

Report on Coastal Environmental Study Tour

17/01/2009

To

18-01-2009

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Introduction

This report belongs to the Coastal field study organized by “Kumari Arivial Peravai “in 17/01/2009. This field study is really concentrated in the coastal areas of Kanyakumari District and was carried out for 2 days on 17/01/2009 and 18/01/2009. This field study was conducted by a group of Young Scientists and their guide teachers. This program started with the inauguration program at Marthandam College of Engineering.

The main aim of this study is to know the opinion of the people living in the coastal areas about the growing pollution and their knowledge about Tsunami which has caused a great damage both in the hearts and the place of these people. This report is mainly based in the information gathered from the people living in the coastal areas and also from the information given by our scientists during the coastal study.

Places visited.

The places visited by the group of Yong Scientists on their Coastal Study Tour are listed below in the order of visit.

- Neerodi
- Vallavilai
- Nithiravilai
- Parthibapuram
- Thengapattinam
- Inayam putthanthurai
- Kulachal
- Kadiapattanam
- Muttom
- Rajakkamangalam
- Peria Kadu
- Manakkudi

- Vattakottai

Neerodi

Neerodi is one of the coastal villages in Kanyakumari district and it was affected by tsunami and high tide waves. This village belongs to Kollemcode panchayat and Munchirai Panchayat union. Total families of the village is 1478 and 85% of families depends on fishing as the main source of income. It is estimated that 126 houses are situated within 40'. The fishermen says that they do not have adequate income from their profession. At that place Mrs. Esalda headed us and gave a wide range of information to us.

She said that the fishermen of that region poor catch after Tsunami. She also said that because of the depth of the sea in that region the size of the waves caused due to Tsunami in 26/12/2004 was greatly minimized but as they are living very close to sea and as the concentration of people living in the coastal regions is also high Tsunami has caused great damage to those people. She said that now the fishermen in that region are using modern methods of fishing. She said that they have included the usage of lights to attract fishes. She also said that due to the concentration of population in the coastal areas the tortoises which once used to come to these shores have stopped to make their visits to this sea shore. She also reported that she has noticed about 75 feet of the land area is occupied by the sea water in due to climate change. To her sadness she said that most of the people are starting to abandon the job fishing and have started to accept alternate jobs. This sea shore really has unsanitary condition and the plastic wastes were found abundantly.

Vallavilai

Our team reached this place at around 12:35 pm. We were provided with certain refreshments at a school present in that area. After that we started to move towards the fishermen area. There we met two fishermen called Peter and John Bergmans. Mr. Peter is a fisherman for more than 50 years and they gave us a clear idea about their occupation. They said that their job is the job where the income earned is shared evenly and said that they were proud of their occupation.

But the sad thing is that these people too reported a fish scarcity after Tsunami. They said that they used to get an average income of about Rs. 5000 after one ride and said that their average income has declined.

Nithiravilai

We reached this place at around 1: 23 pm.

At this place we were given a grand welcome by a group of young patriots and loving people belonging to "Patriot Sports Club" and we had our lunch at this place. It is true that the people belonging to this place are really very friendly to all of us.

Parthibapuram

We arrived at this historic place at around 2: 53 pm

This place which is found in the Kanyakumari District has a long and forgotten history. This place belonged to a king called Karuna Thanagan who had a very good administrative capacity and efficiency and ruled this place in a good manner. This place was famous for its university which was equally famous to the Nalanda University. To conquer this place so many wars has been made. But at last when it joined to Tamil Nadu

everyone forgot about this place (even the Indian Government). This place has a larger history and it is necessary to bring out the history to the modern world.

Thengapattinam

This beach is located on the west coast near Painkulam village in Vilancode Taluk. It is a fine beach adorned with coconut groves. Coconut trees are found abundant in this place, and the place gets its name from the trees. 'Thenga' means Coconut and 'Patanam' means town. In ancient times, Thengapattinam had trade relations with the nations in the Middle East. There was direct boat service between Thengapattinam and other foreign towns.

This is an estuary and hence it is a best, breeding and hatching ground for fish. Thus it is a very good fishing ground.

Inayam putthanthurai

Our team arrived at this place around 3: 59 pm.

