# Visualising Fluid Heritage: The Role of Water 'Museums' in Addressing Water Security

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# Why Water Museums?

- New paradigm of water management requires re-thinking what water 'is' and what water 'means' – for all users (ethics, water values)

- Water museums all over the world exhibit and interpret an outstanding fluid heritage, both tangible and intangible, from ancient artefacts and technologies to strategies to combat water scarcity, pollution and climate change

- But while museums are repositories of our water heritage, they need to play a bigger role in helping people reconnect with water in all its dimensions

- Challenge of funds, lack of connectedness, too local, often top-down or 'stiff'
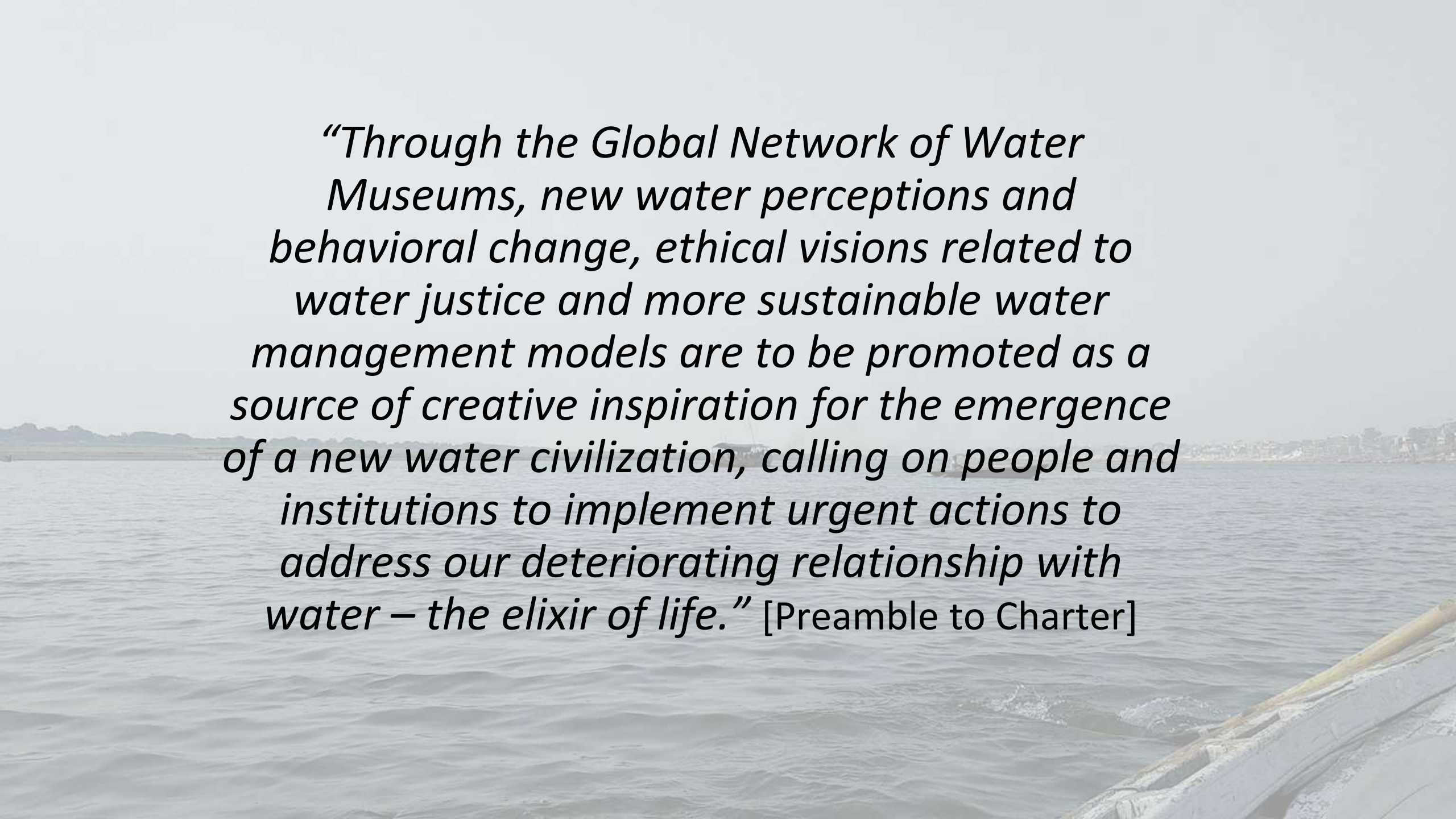
**Water Harvesting Well in Kangra Fort,- Amit Tandon**

