

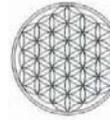
# புதுச்சேரியின் உணவுப்பழக்கம்

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

**A scientific and citizen annual event to enlighten  
Initiatives around food**

**Workshop and citizen food festival**

**February 3-10, 2021  
Third Edition**



## Objectives of this annual scientific and festive event

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 end of January (for Pongal), 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?

The concepts we discuss are those of local food system, food sovereignty, social and environmental justice and agroecology, including through a gender lens. 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 objectives are : i) to organize scientific debates on food including all the food chain from production to consumption and waste management according to a food system approach, ii) to organize discussion with the public policy stakeholders, iii) to collect, with the society, scientific and citizen data on the practices and food heritage of the different communities in Pondicherry and its region; iv) to promote awareness of the population on food issues (social and power relationship along the entire food chain: implementing an inclusive food system, in a reflection on local food democracy); v) education on food (and tastes); vi) to create a festive moment to share emotion around food.

This scientific and citizen week organisation is a testimony of the involvement of the local society to think of and show the diversity of the food heritage of the culinary communities of the Pondicherry Territory and the close Tamil Nadu region. In this sense, it is an opportunity to think about an educational project open to the city and to build it with a certain number of stakeholders from the city who wish to stage elements of daily food life: to show and tell what is important to them in the links between food/plant and animal, wild and domestic/ Tamil culture biodiversity.

# Partnership

## **A co-organized initiative of academic institutions and social movement**

### **- Scientific institutions**

#### In India

**French Institute of Pondicherry:** Venkatasubramanian and Guétat-Bernard (with the collaboration of the Social sciences department: Kannan and Prakash (literature and culture), associated researchers : Frédéric Landy, Brigitte Sébastia, Indhubala PhD student and theecology department Balachandran, Anupama, Prasad, Lazar PhD student ; Photographer : Rameshkumar)

Collaboration with :

**Humanities across borders** (Leiden University Netherlands : Aarthi Kalwar (associated researcher from **MIDS**, Madras), Surajit Sarkar and Dharitri Narzary Chakravartty (from **Ambedkar University**, Delhi (AUD), School of Liberal Studies)

**University of Pondicherry:** 4 departments (literature and French studies – Ritu Tyagi), social work (Nalini Ranganathan), women studies (Aruna Chinnappan), food studies (Prathap Shetti)

**IIT Madras:** John Bosco Lourdusamy and Mathangi Krishnamurthy from the department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr Kanagarathnam, postdoctoral student

#### In France

Institut européen d’histoire et des cultures de l’alimentation, **IEHCA**, Tours (Olivier Rollin)

**Réseau Agriville** : Camille Dumas

**Unesco Food chair:** Nicolas Bricas

### **- The citizen’s movement on Local food of Pondicherry,**

Jointly with **Fair Trade twin Towns** and **Social Entrepreneurship Association (Venkalp Sangam)**, **Save Farmers**, **Uzhuduunsundar** (vegetable seeds bank), INDP

**Restaurants** : Maiyam-past food restaurant Vijhay Ganesh M, Sylvain Paquery restaurant Villa Shanti, M. Amarnath K. restaurants Surguru

**PondiCan**, Pondicherry, Heritage festival organizer

**Gardeners** : Deepika Kundaji and Bernard from Peeble garden, Auroville, who are protecting one of the largest collections of vegetable seeds in India (cf. Reviving vegetable diversity, Sahaja Media, Bangalore, 2015).

- In collaboration with : **the Agriculture Department of Pondicherry and the Tourism Department of Pondicherry**
- **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)**

# *Program Details of the 8-Day workshop*

## **DAY 1**

### **Wednesday, February 3**

14.00-15.00pm: Welcome talks and launch of the week-event. Invitation of the official (Agriculture, Tourism, Health dept; Consulate, NABARD, Director of IFP)

15.30-16.30: Launch of the photos exhibition by Ramesh kumar and all the photographers team

## **DAY 2, Thursday, February 4**

**Farms visit and workshop in the farm, venue PS Palayam in coordination with POLLIN Project, MITI CNRS/IFP**

7.00 – 9.00 : training session on beehives caring with Selvakumar, beekeeper member of POLLIN project

9.00-9.30 : tea break

9.30-12.30 : farms visit and Nina Sengupta walk on edible plants

12.30-14.00 : lunch break

14.00-16.00 : workshop on pollination and biodiversity

16.00-16.30 : tea break

16.30-18.00: exchanges of experience on pollinators and agroecology

Jointly organized by IFP and *Namma Unavu* group of organic farmers (members of the food platform). Invitation of beekeepers from Panruti villages.

