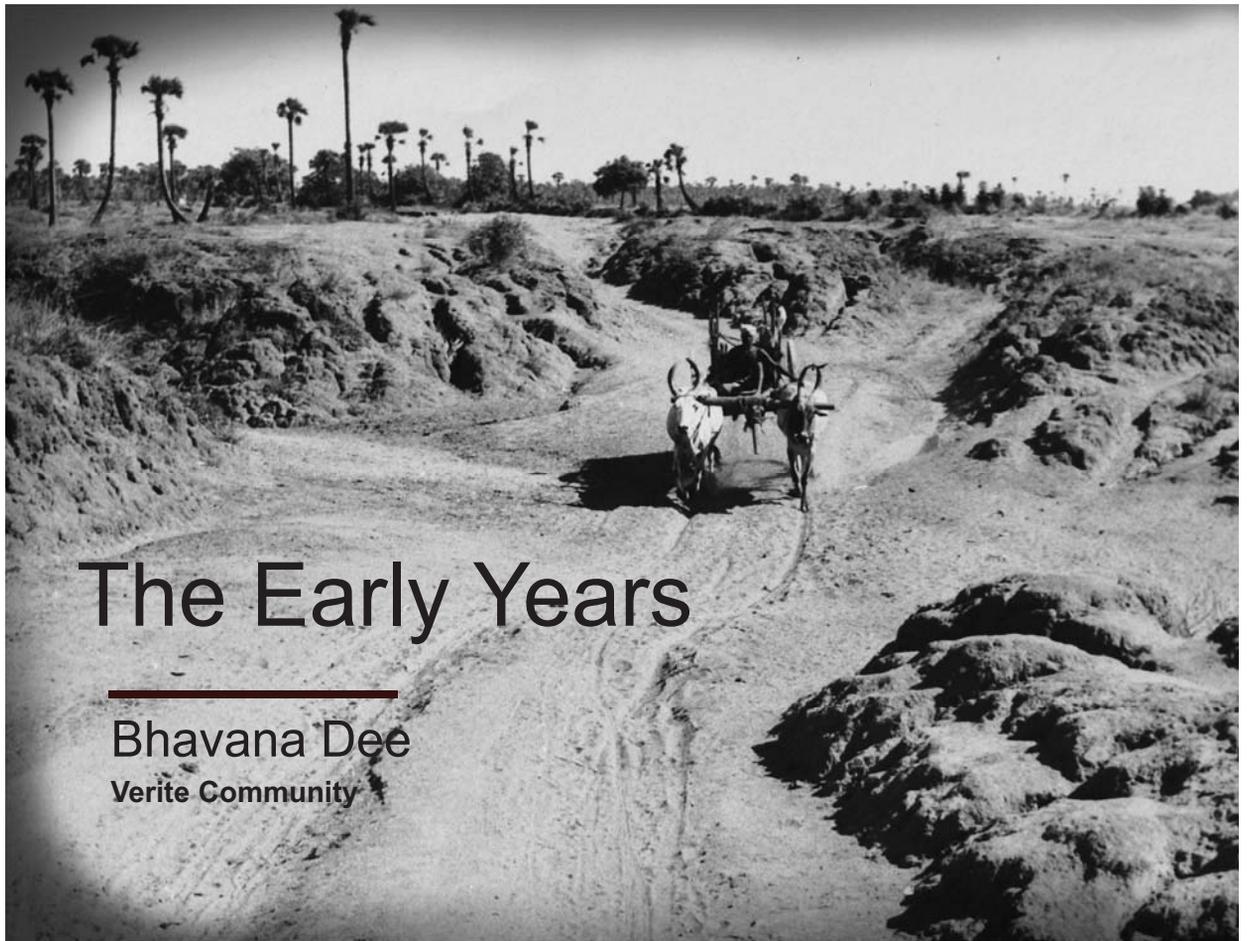


Presented at



Auroville Green Practices

Seminar and Site Visits
26-28 August, 2010



The Early Years

Bhavana Dee
Verite Community