# WAMU-NET: Who? What? Why?

- **Venice, May 2017**: Launch of global network, 29 museums represented
- Exchange of ideas and good practices, laying the ground for future joint activities, exhibitions, exchanges, fund-raising
- **'s-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands, May 2018**: second network meeting, focus on institution building, membership norms, governance
- **Paris, June 2018**: UNESCO-IHP recognizes the Global Network of Water Museums as an important, unique means of addressing SDG 6 through education and outreach activities – 4 million plus visitors each year
- Diversity of water museums recognized: physical, open-air, networks, digital
- Associate members: universities, water associations, artists, professionals (paid, sliding rate, depending on GDP /number of visitors; solidarity contributions)

*"Through the Global Network of Water Museums, new water perceptions and behavioral change, ethical visions related to water justice and more sustainable water management models are to be promoted as a source of creative inspiration for the emergence of a new water civilization, calling on people and institutions to implement urgent actions to address our deteriorating relationship with water – the elixir of life."* [Preamble to Charter]
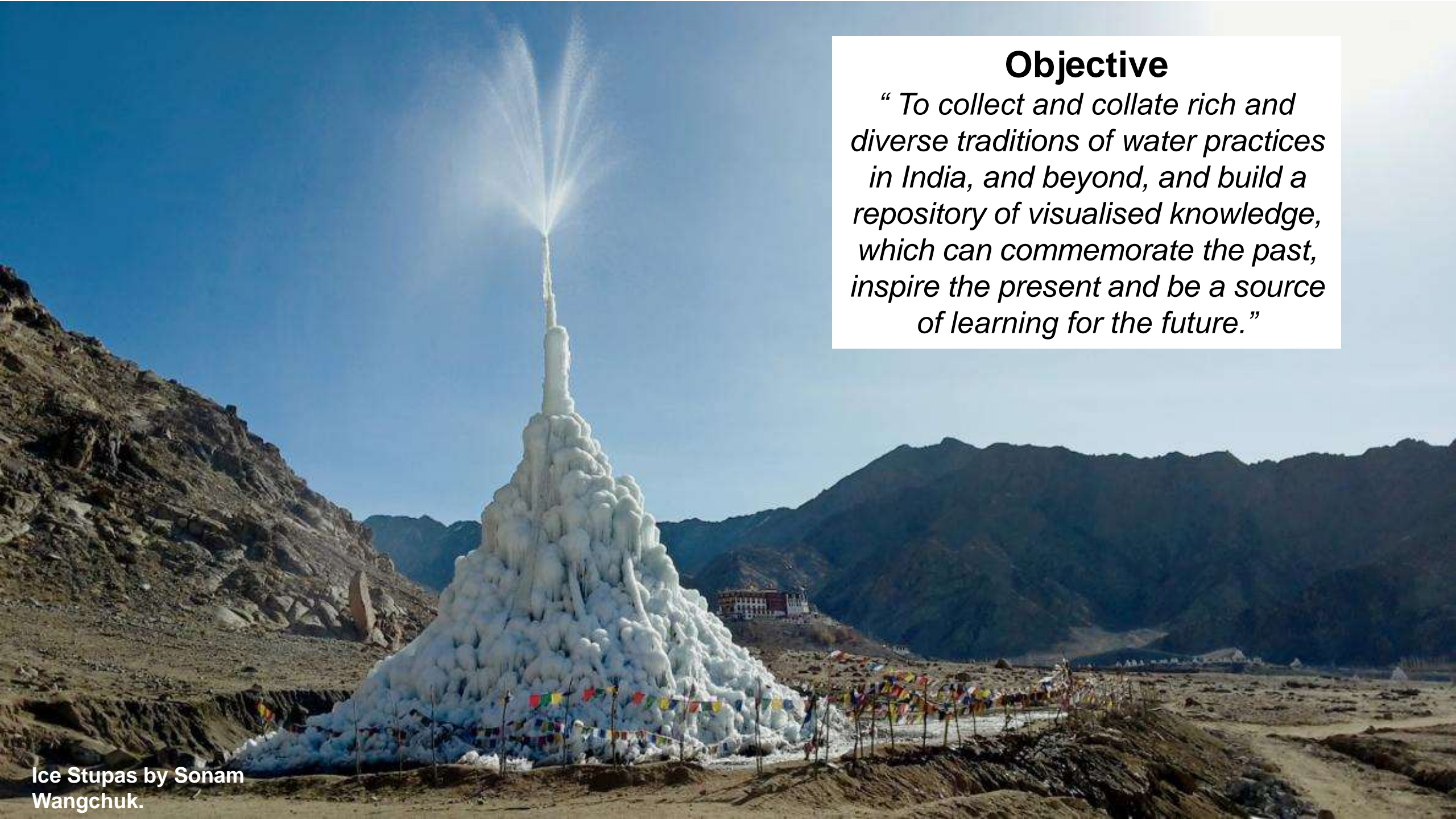
# Living Waters Museum

