Coming together to celebrate the rich and diverse heritage of Pondicherry

7th January – 11th February

Organised by
- People for Pondicherry’s Heritage
- INTACH Pondicherry Chapter
- PondyCAN!

Supported by
- Government of Puducherry
- Department of Tourism Pondicherry
- INTACH
Pondicherry heritage festival 2020

Concept of Pondicherry Heritage Festival:

Popular destinations across the world such as New York, Berlin, Paris and Sydney continue to attract a wide audience from all spheres of life and are melting pots for cultural exchanges. Pondicherry also has this quality of bringing together a diverse population of tourists and travellers looking for something to coax them into a new, exciting, passionate and yet peaceful lifestyle and environment. There is an unseen force behind how Pondicherry invites people of all cultures and yet retains its own, which expands beyond the exotic charm of its beautiful architectural heritage and sandy beaches.

Magical yet ordinary to the casual eye, the city harbours a deeper meaning and connection to the intangible realms of beauty, wisdom, tranquillity and harmony. This has led Pondicherry to become a universal platform for positive inner change and has inspired an inclusive, collective and inspiring evolution towards a future, long foreseen by the sages of yore. The marriage of spirituality and material research is a trademark of Pondicherry’s excellence and uniqueness. On November 29th, 2014, the collapse of the Mairie building (Town hall) of Pondicherry, which was built in 1870 to accommodate the offices for the mayor of Pondicherry, led to the realization that the need to conserve and celebrate the heritage of Pondicherry is immense.

A group thus emerged from the civil society called “People for Pondicherry’s heritage” (PPH) and conceived the idea of the Pondicherry heritage festival, first of which was held in 2015 and became an annual event. The Pondicherry heritage festival is being organised by People for Pondicherry’s heritage (PPH), INTACH-Pondicherry and PondyCAN.

The main objectives of Pondicherry’s heritage festival are:

A) to create and strengthen this distinct identity of belonging and being Pondicherrian for all its residents,

B) to show its unique character in all its diversity to visitors who come from all over the country and the world attracted by the idea of “Pondicherry”,

C) to create a platform for experts, historians and old residents to meet and discuss what is special about Pondicherry and how we can preserve the same.

The charm and beauty of Pondicherry presents a unique challenge to the government and civil society interested in protecting and restoring its built heritage. Unlike the monuments and national parks under the purview of the Archaeological Survey of India, the architectural heritage of Pondicherry is a melange of private and government buildings. Pondicherry has two distinct parts namely, the French and Tamil quarters. The structures in the French quarter are a fusion of European classical style and local vernacular architecture and those in Tamil quarter are built in the vernacular style of Tamil Nadu. Both have influenced one another resulting in a harmonious blend of both the styles in many buildings.
Pondicherry’s unique architectural style is an inheritance of which we are but today’s custodians. It is our responsibility to preserve the essence of this built heritage for the future generations. It is with this vision that Pondicherry heritage festival sought to explore the various facets of the town’s culture, spiritual heritage, contributions to the world of art, literature, folk and classical music and dance, traditional and contemporary crafts and the work done by many organizations, institutions and individuals towards understanding and preserving the heritage of the town.

**Evolution of Pondicherry Heritage Festival:**

Now in its Sixth year, the Pondicherry Heritage Festival continues to celebrate the singular character of this extraordinary town and its environs. In the first year, 2015, attention was drawn to Pondicherry’s outstanding architectural legacy, its spiritual heritage and intangible heritage. The following year, 2016, the festival celebrated Pondicherry’s natural heritage, explored its heritage through the written word, visual arts and performing arts. In 2017, besides celebrating architectural, intangible and natural heritage, the festival focused on one of Pondicherry’s most ancient heritage, at Bahour. In 2018, the festival focused on the streetscapes of Pondicherry and expanded to explore another ancient heritage of Pondicherry, at Madagadipet, Thirubhuvanai and Thiruvandar Kovil. In 2019, the emphasis of the festival was about Pondicherry’s splendid natural heritage, and specifically its wetlands and water bodies. This year it is all about Water Conservation, Preserving our Natural Heritage: wetlands and water bodies. The festival expanded in this year with several local organisations and individuals actively involved & organising events, under the Pondicherry Heritage Festival banner. This overwhelming response made the heritage festival again a three weeks event from 7th January to 11th February 2020.