In the bleak wasteland, a few stones marked where Auroville was to grow



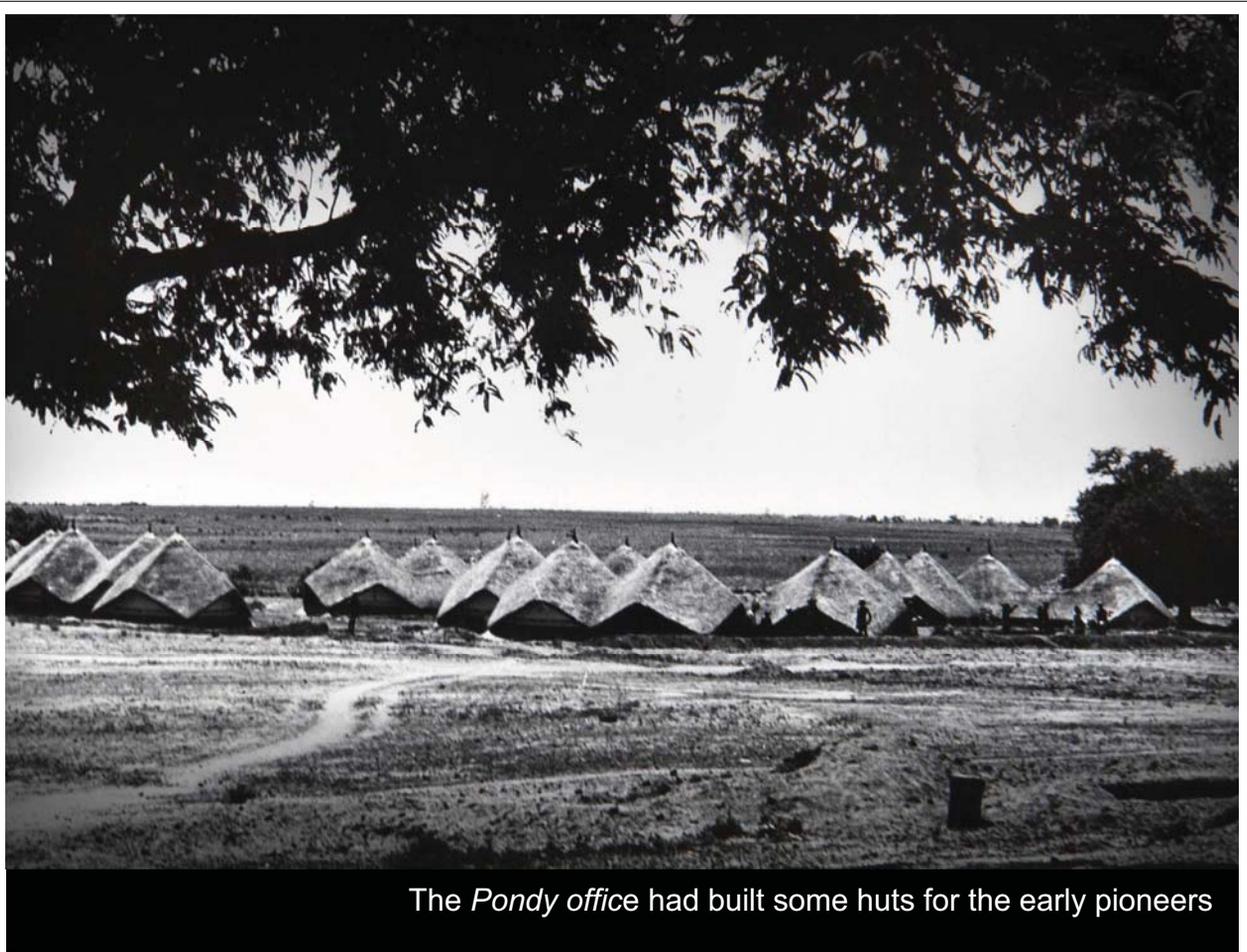
In the absence of forest cover, the heavy monsoon rains were carrying away the top soil