www.livingwatersmuseum.org

**Objective**
" To collect and collate rich and diverse traditions of water practices in India, and beyond, and build a repository of visualised knowledge, which can commemorate the past, inspire the present and be a source of learning for the future."

Ice Stupas by Sonam Wangchuk.

# Our Approach

- **Three C's:**
  - **Collaboration**: schools, academic institutes, NGOs, artists, interns, students
  - **Curation**: research – design – production
  - **Communication**: art as advocacy, action
- Process approach, interdisciplinary, new media
- Partnerships: media, festivals, museums, cafes
- Goal: doing digital, doing good? Can a museum be a social enterprise? Engage youth in eco-entrepreneurship activities around water heritage and livelihoods



Springs near Rudraprayag, Uttrakhand. , Amit Tandon

# Crossing The River

Amit Tandon and Akshay Shete

- The purpose of the research was to explore indirect relationships between water and cities by exploring bridges as a medium for crossing water.

- Primary and secondary research.

- Short video production





Top :Archival images of Lakdi Pul (Source : Deccan College)

Left: Image of Lakdi Pul, Pune

# Journey of Sabarmati River

Researcher – Shalvi Suman



**1.** Sabarmati river's origin in the Aravali range locally known as 'Bhuj Talav'

**2.** Dharoi reservoir - Gravity dam over Sabarmati (1978)



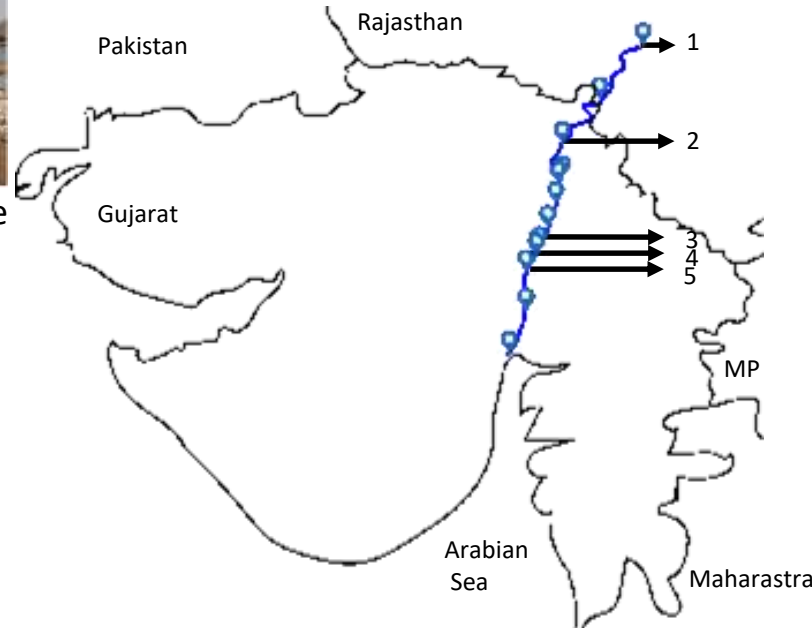**3.** Sant Sarovar Dam - Barrage in Gandhinagar (2006)

**4.** Narmada canal (2008)



**5.** Vasna Barrage (1976)



Map showing the path of Sabarmati river and major water harvesting systems



Map showing the Walled City, Ahmedabad
Source: Architecture at Ahmedabad, the capital of Goozerat

- Dry and wet scenario of Sabarmati in summers
- Water harvesting measures and their effects on the Sabarmati in Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- Role of Sabarmati in Ahmedabad - resource, livelihood, entertainment, aesthetics.
- Foundation of Ahmedabad in 1411; Gandhi and the nationalist struggle, Salt March…



Gandhi and his followers at Sabarmati Ashram
Source: The Hindu Archives

## Objective:

• Creating an interesting narration to communicate research to a young audience.