“Coming together to celebrate Pondicherry’s rich & diverse heritage”

The success of the Pondicherry Heritage Festival is due to the active participation of our Festival partners and new participants.
Now in its sixth year, the Pondicherry Heritage Festival continues to celebrate the character of this extraordinary town and its environs. Originally conceived to draw attention to conserve Pondicherry’s outstanding architectural legacy, the festival has expanded its scope to embrace other aspects of heritage. It is the interplay of its diverse built environment, an idyllic seaside natural setting, a rich spiritual and intellectual history, and fascinating combination of indigenous and imported cultural practices that gives Pondicherry its distinctive flavour.

The emphasis for this year’s festival will be on Pondicherry’s splendid natural heritage, and specifically its wetlands and water bodies. The natural heritage is as much at risk as built heritage, and often gets overlooked. This year the festival will draw attention to the acute need to preserve and safeguard Pondicherry’s precious fresh water resources, as well as the wetlands that are not only unique and beautiful ecosystems, but provide the key environmental buffer against drought and flood.

Children’s events commenced this year in advance of the main body of the festival, with creative expression of heritage through dance, poetry-writing, and other arts. The annual Pondicherry Heritage Quiz for teams of students from schools throughout the city remains a festival highlight.

The main festival kicks-off with a very special theatrical event: “Bharathi Yaar?” portraying key events in the life of Mahakavi Subramania Bharati using theatre, recitation, dance (folk & classical) and videography. The event showcases the richness of the literature, poems and songs of Bharati and the events which inspired them.

As Pondicherry moves closer to obtaining status as a UNESCO world heritage city, the festival is delighted to host two important conversations. In the first, we will learn about Ahmadabad’s UNESCO application from Professors Saswat Bandyopadhyay and Rabindra Vasavada; in the second, we will hear about the conservation experience in Chennai from Dr. Arun Menon of IIT - Madras and a representative of Chennai’s PWD.

As always, the schedule will be brimming with music, dance, and the launch of a book on Pondicherry. Heritage buildings will be open for public tours, special events will feature Pondy’s cuisine, cooking classes, a ‘food trail’ and the “Made in Pondy” exhibition in the town's Crafts Bazaar will feature some of the finest products and beautiful handicrafts this region produces. World Wetlands day will be celebrated on 1st and 2nd Feb with a photography exhibition, a special session in Ousteri and 2 cycle tours of water bodies. The festival will also include the dedication of the garden of Joan of Arc, newly restored by Friends of Pondicherry Heritage, as a place for peaceful meditation and celebration.

Since its start in 2015, the Pondicherry Heritage Festival has always been a volunteer effort, led by the People for Pondicherry’s Heritage, INTACH and PondyCAN, with very valuable support from the Puducherry government’s Tourism Department, the French Institute and the Alliance Francaise of Pondicherry as festival partners organising events or hosting them along with supportive local businesses.
The organizers hope the Heritage Festival continues to strengthen the respect of Pondicherrians for the traditions and treasures of this special seaside settlement, created by the confluence of cultures in a spectacularly beautiful setting. They believe that, by celebrating the heritage, it will become an important aspect and Pondicherry will retain its unique character.

More information about the Pondicherry Heritage Festival and a schedule of events can be found at pondicherryheritagefestival.org and https://www.facebook.com/PondicherryHeritageFestival/ and pondylive.com the festival’s online media partner. A full list of partners is available on the PHF website.
Events of this year:

1. **Academic competition:**
   a. Heritage Quiz.
   b. Art activities for school children.
   c. Water expo.

2. **Book launch:**
   a. Nil Kusum by Rajen Parekh.

3. **Workshop:**
   a. Warli Art.
   b. Madhubani Art workshop.
   c. UNESCO workshop, Heritage conservation Seminar.
   d. Water kolam workshop.

4. **Cooking classes:**
   a. Discovery of the Richness of Seafood recipes from Pondicherry.
   b. Creole Cooking.
   c. Indo-Vietnamese recipes.

5. **Drama:**
   a. ”Bharathi Yaar?” A Bio-play in Tamil.
   b. Historical Drama in Kanaganeri.