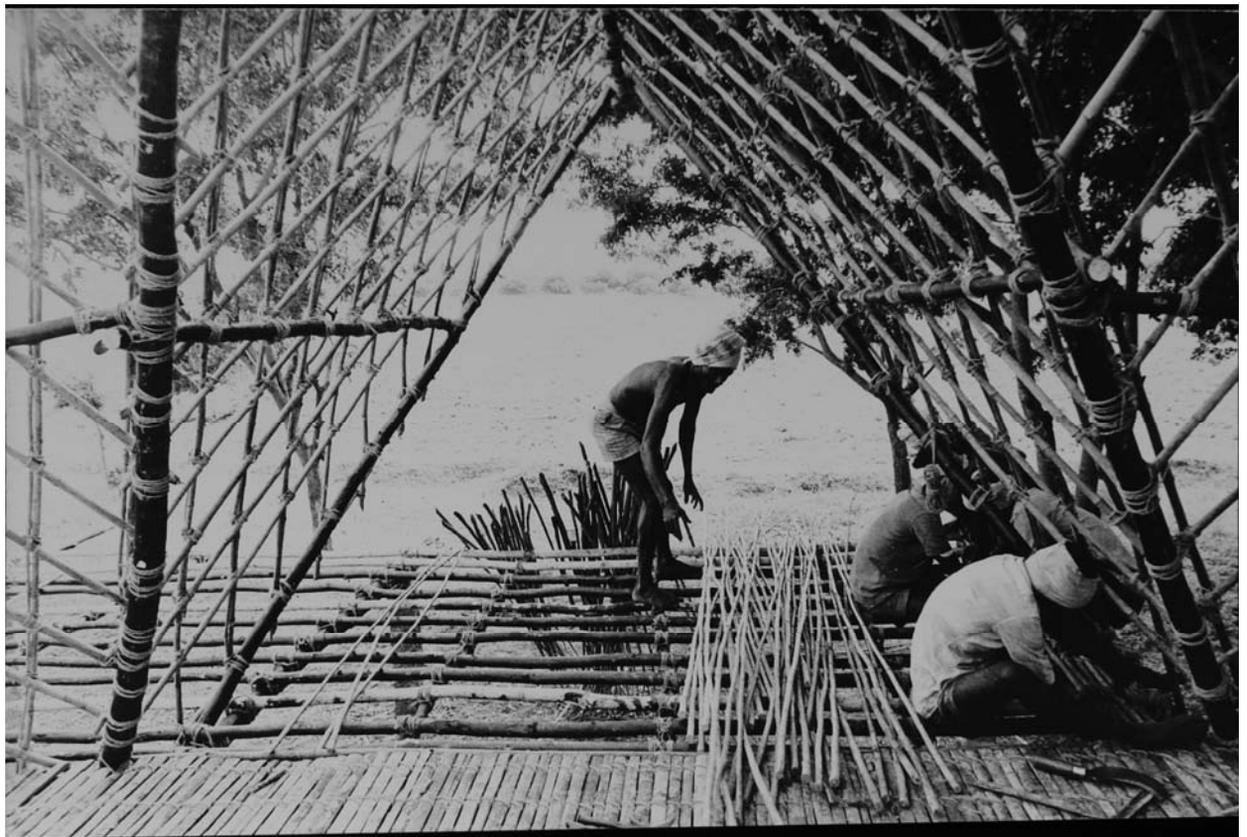
carving ravines in the landscape



The only trees that survived were the palmyra and the cashew



The *Pondy office* had built some huts for the early pioneers



But to settle the far flung pieces of land, the first thing to do was to make some houses – using local materials and local skills



with an added dash of Buckminster Fuller geodesic innovations...



"Keet Palaces"



The next thing to notice were the local people – skinny children and their skinny mothers, and fathers, looking for work...



Main occupation of the children was goat-herding ---



We soon put these hard-working earnest people to work planting trees, making bunds, building houses...



