

Rejuvenation of Traditional Water Bodies Makes Puducherry District Water-Rich

The success of Neerum Oorum campaign by Dr. Arun T., District Collector, Puducherry District, has transformed the region not only into a water-rich area but also where the local people benefit from the serenity the presence of water provides. This all was achieved through rejuvenation traditional water bodies in the district, executed by convergence of various stakeholders and strong community mobilization.

As a first step, a survey of all water bodies in the district was conducted after which a unique number was given to each. The water body was then geo-tagged and a display board was installed at the location to avoid any confusion. Various stakeholders like the municipality, panchayat, schools, banks, NGOs, NABARD and corporates converged to contribute in their own ways to rejuvenate the traditional water bodies in the district. 'Donate for a Pond' campaign was also run parallelly. Resultantly, 197 ponds were de-silted and 203 km canal was constructed under MGNREGA. Several lost ponds were also recovered in this process, which were de-encroached. For effective monitoring, a mobile application with details of these ponds was created and an inventory of all water bodies is now maintained.

In addition to this, all government departments and cinema halls were asked to install rainwater harvesting structures. An intensive afforestation drive was also conducted in which about 52000 saplings have already been planted so far and plantation of about a lakh more is underway.

The activities had major impact on the water situation of the district and it became water-rich. According to a report by Central Groundwater Authority, the district has sustainably seen a rise of 15-feet in groundwater levels. Most importantly, some of the rejuvenated structures have become good spots for people to develop a relationship with the water bodies and families through them regularly to spend peaceful moments with their loved ones.



