



At puvudham the activities are dictated by the seasons. When the rains finally came on 28<sup>th</sup> September and all our water bodies were full by 10<sup>th</sup> of October! The children enjoyed swimming in murky water and the teachers prepared neem decoction and adathoda decoction to be taken as a preventive for fever and common cold.

On 12<sup>th</sup> October a group of 40 youngsters from Chennai and Pondicherry came to puvudham. They call themselves **weekend farmers** and they came at a very good time. We had dug pits for planting 700 trees and were planning to do planting of fruit trees in our new land which we procured for the construction of the hostel.

We also wanted to initiate our permaculture plot. So all in all they helped us to plant 1000 trees within 5 hours. After a simple lunch of khambu khichidi (bajra mixed with sprouts and some vegetables) we all sat down to share our concerns. That was really a good experience for us to plant in a large amount with in a day. Thanks to the week end farmers group. They left for **Co-forest** which is an initiative by Piyush Manush around 11kms from Puvudham at 5.00 pm.

Around 40 children and 5 teachers did a three day visit of puvudham from the TIMBAKTU COLLECTIVE. It was a busy two days sharing cultural activities, songs and dances. The teachers of Puvudham and Timbaktu shared their teaching methodologies and histories. It was a very difficult time for the



children to learn to use the composting toilets and minimise the use of water as that was the time when we had just received the rain and the water had not yet percolated into the wells! We took them to the forest at Hogenekkal for a silent walk which turned out to be not so silent. The 5<sup>th</sup> and

6<sup>th</sup> class of Puvudham went with them and we all enjoyed the picnic of ragi idlies and tamarind rice.



The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> children went to Mr. Babu's farm at Krishnagiri for three days. They trekked on the fort of Tipusultan and walked up the nearby hill to see water transporting by suction. The food and accommodation expenses were sponsored by Mr. Babu and we are very grateful to him for the same. They also did a lot of drawings of nature and wrote short poems on their own.



All the classes made their vegetable beds and sowed different vegetables. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class did observation of number of leaves on sprouting, took data on rate of growth and did drawing of the different plants and insects. They decided on the planting pattern and even brought seeds from home to plant.



Harisha and Sutapa who work at ATREE came to visit the Puvudham forest and we are working on a proposal for a food forest with ATREE. Harisha helped identify many indigenous edible plants and we are propagating them by completely stopping grazing of animals on the 6 acre we have decided to allow to become a BIO REGION RESOURCE for planting material and seeds. We also discussed our plans for the Permaculture plot with them and realised that we could focus on papayas, custard apples and a supply of greens throughout the year. We have set up a drip irrigation system for this plot and hope to sustain it perennially.



The 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> class went on their cultural exchange to IMILI MAHUA School in Chhattisgarh for 10 days. This was a wonderful experience of a tribal village and their way of life without electricity. So



wonderful that they came back and wrote a script for a drama on the ill effects of total dependence on electricity which they plan to perform for our annual day function on 18<sup>th</sup> Jan. Before they went they spent time learning Hindi basics and the alphabet. Prayagji, who started the school in BALINGAPARA village took the children to the forest to see the trees and help them prepare a herbarium of the vegetation around. They went on long cycle rides and swam in the village pond. Some who had not learnt swimming learnt it there. It is going to be an experience etched in their minds for their life time.



From there they went to Living Vikasa Vidya Vanam at Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh. Parimiji and Nandu who live on the farm shared ideas and held discussions and taught them book binding. They also took them to see the fort Kondaraju konda. All in all they had a wonderful 25 days and returned full of new ideas.



At home we have just procured a new piece of land next to the Puvudham land owing to the problem with the hostel registration. Now we are busy trying to construct the hostel in the limited funds that we have. Local stone, adobe and lime concrete are the new options we would like to try out in the new construction. We will have a very small carbon foot print indeed! Almost all



the material is local and all the children and teachers are pitching in to make this building happen. While we are doing the work we also experiment with various stabilisers and then test the bricks for compressive and tensile stress. The math involved is very challenging for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, while the lower classes learn about the kind of soil needed to make bricks! The boy's room in the hostel will double up as an auditorium, as



visible in the picture! We have just finished the belt concrete and will soon be putting the termite resistant course with lime mortar! Our paddy fields and our Permaculture garden are also green and have begun giving vegetables!



We thank all our donors and friends for their continued support!

Do look us up at [www.puvudham.in](http://www.puvudham.in) or come to Puvudham. If you would like to foster one or more children or contribute to any of the activities, do contact us at [puvudham@gmail.com](mailto:puvudham@gmail.com)

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