions?

The concepts we are going to discuss during these four days are those of local food system, food sovereignty, social and environmental justice and agroecology. Agroecology questions the dominant and interdependent global agricultural and food models and their socio-economic and environmental consequences. Agroecology sustains autonomy via appropriate techniques and social interactions (technologies called "social", exchange of seeds, consumer groups, direct sales, etc.) on the basis of a renewed relationship with "nature" (agricultural diversification, respect for natural cycles and ecosystems). The speakers also question these debates according to an approach based on social gender relations. This is why, the first two days of the program are included in a two-year seminar on Gender and Development that the French Institute is organising with Pondicherry University in order to raise a discussion on gender and agroecology.



Programme : a 4-Day workshop

Compulsory registration

Day 1 and Day 2– Wednesday, January 22nd and Thursday 23rd, Talks and debates, venue French Institute

Debate 1: Preservation of native and indigenous seeds (millet, rice, vegetable): a way to sustain biodiversity, adaptation to climate change and water preservation

Debate 2: Direct Cash Transfer scheme of PDS: controversy around a pilot program in Puducherry territory and discussion around food justice concept and action.

Debate 3: Market driver of commodification of knowledge versus domestic food culture, diet patterns and family health

Day 3 - Friday, January 24th

Morning (8.30-12.30): Field visit of organic farms in Kunichampattu village and discussion with organic farmers groups

Day 4 - Saturday, January 25th from 10.00 am to 6.00 pm: venue Saint Gilles street (between French Consulate and French Institute, Beach Road)

Organic food fair and debates

Program Details of the 4-Day workshop

DAY 1 – Wednesday, January 22, venue French Institute of Pondicherry	
8.00-8.30	Inscription
8.30-9.00	Informal discussion and reception of our guests
9.00-9.30	Hélène Guétat-Bernard and Venkatsubramanian Presentation of the program and objectives. Introduction of the 3 controversies
9.30- 10.00	Mrs Bagyavathi , Treasurer of Puducherry Pradesa Nammazvar Iyarkai Vivasayigal Sangam, a farmer organization A woman organic farmer’s testimony
10.00-10.30	Keynote address by Shri. R. Kamalakannan , Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Government of Puducherry
10.30-11.15	Aarti Kawlra , Academic Director, ‘Humanities across Borders: Asia and Africa in the World’ (HaB), IIAS, Leiden, NL and independent scholar, Chennai Stories of cultivation from the Humanities across Borders network: Rethinking abundance and thrift
11.15-11.30	Tea-break
11.30-12.15	Kavitha Kuruganti from Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture, ASHA, New Delhi Anna Swaraj movement, a vision for India’s Food Sovereignty and Agro-ecological Resurgence
12.15-12.45	General debate with an introduction by Santha Sheela Nair , retired from State Planning Commission, Govt. of Tamil Nadu - Vice Chairperson
12.45-14.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
14.00-17.00	Debate 1: Preservation of native and indigenous seeds (millet, rice, vegetable): a way to sustain biodiversity, adaptation to climate change and water preservation Introduction by Shamika Mone , Research director of Organic Farming Association of India and INOFO From Indian farms to international organic network: Organic Farms, Farmers and

	Seed keepers, a Fight to preserve the Multiplicity of Knowledge
DAY 2 – Thursday, January 23, venue French Institute of Pondicherry	
9.00-12.00	<p>Debate 2: Direct Cash Transfer scheme of PDS: controversy around a pilot program in Puducherry territory and discussion around food justice concept and action.</p> <p>Introduction by Reetika Khera, associate professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.</p> <p>Food or Cash: What the evidence does tell us?</p>
13.00-14.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
14.00-17.00	<p>Debate 3: Market driver of commodification of knowledge versus domestic food culture, diet patterns and family health</p> <p>Introduction by Haripriya, FRSC, Research and Professor, Department of Food Science and Technology, Pondicherry University</p>
17.30-18.00	Conclusion

Introduction of the workshop

- **Aarti Kawlra**, Academic Director, ‘Humanities across Borders: Asia and Africa in the World’ (HaB), IIAS, Leiden, NL and independent scholar, Chennai

Stories of cultivation from the Humanities across Borders network: Rethinking abundance and thrift

Postcolonial developmentalist interventions disseminate expert knowledge, seed, fertilizer, pesticides and soil testing facilities through agriculture extension work focused on enhancing crop yield in most countries of the global South. Crop insurance, farm loans/subsidies, modern harvesting and irrigation machinery and food processing are other governmental outreach programs for farmers. The story of India’s green revolution is a classic example of the failed promise of capitalist agriculture in the face of climatic vulnerability and the extreme precarity of farming livelihoods.