And as watchmen, to keep out the goats their kids were bringing in.



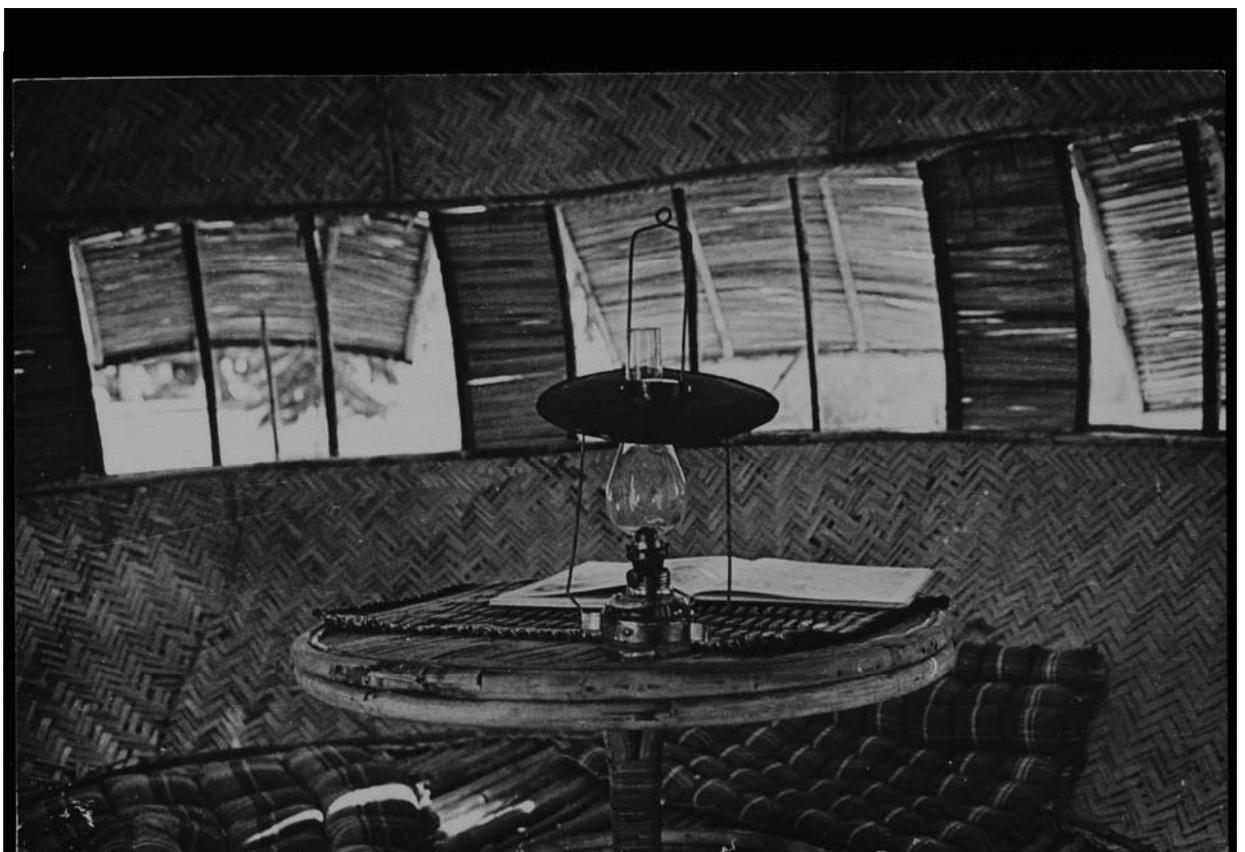
Pretty soon there were signs of change...



While meanwhile, in Pondy, the architects created plans...



And it was getting more comfortable out on the land as well





Many people came from Pondy and all over, to inaugurate the Matri Mandir...



And we'd built wells so we didn't have to haul water by bullock cart any more...



And we were learning from the local farmers what to cultivate and when and adding our own learnings...

Growing seedlings to plant out later...