## **DAY 3, Friday, February 5**

**Farms visit and workshop in the farm, venue Oraiyir, Panruti taluk, Cudallore district**

In coordination with the Observatory of ruralities and inequalities – IFP/IRD

9.00-11.00 am: workshop on preservation of biodiversity and native seeds (rice and millets) in the context of climate change. Lesson from the field: farmers experiences exchanges (with *Puducherry Pradesa Nammazvar Iyarkai Uzavargal sangam* - Natural farmers unions- and from the Save farmers NGO), and main challenges of the support institution (the center for Indian Knowledge system, CIKS and Dhan Foundation).

11.00-11.30 : Tea break

11.30-13.30 : Debate with SHG women groups on the context of COVID 19 and the food constraints

#### **DAY 4, Saturday, February 6**

Morning

7.00 am to 10.00 am : Cycle tour and circle garden visits and sharing food (cooking activities)

#### **DAY 5, Sunday, February 7**

**Organic food fair and debates**

**Venue : Arboretum**

The exhibition of organic food 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.

All day

**Farmer's Market**(including producers of organic manure, seeds, natural insecticides, potters, etc.)**and events**

7.00 – 9.00 (venue at IFP): training session on beehives caring with Selvakumar, POLLIN project IFP, MITI CNRS

11.00-13.00 (venue Arboretum): *Kirai* festival: recipes sharing, invitation of Siddha doctors, showcase of different recipes part of Pondicherry cuisine

15.00-19.00 (venue Arboretum)- Local vegetable seeds conservation: Talk of Deepika Kundaji from Peeple garden.

#### **DAY 6, Monday, February 8 , venue IFP**

Coordination H  l  ne Gu  tat-Bernard (IFP) and Gijs Spoor (Social entrepreneurship association)

9.00-12.30 am

#### **Debate 1: Food as a Common**

The session questions food as a common through the notion of pollination, from a cultural and ecological point of view.

9.00-10.30

**Cultural pollinators and social narrative:**

How the narration about cooking recipes, pride in talking about childhood memories related to one's diet and one's relationship to plants, old vegetables, fruits, but also meat food allows one to transmit

emotions, to pollinate in order to support social life. People's stories have this strength to cross-fertilize and give support to innovate. These anthropological food narratives may engage a community response that supports a link between individual and collective stories.

**Ritu Tyagi** (univ. of Pondicherry) and **Hélène Guétat-Bernard** (IFP): “Food, identity and Agency: a comparative approach through literature of Post-Indenture Indian Women Diaspora and through social sciences of contemporary Pondicherry situation”

**Kannan,Prakash V** and **Boopathiraj** (IFP): “The narrative of Madurai, Tamil Nadu’s emerging Gastronomic Capital”. The phenomena of “Village food factory”

**John Bosco** from IIT Madras

**Aarthi Kawlra**, Humanities across borders

10.30-11.00 tea break

11.00-12.30

**Ecological pollinators** play a fundamental role to preserve life. In tropical areas, such as the Pondicherry region, the increase in irregular rainfall and extreme events (cyclones) has a strong impact on agricultural models and food security. Changes in land use (urbanization and reduction of natural spaces) and pollution by agricultural inputs also contribute to the erosion of biodiversity, especially that of pollinators. However, their services increase agricultural productivity, ensure a diversified human diet and maintain biodiversity. Understanding the links between climate change, the environment and food production is fundamental. The session will present the POLLIN project funded by the CNRS-MITI and its main ambitions.

