Revival and Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies”

Jatayu Teertham

By
Vivekananda Kendra - Nardep

**Type:**
Stepped Tank

**Location:**
On the way to Dhanushkodi – inside the forest

**Coordinates:**
Lat-9.25655, Long-79.31602

**Measurements:**
L9.14 m B 9.44m D 3.65m

**Water holding capacity:**
314927 litres

**Water availability:**
Throughout the year

**Literary mention:**
Sethu Purana Vasana Kaviyam

**Affiliated to:**
Ramanathaswamy Temple; HR&CE

**Deity:**
Lord Rama

**Survey no:** 1044/2, Rameswaram
Revenue village, Rameswaram Taluk

**Ritual cleansing:**
Cures Diseases and Removes the Sins

**Year of renovation:** 2022

**Renovation work sponsored by:**
Vivekananda Kendra - Nardep
Jatayu Teertham

Jatayu Teertham is a tank located in the forest area of Rameswaram Municipality, on the way to Dhanushkodi. Other water bodies namely Jatamakuta, Sarvaroga nivarana, Vibhishana and Sarabha Teerthams are in the vicinity. Tharavai wetlands are approximately 3kms away from Jatayu Teertham.

**Location (Lat-9.25655, Long-79.31602)**

Jatayu Teertham is located 6.4 KM from the west tower of Sri Ramanathasamy temple towards the South West direction.

**Mythology and Spiritual Importance**

As per Sethu purana vasana Kaviyam there is a Teertham in the name of Jatayu – Bird which communicated the abduction of Sita to Lord Rama. Anybody who has a dip in this Teertham will have the sins cleared and acquired punya and they will have the different forms of wealth.

**Architecture**

The entire construction of this water body is to suit cattle and wild animals. Thus, there is no gate so that the cattle can reach the water source without any difficulty. Moreover the steps are wide and almost like a ramp, so that the animals will not find any difficulty in reaching the pond. However it is raised by a parapet wall on three sides to prevent sand sliding.

**Process of Renovation**

Shri.Pakshi Sivarajan, literature scholar from Rameswaram who is also a volunteer of Green Rameswaram from its inception, informed us the existence of Jatayu Teertham. When the renovation team visited the location dilapidated Teertham structures were visible and the area was covered with thorny bushes. Water was stagnated in the area and wild animals use to quench their thirst in the Teertham. Initially renovation team considered the Jata Makuta Teertham, which is 1.5 km away from this spot, as Jatayu Teertham. A careful literature review and consultation with field experts cleared the ambiguity.

Teertham renovation works started with Bhoomi Pooja on August 29, 2022. Shri.Ganesan, Community leader from Ramakrishnapuram and other members participated in the event.
Neem Tree plantations and hiding ground for the LTTE

In the forest area, the department has systematically planted Neem trees which are growing nicely. Once upon a time the forest was used by the LTTE militants during the conflict with the Sri Lankan Government.

Following renovation activities were carried out:

i. Clearing thorny bushes
ii. De-silting
iii. Bund Strengthening
iv. Side Wall repaired on all sides
v. Cement Plastering
vi. Parapet walls raising
vii. Repair and Construction of steps
viii. Entrance structure
ix. Installation of Nagaraja idols on the parapet wall

Helping the wild animals and cattle in the remote forest

Vivekananda Kendra NARDEP is working in the field of Environment for number of years and thus the members felt that the water body also should be created for cattle and wild animals.

During the survey period, they found the ponies digging the ground in search of water. It is believed that ponies know the ground water source which they use in emergency. Seeing this, the members approached the forest department and after lot of hassles, they got the conditional permission.

During the construction work ponies and pigs came for inspection to see the work carried out for them. Perhaps, they wanted us to do the perfect work so that they can utilize the source for number of years.
Teerham before Renovation

Clearing thorny bushes
Strengthening Side walls

Repairing Sidewalls

Raising the Parapet walls
Repairing the steps

Steps repaired

Installation of Snake God Idols