Exploring raised beds, composting, no-till agriculture and much more...

All organic.....





Concocting insect-repellant sprays from neem...



And, in the odd corner, substituting the bullock and plow with a hand-tiller....



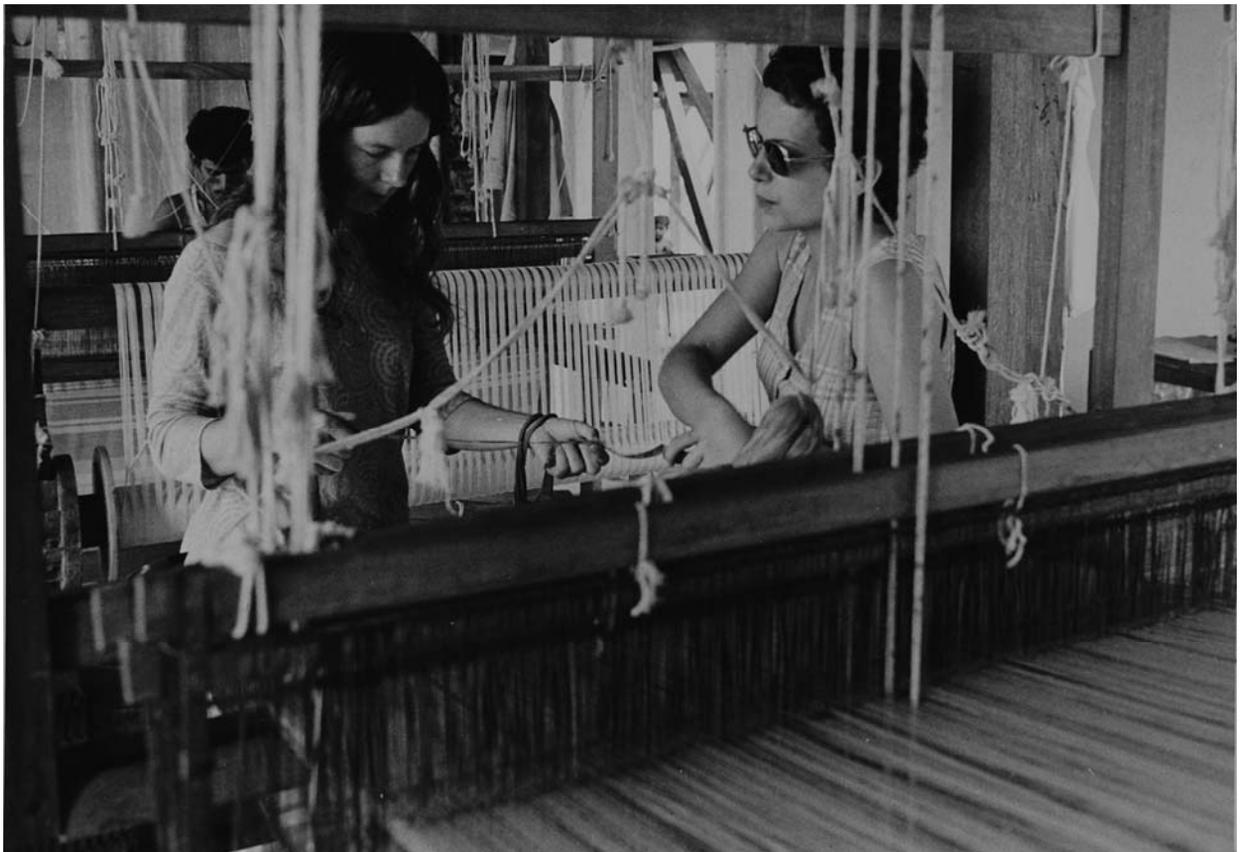
We got cows and started producing our own milk and dairy products...



From "Auro-Dairy" we delivered milk to many communities in an old jeep...



We began to organise handicraft workshops: agarbathy making, crochet, embroidery...