• Exploring a different perspective to human-made and natural elements.

• Linking different facts and findings in a story to make it engaging for the audience.

## Narration:

• A crane flying down from the source of Sabarmati and exploring the river.

## Product:

• A 6-7 minute stop motion animation video with voiceover and original clippings from different sites explored during the research.



A few frames from the animation clip

Animator – Shalvi Suman

# Livelihoods around Sabarmati


Farming with waste water irrigation


River pollution near vasna barrage


Laundry Campus


Map showing the south end of Sabarmati in Ahmedabad
Image Source : Google maps 2018

- Interviews of people whose livelihoods were closely associated with the Sabarmati river.
- Understanding impacts of water storage on river flow, people and their livelihoods
- Settlement around Sabarmati before the riverfront project and after relocation
- Water harvesting measures during summers when the river used to dry up completely (well digging)
- Exploring downstream where all the waste management of Ahmedabad takes place.

Researcher – Shalvi Suman

Laundry campus situated at the south end of Sabarmati in Ahmedabad where most of the city's waste management takes place.





**Narration:**

- By an elderly **dhobi** who is explaining how they used to wash clothes in the past to his young children who are marveling the washing machines and dryers given by the state government



**Product:**

- A stop motion animation clip explaining the livelihoods and settlements associated in and around Sabarmati.
- Scenario before and after the riverfront project.
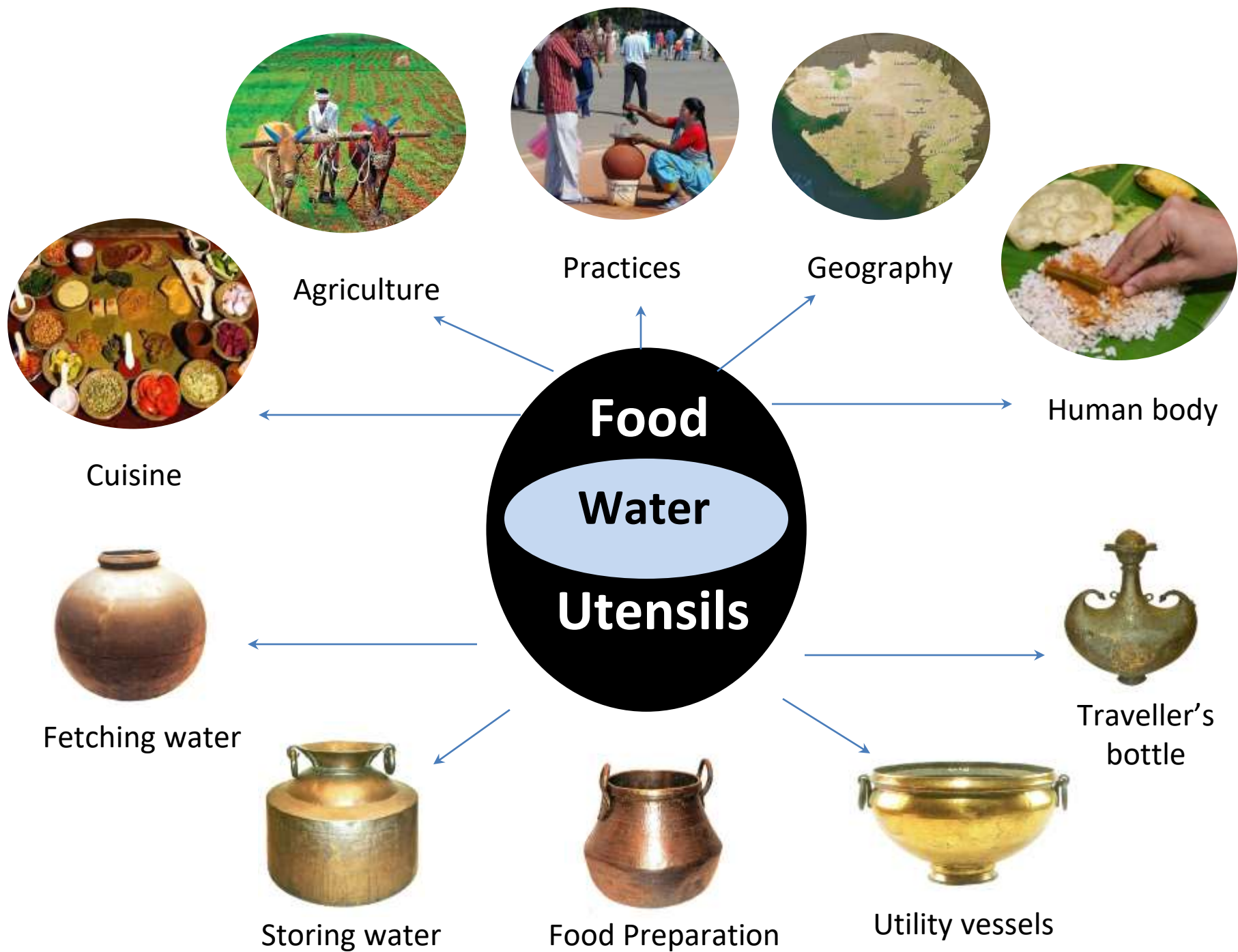- Archival images