In his formulation of the principles of an “economy of permanence” Gandhian economist, J. C. Kumarappa sought to delve into the question of agricultural production as follows: “If we produce everything we want from within a limited area, we are in a position to supervise the methods of production; while if we draw our requirements from the ends of the earth it becomes impossible for us to guarantee the conditions of production in such places.” (J.C. Kumarappa, *The Gandhian*

Economy and Other Essays 1948). The idea of local self-reliance is fundamental to regional governance and planning in many European and African countries and in India has followed a singular tradition since Gandhi's insistence on decentralised production and humanizing technologies. Yet it is marginal to the dominant discourse of modern agriculture and water management in state discourses in the global South.

In this presentation I propose a rethinking of abundance and thrift by posing some talking points on food sovereignty drawn from narratives on paddy cultivation, seed conservation and irrigation practices in parts of West Africa, highlands of Southeast Asia and south India.

- **Kavitha Kuruganti** from Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture, ASHA, New Delhi

Anna Swaraj movement, a vision for India's Food Sovereignty and Agro-ecological Resurgence

Agriculture continues to be at a cross-roads, having to provide multiple solutions to the needs of various stakeholders. It has to provide viable and sustainable livelihoods for millions of people dependent on it, even as it has to provide solutions for climate change, for malnutrition and for environmental degradation of various kinds. Piecemeal solutions to each of these challenges (unviable livelihoods, climate change, malnutrition and environmental degradation) is bound to lead us towards more problems. On the other hand, evolving a vision for Anna Swaraj and moving towards it is quite possible, with solutions that seamlessly include environmental, social and economic justice. The vision of Anna Swaraj is to provide local, adequate, nutritious, diverse and affordable food for all – respecting bio-cultural plurality – through protecting and promoting economically viable, ecologically regenerative, and socially just livelihoods, centred around farming, processing and distribution of food. Such a vision incorporates 'Knowledge Swaraj' too, incorporating people's knowledge systems that embody plurality, justice and sustainability. An inter-sectionality approach in this Anna Swaraj vision puts the focus on the invisible and marginalised amongst the farmers. Experiences from the ground show that such a vision can be made into a reality through concerted action and conscious re-orientation of our food and farming systems.



Debate 1: Preservation of native and indigenous seeds (millet, rice, vegetable) to sustain biodiversity, adaptation to climate change and water preservation.

Introduction by **Shamika Mone**, Research director at Organic Farming Association of India (<http://ofai.org/organisation/>) and INOFO (<http://www.inofo.org/author/shamika/>)

From Indian farms to international organic network: Organic Farms, Farmers and Seed keepers, a Fight to preserve the Multiplicity of Knowledge

A seed is a reproductive structure. It fertilized embryo is in dormancy until sown. Seed are the basis of food reproduction. A contaminated seed means a contaminated food chain. For a consumer, the seed is a source of food. For the scientist, it is a genetic resource. For the business community, it's all about profit. But for farmers, the seed is their whole world. It is life itself!

Organisation of the debate: **Venkatsubramanian**, IFP

Support in the organization of the debate: **Indhubala Kesavan**, PhD Student, JNU.

Among the participants:

- The **Director of Agriculture Department**, Government of Puducherry : "**Sustainable and Holistic agriculture focus on Puducherry**"
- **Dr. V.Raji Sugumar**, Associate Professor & Head, PG & Research Dept. of Home Science, Bharathidasan Govt. College for Women, Puducherry
- Work group presentation of Tamil students from the Lycée Français de Pondicherry around family food changes and their understanding through an intergenerational dialogue. Work framed by **Vinnarasi Vienne** and **Emilie Ponceaud**
- **Farmers organizations :**
 - *Puducherry Pradesa Nammazvar Iyarkai Uzavargal sangam* (Puducherry region Nammazvar Natural Farmers Union)
 - *Puducherry Pradesa Nel Jayaraman Pala Payirgal Sagupadiyalargal Sangam* (Puducherry region Nel Jayaraman Multicrop cultivators Union)
 - Swaasa M Global Farmer Producer Co

Debate 2: Direct Cash Transfer scheme of PDS: controversy over Food justice with Puducherry as a pilot program.