6. **Music:**
   a. Run by Adishakti.
   b. Siddharth and group.
   c. Hindustani Classical-Sarod Recital.

7. **Discussion:**
   b. Geography of the night.
   c. Waterscapes evening walk.

8. **Dance:**
   a. Odissi by Rekha Tandon.
   b. College students dance.
   c. Indian Music and French dance by Students.

9. **Inauguration:**
   a. “Made in Pondy”.

10. **Photo Exhibition:** Wetlands photo exhibition.
11. **Cycle tour:** Around Pondy’s water bodies.
12. **Food Trail:** Celebrating Local cuisine of Pondicherry.
13. **Street Play:** Reclaiming the streets for children.
14. **Reception:** To give the Guardian of our Heritage 2020 Award.
15. **Fashion show.**
Academic competition:

Pondicherry Heritage Quiz:

On 7th of January, a Heritage quiz was organised by Dr. Kannan and Pondicherry Heritage Festival organisers. Heritage quiz was held at Alliance Francaise campus, Pondicherry, with the support of Education Department, Pondicherry. It had requested all the schools of Pondicherry to take part which included both Government and Private Schools.

The topic for Quiz competitions was about Heritage of Pondicherry.

- Junior level entry was VI grade to VIII Grade
- Senior Level entry was IX grade to XII Grade

Quiz was conducted in both Tamil and English for both the levels.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Competition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Juniors English</td>
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<td>Seniors Tamil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seniors English</td>
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Students registering for Quiz competition
Inauguration

Quiz Competition - Prelims
Quiz Competition-Finals

Interactive Session with Students
Prize Distribution

Group Photo of Chief Guests and Winners
Art Activities for school children - Creative Expression – (Day – 1):

On 9th January we hosted various programs for School children to ignite the young minds about their Heritage and make them participate and celebrate the Heritage of their own town. The program also made them understand the importance of heritage and the need to preserve them. Painting, sketching, collage, letter and poem writing, power point, photography, solo and group dance competitions were conducted under the theme cultural heritage of Pondicherry. The program was hosted by Dr. Kannan and his team with the support of INTACH-Pondicherry and Department of tourism, Pondicherry. The Government of Puducherry School of Education department had accorded permission to conduct the programs and a circular to this effect was sent to nearly 500 schools by India Post and email. Invitations were sent to all Government, Govt. aided schools and Private schools of Pondicherry Urban and Rural areas and to Cuddalore and Tindivanam. The entire program was made into 2 days.

The topic for all competitions was heritage (Cultural / Spiritual / Natural) and History of Pondicherry.

- Junior level entry was VI grade to VIII Grade
- Senior Level entry was IX grade to XII Grade

First day events are below as followed

1. Painting
2. Sketching
3. Collage
4. Essay writing
5. Photography
6. Creative writing
7. Solo singing
8. Group Singing
9. Instrumental

It was a huge logistical nightmare but thanks to volunteers from INTACH-Pondicherry – their office staff, architects, Interns and college students from Idhaya college of Arts and Science. The program commenced at 9:00am and ended by 5:00pm.

<table>
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<td>Sketching</td>
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<td>Photography</td>
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<td>Essay writing</td>
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<td>Solo singing</td>
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<td>Group singing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Dance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rangoli</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puppet show</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short film</td>
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Venue of the Program: Art and Crafts village, Muruganpakkam

Painting competition
Collage Competition

Essay Writing Competition
Art Activities for school children - Creative Expression – (Day – 2):

The next day in Art and Craft Village, Murugapakkam, 10th January the festival continued. The following are the events conducted:

1. Rangoli
2. Puppet show
3. Dance
4. Short film

Student in Rangoli competition

Students completing Rangoli
Group dance

Puppet show
Group dance

Prize Distribution
**Water Expo:**

Pondicherry Heritage Festival has organised a competition for school students in which they came up with ideas on water management, on 30th January at INTACH Office. Students came up with innovative ideas; they gave ideas to clean the ponds and lake which is polluted by us, and also to clean the grey water in simple methods. These ideas can be strengthened by officials to make their small model get into reality.
Book Launch

Book Launch by Rajen Parekh:

“Nil Kusum”, this book was launched on 10th January, at INTACH office, Pondicherry. In Gujarati Nil means “blue” and Kusum means “flower”; literally means “blue flower” but here it was names of his sisters, This book tells the story of a town, a home and a family, it also includes a foreword by Shri Shrutpragya Swami and an Appendix including a note on the making of the book and acknowledgements.