Archival images of the dhobi ghat at the banks of Sabarmati

Image Source : Parmanand Dalwadi, Courtesy of NID

**A Multimedia Exhibition at Vishalla Restaurant and Vechaar Museum**

*Building a value perspective on water by celebrating water wisdom and exploring the tangible and intangible heritage around water and food in Gujarat.*

Vishalla Prides itself on its presentation of Indian Culture and tradition in its village like environment with its museum of old utensils  known as Vechaar. Surendrabhai Patel the designer could not let our rich heritage pass with these vessels being lost in the kilns! He was determined to preserve them, and today, his dream is a reality in the form of this museum.

**Project by-**
**Swarnika Nimje**
**National Institute of Design**

Agriculture

Practices

Geography

Cuisine

Human body

Food
Water
Utensils

Fetching water

Traveller's bottle

Storing water

Food Preparation

Utility vessels

# Water utensils: telling their story

*"Do you know who brings water home for hundreds of rural families across Gujarat? Made of bronze, my long neck and wide collar help Jigna to hold me gracefully in the curve of her hip, as she walks back from the village well, careful not to spill water she has spent several hours collecting. On her head, she confidently balances another broad-based, brass pot, while sharing local news and singing along with her friends. I know its hard work for Jigna, particularly in the dry summer months, but she doesn't complain even when she has to miss going to school on some days."*

**How much water goes in growing one meal for you?**

40 drops (40lts) for tur daal made out of tur seeds.

30 drops (30lts) for Thepla bread made out of wheat.

**Choose your meal and know how much water is required to grow it.**

# There was Water



Froth now settles permanently on the surface of Bellandur lake.

1. Secondary research
    – Books and blogs, archival research
2. Primary research: field visits and interviews with:
    – Elderly Priests from old temples
    – Caretakers of old cemeteries
    – Fodder collectors, livestock owners who could possibly be found along the bank of the lake
    – Former members of the village *panchayat* (elected local council)
    – Old residents
3. Photographs and videos, recording sounds
4. Developing, illustrations and animation
5. Story telling, narration, review, edit, review, edit….
    Credit: Priyanka Kumari, NID



A very famous old temple on the bank of the lake lies submerged in water and unattended today.