Introduction by:

- **Reetika Khera**, associate professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

Food or Cash: What the evidence does tell us?

Dismantling the PDS in favour of cash transfers has been debated for nearly a decade now. What do field studies on this issue tell us about people's preferences, feasibility of the two approaches, logistics and costs? This talk will cover some of these issues and the politics of food vs. cash, based on various studies conducted in India. On balance, it appears that the time to transition to cash transfers has not yet arrived in India.

- **Frédéric Landy**, director of IFP

Cash or kind transfer? The regional, national and global dimensions of revamping the Public Distribution System

Whether food aid is delivered in kind or in cash is of course crucial for many households, in particular as far as gender issues are concerned. But the regional, national and global dimensions must also be taken into account while discussing this topic. In a way, cash transfer could reduce the competition suffered by local agriculture from regions of surplus. Yet, it would force the dismantling of the whole procurement machinery at the national level, unless surplus wheat and rice are exported into the global market with a risk of dramatic fall of prices.

Organisation of the debate: **Augustin Brutus**, Intercultural Network for Development and Peace (INDP).

Support in the organization of the debate: **Nithya Joseph**, post-doctorate, IFP.

Among the participants:

- **Sudha Sundaraman**, AIDWA (All Democratic Womens Association)
- Members of **SAMAM** (Samam Makalir Suyasarbu Iyakkam)

Debate 3: Market driver of commodification of knowledge versus domestic food culture, diet patterns and family health

Introduction: **Haripriya**, FRSC, Research and Professor, Department of Food Science and Technology, Pondicherry University

The imminent need for synchronizing food policy, production and nutritional security

Nutritional transitions are well observed in countries which are undergoing rapid transition. All over the world major shifts in dietary patterns are being observed, even in the feeding of

elementary staples towards more varied diets. Complementing these variations in food consumption has considerable health magnitudes. A picture of food availability, consumption and projections to 2050, both globally and for different regions of the world, along with the drivers are largely responsible for these observed consumption trends and are the need of concern. The differences in consumer characteristics and socio- demographical factors are the result of the diverse transition. Future food policies must calibrate to both agricultural and health sectors, which would thereby enable the development of coherent and sustainable policies that will ultimately benefit agriculture, human health and the environment. Urbanization, globalization and ageing epitomises encounters new avenues to achieve good nutritional status. Changes in agricultural practice over the past 50 years have increased the world's capacity to provide food for its people through increase in productivity, greater diversity of foods and less seasonal dependence. The result of modified agricultural practices has enhanced the world's capacity to feed its people through greater diversity of foods, low seasonal dependency and improved productivity. Traditional rice varieties are combinations of micronutrients, energy dense which holds immense functional properties. Traditional rice varieties are our super food that caters to the requirements of our population. The potential nutraceuticals of these varieties are capable to cater the multi-nutritional deficiency of the population. Food policies must insist the inclusion of locally available, self-reliant food economics which would aim at a sustained food production, processing, distribution and consumption. This will directly integrate with enhanced social, economic, health and economy.

Participation:

- **Anupama, Prasad S., Lazar J., Prakesh Patel, Lipi, Nandini Rajesh, Rajesh Waran:** "Local"; "organic"; "sustainable"; "health" ; "market drivers" "knowledge commodification"- can diverse experiences from bee keeping to terrace gardens and research in paly-nology and plant ecology be tied together to bring meaning to these key-words in an increasing health conscious world?
- **Nina Sengupta:** Exploring wild edible greens or weeds to reconnect with nature and adapt to climate change, to preserve sensitive issues such as depleting wild food source for the poor, and trendy forage culture among the urban middle class.