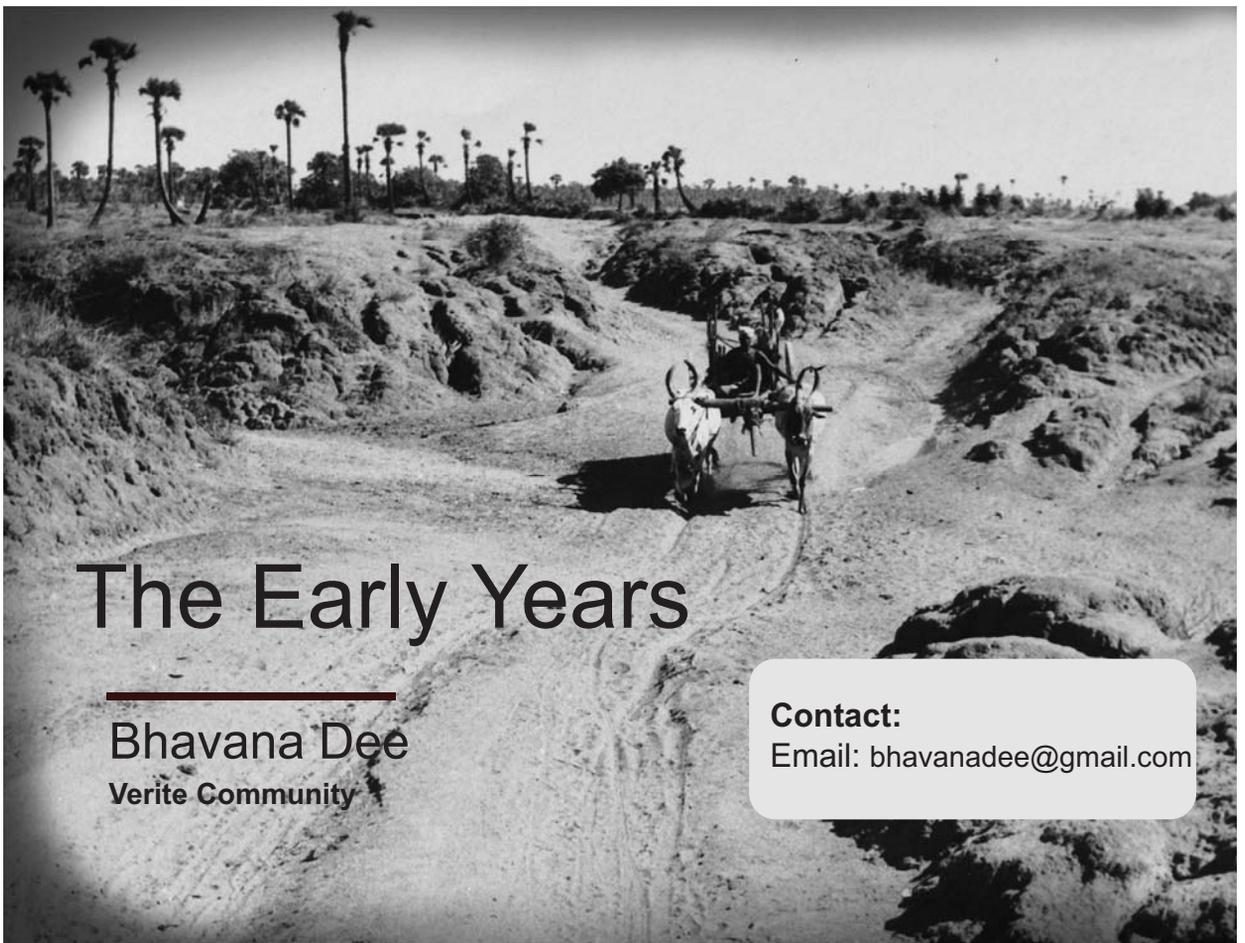
Handloom...



And we began to develop appropriate technologies, like windpumps...



And used tyre vendies instead of the wooden-wheeled kata-vendi...



The Early Years

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