Presentation and discussion of the IFP-CNRS Pollin MITI project

**Anupama** and **Prasad** (IFP): challenge of the Pollin project in the context of climate change

**Valluvan** and **Hélène Guétat-Bernard**, the state of art of social sciences approach of bees keeping in India and pollinisation

With the participation of the farmers and the gardeners of the POLLIN project

## Debate 2: Food, health and nature

Eating means building links with the ecology of the place where we live, its diversity and the need to adapt to change. Edible wild plants play a significant role in the diet and health of urban communities also, in India and Pondicherry in particular. The debate focuses on the leafy vegetables found at the gates of the city, in its interstices and in the gardens. A survey on *kirai* conducted by IFP helps to recall their importance in home kitchens.

Gardens play a major role in **urban agriculture** at the initiative of citizen groups who propose to share their experience and network (in Pondicherry, Orissa, Pune, Chandigarh).

**14.00-16.00 :**

**S. Haripriya**, Food studies dept, Univ of Pondicherry

**Dr Sri Dharan**, Siddha doctor and nodal officer of AYUSH Pondicherry

**Sristi residential farm**, Pondicherry: this experience shows: how the relationship with plants and farm animals can help people with disabilities regain their self-esteem. Planting and feeding oneself from one's own production is a therapy.

**16.30-18.30**(webinar organized with the collaboration of Vikalp Sangam)

**V. Sujatha**, sociologist, JNU

**Balachandran**(botanist IFP), **Guétat-Bernard** (sociologist, IFP), **Brigitte Sebastia** :“The leafy vegetables, (tamil, *kirai*): a living heritage of wild edible plants in Tamil culture”Vii

**Camille Dumat**, Certop, CNRS, leader of Agriville network:“The challenge of soil pollution and the spread of urban agriculture”

**Tristan Fournier**, Sociologue, CNRS, Iris - Institut de Recherche Interdisciplinaire sur les enjeux Sociaux, EHESS, Paris : “Between health, ecology and politics: The promises of wild plants gathering in France”

### **DAY 7, Tuesday, February 9, venue IFP**

Coordination H  l  ne Gu  tat-Bernard (IFP) and Gijs Spoor (Social entrepreneurship association)

### **Debate 3: Food justice and democracy (first part)**

**9.00-12.00:**

Democracy refers to a democratic process with the participation of the citizens, all the citizens concerned by a project. It is a long, difficult demanding process. Citizens enriched with such experiences can then easily stand up for justice especially when it has to do with the right for food. The future requires young, strong, active and constructive citizens.

**Sudha Sundaraman**, AIDWA (All Democratic Women's Association)

**Kannan, N. Karunanithi** and **Karthikeyan** (Government Primary School teachers, Pondicherry): “the School Midday Meals Scheme and political discussion on the future directions of Nutritional sufficiency”

**Augustin Brutus**, INDP, “Training, grounded research and food production: a concrete approach of food democracy to promote an holistic way of development through experiments”

Moderator : Augustin Brutus from INDP

### **Debate 4: Rural (women) entrepreneur**

**14.00-16.00**

Food is often the backbone of alternative economy initiatives, such as popular canteens, currency based on the exchange of food, etc.

Local food can also support economic dynamics based on the links between heritage, social identity and the history of ecosystems. The Kalivery watershed, Ponducherry, is based on the awareness of valuing this history of the links between plants, food and ecology in order to build an economic project founded on a diversity of measuring wealth.

### **Debate 3: Food justice and democracy (second part)**

**14.30-16.30** (webinar organized with the collaboration of Vikalp Sangam)

The idea is to share experiences in France on territorial food plans and in India on experiences of food sovereignty. The health crisis at Covid 19 has accentuated inequalities in access to food. It also provides an opportunity for consumers/eaters to better know the stakeholders in the food chain and for producers to find more direct links with them. Covid relief has also shown that ancient experiences based on local initiatives to preserve food sovereignty allow to face serious crises.

The lunch food is coming from Krishnaas Organic Farm, an ecofriendly store.  
[krishnaasorganic@gmail.com](mailto:krishnaasorganic@gmail.com)

**Support of PhD Students :** Ammel Sharon, Indhubala (JNU), Lazar (IFP), Kanagarathnam (IIT Madras)

## **Biography (To to be updated) of the key speakers and participants**

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**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.

**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, alongwith 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 hold 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 context (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.

**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.

**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 Melisopalynology, 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.

**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](mailto:reengaram@gmail.com)

**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 PWDV Act. 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.

**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.