Organisation of the debate: **Vijhay Ganesh M.**, cook

Support in the organization of the debate: **Rashni Snigdha**, PhD student, Pondicherry University

Among the participants:

- **Balachandran**, Botanist, Department of Ecology, IFP
- **Dr Gayatri**, Siddha doctor at Kalapet health centre
- **Dr. Uma Chandrasekaran**, Professor - School of Management, Dean - International Relations, Pondicherry University



- **John Bosco Lourdusamy**, Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras, Chennai

The lunch food is coming from Krishnaas Organic Farm, an ecofriendly store. krishnaasorganic@gmail.com

DAY 3

Friday, January 24th Field visit and debates

Morning (departure 8.30 am, return 12.30 pm): field visit of organic farms in Kunichampattu village and discussion with organic farmers groups.

Afternoon (venue IFP from 14.00 to 5.00 pm): Construction of a platform of decisions making for action in 2020

DAY 4

Saturday, January 25th 10.00 am to 6.00 pm: Organic food fair and debates, Venue Saint Gilles street (between French Consulate and French Institute, Beach Road)

Inauguration (10.00 am):

- **Shri V. Vaithilingam**, Member of Parliament, Puducherry
- **Mme Catherine Suard**, French Consul General of Pondicherry
- **Mr. Frédéric Landy**, director of IFP

The exhibition of organic food, in the street adjacent to the French Institute, is an occasion for the organic producers to invite the public to visit their stall and discuss with them on the value of their production. This interaction between producers and consumers may also include the street vendors of organic products and millet recipes. Different initiatives are presented such as roof gardening and bee conservation.



Biography of the key speakers and participants

K ANUPAMA is a researcher in Palynology and Paleoecology at the French Institute of Pondicherry, India with more than 25 years of experience. Areas of expertise include biological "proxies" such as Pollen and Phytolith studies, Quaternary Paleoecology, Archeopalynology, Melissopalynology, Aeropalynology and Tropical Forest Ecology. Understanding and quantifying the vegetation changes in the Indian subcontinent with reference to *changes in climate (specifically the monsoon)* and with reference to *human impacts* which go back several millennia in this part of the world forms the major thrust area of present research. Delineating methodological challenges in Tropical Palynology and Paleoecology using multiple proxies and a **trans-disciplinary approach** building collaborations with human sciences, particularly Archaeology in the framework of Anthropocene are big constraints in the tropics, and these are precisely the areas of interest. Currently President of INQUA's Humans and Biosphere Commission (2019-2023).

BAGYAVATHI, from Karikalambakkam village in Ponducherry territory, treasurer of Puducherry Pradesa Nammazvar Iyarkai Vivasayigal Sangam. She is an organic farmer practicing agriculture since the last 20 years. She received in 2018 an award from Government of India as a woman organic farmer and also two other awards from private organisations.

Dr. Uma CHANDRASEKARAN, Professor - School of Management, Dean - International Relations, Pondicherry University.

Lipi DAS has been fascinated by bees since childhood and is passionate about the natural world and its conservation restoration. She sees bees as central to both Nature and Humans and has been, along with Mr **Prakash Patel**, responsible for one of the most remarkable stories of Eco-restoration at Mereville, Project Eco-Lake Pondicherry. Both Lipi and Prakash are associated with SAICE (Sri Aurobindo international Centre of Education) and provide an incredible environment and experience for their school children to learn biology and ecology, hands-on. Lipi is also passionate about improving the urban atmosphere and experiments (with) urban gardening to provide solutions even in tiny spaces.

Hélène GUETAT-BERNARD is professor of sociology at Toulouse University (ENSFEA), presently Head of the Social Sciences Department at the French Institute of Pondicherry, India (UMIFRE 21, CNRS-MEAE). She holds a PhD in socio-economy from EHESS-Paris, and was professor of geography for 15 years. She is working on gender and rural development, agroecology, local food system, care and ecofeminism in different contexts (India, West Africa, Brazil, France). She has edited books on gender and development. She participated in the creation of an international network on gender and agroecology.



Dr. S. HARIPRIYA, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Food Science and Technology, Pondicherry University with over 18 years of teaching and research experience in the field and food and nutritional science with specialization on indigenous foods and its nutraceutical potentials. She is a content rite for MHRD MOOCS initiatives E pathasala and has piloted several national and international research projects.