Nil Kusum

Discussion during book launch
Book launch by P Raja:

P.Raja’s 4th edition of Concise History of Pondicherry time was launched on 6th February at Palais de Mahe.

P Raja discussing with the audience

Audience listening to the speech
Workshops:

Warli Art:

On 25th January, Warli Art workshop was conducted in SITA Cultural Centre, by Sri devi. This rudimentary wall paintings use a set of basic geometric shapes: a circle, a triangle, and a square. These shapes are symbolic of different elements of nature. One of the central aspects depicted in many Warli paintings is the tarpa-dance. the tarpa is a trumpet like instrument, is played in turns by different village men. Then all men and women entwine their hands and move in a circle around the tarpa player, one such painting is painted by the participant of this Warli art workshop.
Madhubani art:

Madhubani art workshop was conducted by Sri devi, teacher in SITA Cultural Centre, on 1st February. This painting was traditionally created by the women of various communities in the Mithila region of the Indian subcontinent. This painting as a form of wall art was practiced widely throughout the region; the more recent development of painting on paper and canvas mainly originated among the villages around Madhubani, and it is these latter developments that led to the term “Madhubani art”. These paintings were traditionally done on freshly plastered mud walls and floors of huts, but now they are also done on cloth, handmade paper and canvas.
UNESCO Workshop:

UNESCO workshop with Dr. Saswat Bandyopadhyay, Professor CEPT University & Dr. Vasavada, retired Prof CEPT and Eric Falt the Director and UNESCO representative, New Delhi on Chief Secretariat on 8th February in Chief Secretariat. A heritage conservation Seminar was given by Chennai PWD, Heritage Wing and Dr Arun menon, IIT Madras.
Presentation by Ar. Arul

In the workshop
Water kolam:

Water kolam workshop was conducted by Anita, teacher in SITA Cultural centre on 8th February. 10 students participated in this workshop. Kolam is a form of drawing that is drawn by using rice flour, chalk, chalk powder or rock powder, often using naturally or synthetically coloured powders. It is a geometrical line drawing composed of curved loops, drawn around a grid pattern of dots. Kolam are thought to bring prosperity to homes. People participated in this program with full enthusiasm.

![Participants following the instructions](image1)

![Kolam done by one of the participant](image2)
Cooking Class:

Sea food recipe:

On 25th January, Cooking class was organised by Pondicherry Heritage Festival, at SITA Cultural Centre, on the topic “Discovery of the Richness of Seafood recipes” from Pondicherry. This event was conducted by Shafeya. The ultimate aim of this workshop is to bring out our traditional Pondicherry cooking style.
Creole Cooking:

On 1st February, cooking class was conducted on the topic “Discovery of Richness of Seafood recipes from Pondicherry” Creole cooking. This event was conducted by Manisha, teacher in SITA Cultural centre. Creole is a style of cooking originating in Louisiana, United states, which blends West African, Spanish, Amerindian, influences, this cooking methods includes Barbecuing, Baking, grilling, Braising and etc. Participants of this class did dishes with crab.
Indo Vietnamese Cooking:

On 1st February, cooking class was conducted on the topic “Discovery of the Richness of Seafood recipes from Pondicherry” in Indo-Vietnamese style. This class was conducted by Manisha, facilitator at SITA Cultural Centre.

Participants cooking

Prepared dish
Bharathi yaar?:

Bharathi yaar?, a super hit Tamil theatrical extravaganza combining drama, song, dance & film happened on 25th January 2020 at Gandhi thidal, Beach road, Puducherry. This bought us our beloved hero Subramania Bharathiyar. This play was directed by SBS Raman. This was a 3-hour play which depicted Bharathiyar’s life history and also had songs which was sung by Bharathiyar.
Locals gathered for the play

Crew with back stage volunteers
Historical Drama:

On 9th February, students made a drama on history of Pondicherry, at kanaganeri.
Music

RUN by Adisakthi:

On 27th of January, a musical concert by Adisakthi was set in the courtyard of the Kariappa house, with the backdrop of the beautiful tree, this program took the audience on a journey in time through the Spiritual poetic Heritage of India from the 7th century till our times.
Siddharth and group:

On 31st January musical band of Siddharth was organised by Pondicherry Heritage Festival in Band stand, behind the Craft bazaar.
Sarod recital:

On 5\textsuperscript{th} February, a Hindustani classical – Sarod recital was performed by Giridhar Murthy. This event happened in gratitude heritage. The Sarod is a stringed instrument, used mainly in Hindustani music on Indian sub continent. Along with sitar, it is among the most popular and prominent instruments. It is known for a deep, weighty, introspective sound, in contrast with the sweet, overtone-rich texture of sitar, with sympathetic strings that give it a resonant, reverberant quality. It is a fretless instrument able to produce the continuous slid between notes known as meend, which is important in Indian music.

Giridhar Murthy performing
Discussion:

Water conservation:

On 28th of January 2020, there was an Awareness speech by Dr. M. Anbarashan, Post doctoral fellow, IFP, Pondicherry, about “Conservation and development of Coromandel coastal wetlands of Pondicherry” and we had speech by Mr. Natesan Subramanian a professional social worker, Pondicherry. Students of Idhaya College also gave an extempore speech on water and water bodies. This Awareness program made other students to think on water conservation.
Geography of the night:

On 29th January, we had discussion with a French expert Luc Gwaizdzinski about illustration of city at night. He raised questions to the audience, why night was so neglected?, why public authorities forgot to plan the city for the night?, why nocturnal hours are too often considered in negative terms?. He also stated that like human body, cities are bound by the rhythm of the transition between day and night. In etymological terms too, the night was cast in negative shade, in European language the term is constructed negatively. Since it means ‘not-8’ (n-ight, n-otte, n-uit....), the eight meaning the 8 hours human beings spend sleeping.

Luc Gwaizdzinski said “fortunately certain awareness is emerging, cities are beginning to be designed for the night and “night mayors” are even sometimes elected to better manage these night spaces.
Waterscapes Evening walk:

Pondicherry Heritage festival conducted evening walks on 1st February to know the history of canals in white town. It had a very long history dating back to Dutch rule where, these canals were perfectly planned, Then French developed the city according to the Dutch design, and they just extended the roads and followed the grid patterns. Those 2 canals meet perpendicular to each other like a “T”. The walk continues explaining the city development along the Ayi mandapam in Bharathi Park. This walk ended in other side of the beach road with gaining knowledge of the city planning of Pondicherry.
Dance:

Odissi dance:

An odissi dance recital based on the nine aesthetic flavours or emotions of Indian art was performed by Rekha Tandon. A rasa when translated literally means “juice, essence, or taste”. According to the natya shastra, entertainment is a desired effect of performance arts but not the primary goal. The primary goal is to transport the individual in the audience into another parallel reality, full of wonder and bliss, where one experiences the essence of his own consciousness, and reflects on spiritual and moral questions.
College students Dance:

Dance competition for College students was held at Alliance Francaise auditorium on 30th January, every student participated in this dance competition with full enthusiasm.

Students performing dance

Participants with certificate
Indian music and French dance:

Pondicherry Heritage festival conducted a program in Alliance Francaise, on 4th February. Carnatic music students presented folk songs on nature in several languages. Group of children performed ballet dance and hip hop. It was a visual treat.
Inauguration:

Inauguration of Made in Pondy:

The region of Pondicherry has a long history of creativity and entrepreneurship, with international trade dating back to the beginning of the Common Era. The Pondicherry area also has a rich heritage of local manufacturing. The *Periplus of the Erthraen Sea*, a Roman merchant guide written in the 1st century AD, references a marketplace right outside of modern-day Pondicherry. In 1937 Roman pottery was found there and later excavations confirmed that the local inhabitants traded with Rome throughout the 1st century.

The Chola rulers prided themselves in their cotton, and silk manufacturing and textile guilds in south India exported high quality clothing materials that Roman women particularly enjoyed. Along with textiles, the Pondicherry area exported spices, jewels, and metal works. By the end of the 9th century, the Chola dynasty had established itself as a trading powerhouse, sending Tamil merchants up the east coast of India and into Southeast Asia and China. The international trade continued until the 13th century. In 1674 the French East India Company set up its first trading centre in Pondicherry. Over the subsequent period of colonisation, Pondicherry sent goods to several European countries. The region’s strong history of manufacturing allowed Pondicherry to continue to impress foreign countries with the quality of their diverse products.

