

## Description of field site in Tamilnadu: MIDS Team

Tamilnadu has the second longest coast line of 1061 KM with a population density of 528 per sq.km as against the state average of 372 per sq km.. Marine fishing and fishing in backwaters provide livelihoods to millions of people in this state. The total fisher folk population depended upon marine fishing in the State is 700,000 spread over 591 coastal villages, in 19 taluks and 9 districts. Agriculture all along the coast has also been an important source of livelihood for several millions of people. Coastal wet lands spread all along the Tamilnadu coast are highly valuable for hydrological, biological and for socio-economic reasons.

For the purposes of the present project, we have selected three distinct locations with different ecosystems. The first ecosystem is one in which fishing (both marine as well as back water) is the main occupation and perhaps the only source of livelihood. In this ecosystem vulnerability is increased due to severe anthropogenic factors besides natural coastal hazards and extreme events. We have selected a cluster called Cuddalore old town (OT), in particular a village called Sonankuppam. A good deal of changes has occurred in this ecosystem where fish catch is affected due to natural coastal hazards and anthropogenic factors like effluent discharges from the Cuddalore SIPCOT chemical industries. This has aggravated the vulnerability of fisher-folks in particular small fishermen.

The second ecosystem is one in which both fishing and agriculture co-exists. This is by and large the most prevalent ecosystem seen in the Tamilnadu coast. Besides coastal hazards, inundation occurs due to flooding in Cauvery River and several backwater rivers. We have selected a village called TS Pettai in Chidambaram taluk, Cuddalore district and Vanagiri village in Sirkazhi taluk, Nagappatinam district. In these villages fishing and farming co-exist. Farmers in this region feel that they are completely neglected by state policies even though they are severely affected due to periodic inundation where water stays on lands for months, even with one good spell of rainfall. So, the main problems encountered in this cluster are land and groundwater salinity. Since groundwater is the main source for drinking water in these villages, groundwater salinity has aggravated the drinking water scarcity. The agricultural population who live along the coast, where the Cauvery delta system floods - have been experiencing the more severe problem of land inundation in recent times - not only due to Cauvery drainage water flooding but also due to floods in backwater rivers (seawater).

The third ecosystem is one where agriculture is the main occupation but where cultivation is carried out through broadcast method. Since groundwater is also saline, there is absolutely no source of irrigation. But people in this region face the threat of inundation due to seawater flooding. A village called Pushpavanam has been selected in this ecosystem.

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Ecosystem 1: Cuddalore old town

Polluted Uppanar river (backwater river) in Sonankuppam village,  
Cuddalore



Ecosystem 2

Inundated land in TS Pettai village, Cuddalore dist



Inundated land in TS Pettai village, Cuddalore