INDHUBALA K. is a research student at CSSS, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her MPhil dissertation dealt with the theoretical question of human-nonhuman relationship, in which it focused on the politics of ‘seed’ and the rise of the organic farming movement in Tamil Nadu. She is a part of Tamil student collective in JNU called Tamil Conscience. As a collective, they engage and discuss with the questions of caste, nationalism, social movements, gender, language, federalism and environment with particular reference to the Tamil scenario.

Nithya JOSEPH holds a PhD in the Socioeconomics of Development. She has recently joined the French Institute of Pondicherry as a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow on a project that studies the diversity of debt practices in three villages in Tamil Nadu. This project will pay specific attention to the relationship between climate, livelihoods, debt, and household nutrition.

Aarti KAWLRA, Academic Director, ‘Humanities across Borders: Asia and Africa in the World’ (HaB), IAS, Leiden, NL and independent scholar, Chennai

As academic director of a trans-regional, multi-university, initiative of the International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands, I am engaged in co-creating ‘situated learning methodologies’ and ‘experiential pedagogies’ for a civically grounded, global humanities under the programme *Humanities across Borders: Asia and Africa in the World*. The transdisciplinary program aims to catalyze interaction between the text and context of knowledge in lived experience, to challenge disciplinary and popular assumptions surrounding colonial and postcolonial discourses of culture, heritage, education, nation and development. My recent publications include “Recipes for Re-enchantment: Natural Dyes and Dyeing in India” in *Cloth and India: Towards Recent Histories 1947-2015*, Marg (2016), the book *We Who Wove with Lotus Thread: Summoning Community in South India*, Orient Blackswan (2018) and the co-authored article “An Experiment in Feminist Technology in Local Governance: Revisiting the Question of ‘Invited Spaces’ of Participation in Kerala” in *Review of Development and Change* MIDS Chennai, January–June 2019.

Reetika KHERA, is a development economist working on social policy in India. She is an associate professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

Kavitha KURUGANTI has around twenty-five years of experience working on development issues, mainly on farm livelihoods, food security and seed sovereignty, democratisation of science



& technology, and promotion of ecological farming. She is a development communicator by qualification, with a Master's degree in communication from Central University of Hyderabad.

She has worked in a variety of organizations over the years – grassroots, campaign, women's, funding and state-level resource organizations in addition to working along with farmers' movements and forming informal national networks & alliances, from 1993 till the present. For a decade now, she has not held a paid job anywhere.

She is at present taking an active leading role as a National Convenor of Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture (ASHA Kisan Swaraj network, www.kisanswaraj.in), an informal advocacy platform started in 2010 during the Kisan Swaraj Yatra, to address the agrarian crisis in India, and promote sustainable farm livelihoods. She is also the founder member of another national initiative that focuses on the rights of women farmers called MAKAAM (Mahila Kisan Adhikaar Manch, www.makaam.in). She is a member of the National Working Group of All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (www.AIKSCC.com), which is a joint platform of more than 200 farming organisations of India. Her work at the grassroots level has been with Dalit women farmers to promote agro-diversity, millet-based farming systems and seed sovereignty. A special focus has been on strengthening women in agriculture through collectivization; and she continues to work with several grassroots organizations to empower women in agriculture. As part of ASHA, she played a part in initiating Bharat Beej Swaraj Manch which is a network of farmer seed conservers and seed breeders.

She has served as a member of the Government of India's High Level Committee on the Status of Women in India and member of the Ramesh Chand Committee to examine methodological issues in fixing Minimum Support Price in Agriculture. She was also a member of the Government of India Task Force on Organic and Non-Chemical Farming. She was part of two working groups of the Dalwai Committee of Government of India that came up with a road map for "doubling farmers' incomes". She has just now consented to be part of the Core Group on Food Security of India's National Human Rights Commission.