Rani ni vav, Patan


Adalaj ni vav, Adalaj


Modhera kund, Modhera

# Stepwells: A community water space

**Background:**
- Use of stepwells by locals and travelers in the past (cool, water)
- Placement of a stepwell in relation to the settlement, source
- Well-digging community (traditional artisans, dying livelihood)
- Funding the building of a stepwell  (wealthy women as patrons)
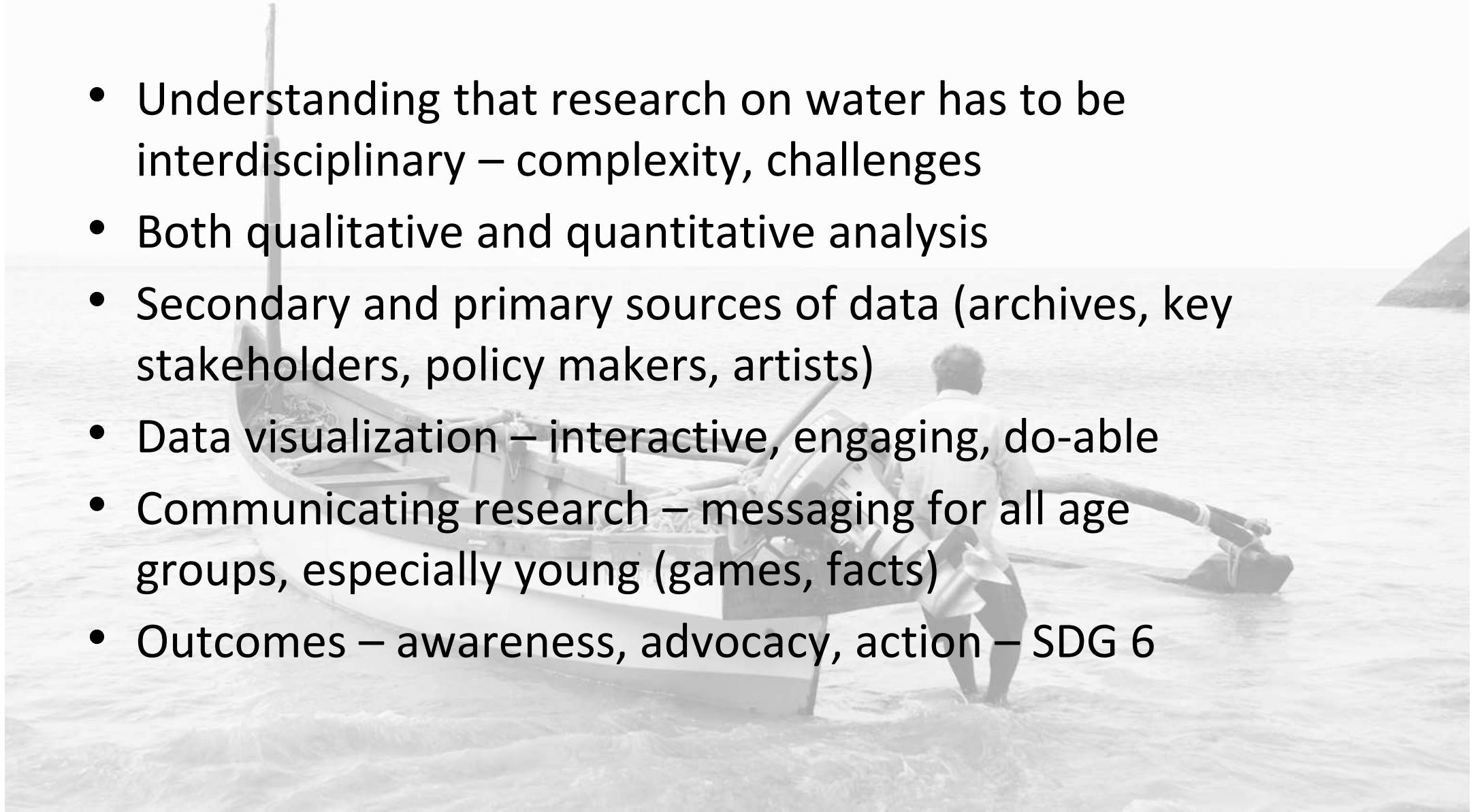- Significance of a stepwell as a goddess (female names, worship)

**Story visualization:**
- Creating 'experiential design' which can re-ignite the values of stepwells and their rich history
- Development of an interactive, online map based on primary and secondary research (with Sahapedia, CHM students)
- Creating other multi-media products for children
- Travel itineraries (www.izi.travel)

# "Talking to Water"

- Understanding that research on water has to be interdisciplinary – complexity, challenges

- Both qualitative and quantitative analysis

- Secondary and primary sources of data (archives, key stakeholders, policy makers, artists)

- Data visualization – interactive, engaging, do-able

- Communicating research – messaging for all age groups, especially young (games, facts)

- Outcomes – awareness, advocacy, action – SDG 6

Thank You

Living
Waters
Museum