The heritage of creativity and entrepreneurship continues to this day. Each year at the Pondicherry heritage festival, made in Pondy brings a collection of the finest products in the region, made and design by our brightest local talent. The products were at sale in the Crafts bazaar, Gandhi thidal from 31st January to 4th February.
Made in Pondy team

Students work displayed
Inauguration:

Inauguration and blessing by the Archbishop for Renovation of St. Joan of Arc garden.

locals gathered for the Inauguration

St. Joan of Arc statue
Photo exhibition:

Pondicherry Heritage Festival organised a Photo exhibition on 1st February, at French Institute of Pondicherry. Photos were exhibited on the Eastern sea facing wall. This was open to public till the end of the month. Prizes were given for the best photography.
Cycle tour:

Cycle tour of Pondy’s water bodies was organised by Pondicherry Heritage festival, on 2nd February at 6:00am. This tour was organised in 3 phases.

- The first one which is a 5km cycle ride in and around boulevard town which is the shortest ride
- The medium ride is 15km which covers water bodies till velrampet.
- Then a 50km ride which is till bahour.

The starting point for all these 3 paths was the Bharati Park. Many youngsters participated in this cycle tour, made awareness to the people about water conservation. The ultimate aim of this cycle tour was to look back the lakes and ponds in Pondicherry, and take preventive measures to regain its glory.
Food Trail:

An exclusive food walk was conducted from Feb 7- Feb 8. The food walk explored the local cuisine of Pondicherry ranging from local road side shops to restaurants to coffee shops to ice cream bars. The tour was designed and guided by ? of Eat Pondy. While the tour was free, participants paid for their food. Both the days, the trail was a hit and people kept asking for more such walks.

Participants dining at one of the restaurants in culinary trail

Participants after dinner
Dining at another restaurant

Heritage Cuisine map
Street play:

To experience our historic street the way it was meant to be as we transform one of the streets in the heart of the town to be free of motorised traffic and clean for children to play. Historically, the streets in the boulevard town were the place for social activity—where people gathered, built relationships, talked about their world while children played in the streets without any safety concerns. They played kabadi, coco, 7stones, hide n seek, statue game hip hop and more of a traditional game.

Unfortunately we have lost our streets to vehicles. Children nowadays need the chance to be outside, active, make friends and to be a part of their community just as much as we did a generation ago. On February 9th, Pondicherry Heritage festival brought this back to promote greatest sense of community, overall happiness and reclaiming more friendly and safer streets for children.

Like other open streets around the world, street play Pondicherry is a free event that invited everyone to enjoy in the street without the presence of motors. Walk, run, skate, roll along the temporarily closed street, with fun events programming up and down the street. This event was organised by Ar. Ananthi G Velmurugan, Conservation Architect and supported by INTACH and people for Pondicherry Heritage.

Posters with tree names in Tamil and English were tied to each tree. Seating arrangements were made with recycled materials. Children were also given traditional refreshments such as peanut ladoo, sesame ladoo, buttermilk, watermelon, cucumber, and ‘panagam’ a jaggery based sweet drink. Shade made out of sarees gave a colourful view of the street.
Children playing

Volunteers and organisers
Indoor games  
Swing  
children playing hip hop  
seating made with tyres
Bullock cart decorated in the street

shade using sarees were designed

Gifts for the participating children
Reception:

On 11th February, the closing ceremony of Pondicherry Heritage festival happened. The idea of PHF was triggered by the fall of the 144 yr old Mairie building, a French era seat of municipal administration in 2014, and an urgency to evolve a collective campaign to preserve the city’s heritage from ruin. The French consul general Catherine suard gave the welcome speech and all the organisers were thanked, as well as volunteers were gifted for their enormous effort put in for this festival.

Organisers of PHF

JanineDeloche receives award
Casablanca Fashion show was conducted in 15th February around 5pm in Mission street. Many people participated in this show, even children made beautiful walk through the red carpet.
The organizers of the Pondicherry Heritage Festival 2020 would like to acknowledge, with gratitude all those who were involved in making the festival an Immense success.