Frédéric LANDY is the Director, French Institute of Pondicherry. He is professor of geography at the university of Paris-Nanterre (LAVUE). On the history of the Public Distribution System and the Indian food policy, he published *Feeding India. The spatial parameters of food grain policy*, Manohar-CSH, New Delhi, 2009. He is now working on the links between ethnicity, heritage making of landscapes, and payment of ecosystem services. At IFP, he is a member of the WaterPondi project that analyses the integration of two lakes in the regional water system of Pondicherry; he is also working with the ATCHA project that focuses on the causes and impacts of groundwater depletion in rural Karnataka and compares villagers' and scientists' perceptions.

Jean LAZAR has an experience of more than 4 years in the fields of Palynology, Field Botany and Honey bee studies. Involved in the research activities at the French Institute of Pondicherry



and Project Ecolake, Puducherry. Familiar with the field and laboratory protocols pertaining to Melissopalynology, paleoecology and Landcover studies. Special focus is on the foraging habits of native Indian honey bee, *Apis cerana*. Part of the research team that has worked in Eastern and Western Ghats and Cambodia.

John Bosco LOURDUSAMY is with the Department of Humanities and Social Science, Indian Institute of Technology Madras. He had obtained his doctorate from the University of Oxford for his thesis on “Science and National Consciousness: A Study of the Response to Modern Science in Colonial Bengal, 1870-1930”. While at Oxford, he had also been a Queen Elizabeth Visiting Scholar to the Department of History and Sociology of Science, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. He was a member of the Research Council, Indian National Commission for the History of Science an organ of the Indian National Science Academy [2014-16]. He is currently part of a multi-author book writing project on "Moving Crops" under the auspices of the Max Planck Institute for History of Science, Berlin.

Shamika MONE is a researcher turned organic farmer and entrepreneur. She does organic farming on 14 Acres (6.5 Ha) leased farm land where she grows traditional rice varieties and vegetables. Since 2017, she has also started a partnership firm called Naisargic Organic in Irinjalakkuda in Kerala to support organic farmers from Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Kerala. After finishing her post graduate degree in biodiversity, Shamika decided to take the less trodden way of exploring biodiversity in agriculture. To better understand agriculture she travelled to Vidharbha region (Wardha district) of Maharashtra, the farmer suicide-prone belt of India. She decided to drop her PhD and work for the farmers. Shamika joined the Worldwide Association for Preservation and Restoration of Ecological Diversity (WAPRED) in 2010 and completed a research study on comparing insect diversity on Organic and Conventional Farms in three years to eventually publish a scientific paper. Later she worked for Organic Farming Association of India (OFAI) and she is now the elected Treasurer and the Managing Committee member taking the lead in driving the movement of Organic Farming in India. Her book: “ A Source Book on India’s Organic Seeds” was officially released by Hon’ble Maneka Gandhi, Department of Women and Child Development in February 2015. This book serves to increase the accessibility and availability of these indigenous organic seeds for the organic farmers in villages as well as cities. She is elected as the South Asia representative of organic farmers in Intercontinental Network of Organic Farmers Organisations (INOFO), a self organised structure within International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM Organics International). In 2015, Shamika represented organic farmers from Asia in an African Organic Congress (AOC) in Nigeria. In 2016, she went to Italy to represent organic farmers from South Asia in the 6th Global Farmer’s Forum. In 2017 World Congress in New Delhi, Shamika was elected as the new Chairperson (President) of INOFO. In 2018, she travelled to Berlin to attend the Global Green Week and to do networking,



Philippines for Stop Golden Rice Network conference and dialogue, South Korea to attend the ALGOA Summit (Asian Local Governments for Organic Agriculture) and many others in 2019 to serve her responsibilities for INOFO.

Santha Sheela NAIR is retired as secretary in the Government of India. She worked for State Planning Commission, Govt. of Tamil Nadu - Vice Chairperson and she worked during the 1990s at the Ministry of Agriculture, government of India where she was actively involved in water issues. After retirement, she was vice chairman state planning commission Tamil Nadu and she launched Millet mission in 2012.

PRASAD is a pollen analyst at the IFP since more than 25 years, with experience in field methodologies, laboratory protocols and microscopic analyses pertaining to Quaternary Palynology. Specific expertise is on identifying and describing pollen recovered from the sediments of tropical India, Sri Lanka and Cambodia. An editorial board member of *Journal of Economic and Taxonomic Botany* and an invited reviewer in many peer-reviewed publications.

Nandini RAJESH studied ecology and has been smitten by Nature since then. She is an organic urban farmer and is engaged in making coconut shell crafts, enabling rural artisans to make a living. Always wanting to make a positive change, she has turned to Natural bee keeping as a means to contribute more to Nature. She hopes to create habitats that are bee-centric and also impress upon farmers to take to organic farming and natural bee-keeping to aid pollination. She can be contacted at reengaram@gmail.com

Rashmi Snigdha ROUT is Ph.D scholar fellow in Anthropology Dept of Pondicherry University/

Gnana SELVAKUMAR, started his career as a bus conductor. Over worked and stressed out with his work schedule, he turned to bee-keeping as a means to make a positive change to the society he lived in. Living and working around bees for the past 15 years he has enabled many to take on bee keeping as a successful occupation. He also conducts training for corporates as well as women self help groups. Selva, as he is fondly called, can be contacted at +91 8344472966

Nina SENGUPTA is an ecologist with a doctorate in wildlife science. She lives in Auroville, India and works around the globe as an independent consultant integrating biodiversity conservation and development options – including access to water and renewable energy. She has worked in South / South-east Asia, Africa, Finland and the USA. She is passionate about food forest, food gardening and making life science active and participatory for all. She has published a coloring book for adults, the first in India, on Edible Weeds.



Sudha SUNDARARAMAN is the National Vice President of All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA). She has been an activist with the women's movement for equality and emancipation for over four decades, both in Puducherry and at the national level. She occupied the position of General Secretary of AIDWA for 9 years. AIDWA is an organization committed to organizing women to fight for their rights, as women, as workers, and as citizens, with a presence in 24 states. It upholds the principles of secularism and democracy, and has been actively engaged with bringing women from the poorest, most backward sections of society to resist multiple discrimination and to access their entitlements. At the national level, AIDWA has contributed to the formulation of more effective laws to address gender violence, including the POCSO Act, the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill, and the PWDVAct. AIDWA has been in the forefront of the struggle for a better, stronger PDS over many years, both here and all over the country.

During the 80's, she has contributed significantly to strengthening the gender component of the Total Literacy Campaign, christened "Arivoli Iyakkam" in Puducherry, which enabled women to access education, and move towards a more equal status in society. Subsequently, the work of organizing women into Self Help Groups through the SAMAM self-reliance movement was undertaken, in which she has been a key advisor and participant.

Raji, V SUGUMAR, Associate Professor & Head, PG & Research Dept of Home Science, Bharathidasan Govt. College for Women, Puducherry, has a Master's in Home Science with specialization in Extension Education with focus on community health & nutrition. This laid the foundation to take a serious academic journey in other Social Sciences through a diploma in Anthropology and three Masters – Sociology, Psychology and Women Studies. Thereafter she pursued doctoral research in Pondicherry University in the inter-disciplinary enquiry into the socio-economic and anthropological aspects of Franco Pondicherrians. This distinguished her from the rest of the Home Science scholars as a social scientist with an original approach. Her scholarship is exhibited in scores of research and commentary articles presented in national and international seminars and in those published in journals and books.

VIJHAI, is the founder of Maiyam - Past Food, where he experiments time honored methods and techniques of cooking while being attentive to the fact that the times and resources are different. At Maiyam he observes the nature and characteristics of food and how our bodies respond to it - he studies the wholesome ingredients before preparing a meal. In this manner he discovers and expresses authentic flavors and cuisine which bring us the healthy sense of well-being. He was the Managing Director of an industry that produced crude palm oil, he observed the system behind the processed food industry and realized that supporting the alternate food system has more meaning towards a satisfactory lifestyle.

Augustin Brutus JAYKUMAR



Founder and Director (from 89 to 93) of Adecom Network in Tamil Nadu and then of INDP (Intercultural Network for Development and Peace) in Tamil Nadu with their counter parts structures in France. Specialised in training on holistic development mainly in the rural areas of Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu. Design holistic development projects associating citizens, elected bodies and researchers and funders. Design intercultural studies, researches and cultural projects linking active partners in the society both in India and abroad.