We were given a grand welcome at St. Antony higher secondary school .Under the arrangements made by Sister. Belinda we went to the local people and we distributed the awareness notices prepared by various teams of young scientists.

The people of that region reported an increase in the amount of fish after the construction of breakwaters in that region.

Karunkal

In this place we were given a grant welcome by Mrs. Gladis Lilly who also arranged a meeting at that place. Many scientists and naturalists participated in that meeting.

Colachal

Next we visited Colachal and that was the last place that we visited on the first day of our program.

Here we visited the construction site. The people living in these coastal areas said that they are living in unhygienic conditions. Even we were able to find the considerable amount of accumulated plastic wastes in the sea shore and we understood the difficulty in living in such an environment.. Later at a place near the A. V. M channel our young scientists belonging to the water team collected water from the river to test it for checking the quality of water and to know about its mineral contents.

Stay

Later at that night we stayed at Vivekannanda Matric School and various cultural programmes were conducted at that place and we were provided with the dinner.

Day 2

18/01/2009

Departure

Next morning we began the day with yoga practice lead by Mr. Sathish Kumar.

After having our breakfast, we left that place after saying thanks to the authorities who have provided us with food and shelter. We left that place at around 8:25 am

Kadiapattinam

We reached this place at around 8:43 am

This sea shore is found in the western side of Kanyakumari District.

At this place we were given lot of information about that place by Mr. Benzigar Rajan who is a scientist in ISRO. He said that the sand in that region is highly radioactive. He also said that the soil in that region contains a lot of Thorium which can be converted in to Uranium. He also said that the radiations present in this region is highly dangerous and can cause diseases to the people of this region.

Muttom

Around 9: 15 we reached this place.

Here the team discussions of various teams took place. At this place Dr. Arul Prakash, the head of Tamil Nadu doctors association gave valuable information on various contagious diseases like cholera, enteric fever, dengue and malaria which arise due to stagnation and pollution of water and also due to the availability of unsanitary conditions. In the same way Dr. Arumugam too gave a short but an informative speech.

Later on we moved towards the Muttom point light house which is situated in a steep cliff. It has been functioning since 1874.

Peria kadu

We arrived at this place around 10: 53 am

At this place scientist Mr. Benzigar Rajan gave a clear idea about the uses of the construction of breakwater. He said that such breakwater block the path of the ocean currents and thus prevents the fish from crossing that area and thus making that region a rich fishing grounds.

Chothavilai

At this place we were provided with lunch Mr. Raguvaran and his family . Afterwards the young scientists gave the awareness notices which were prepared by them, to the tourists and to the public.

Manakudi

At this place we were given lot of information about the biodiversity and the effects of Tsunami in that area by Mr. Mangalavilai Rajendran.

He told us about the importance of the mangrove forests stating that the mangrove forests which were present in the marshy land (semi solid land) can manage any type of Tsunami. He also said that as the Palaiyar joins with the sea at this place, it forms an estuary and hence behaves as a good fishing ground. He stated that if the opening of the estuary is wide it helps to fight Tsunami.

He reported that the tsunami which struck this area affected the bridge which was present in that place.

He also said that the presence of mangrove forests would attract various birds towards that area and hence can act as a wonderful place for the birdwatchers around the world. He said that the presence of this type of forests has attracted many birds to nest in this region.

Vattakottai fort

This is the last coastal area that we visited during this coastal study camp and at this place Adv. L. Rajathurai provided us with refreshment.

Vattakottai Fort (or 'Circular Fort') is a seaside fort near Kanyakumari, the southern tip of India. It was built in the 18th century as a coastal defense-fortification and barracks in the erstwhile Travancore kingdom.

It was constructed under the supervision of Captain Eustachius De Lannoy, an ex-Dutch naval officer of the VOC, who became commander of the Travancore army (the very army that defeated him in the Battle of Colachel) in the 18th century, after he earned the trust of the Travancore King Marthanda Varma. De Lannoy constructed Vattakottai, as part of the defense-fortifications he undertook throughout Travancore.

The fort is made of granite blocks and, today, a part of the fort extends into the sea. It is a protected site under the Indian Archaeological Survey Department. A major renovation of the fort was undertaken recently by the department, and the site is now a popular tourist spot.

Vattakottai Fort commands a picturesque view of both the sea on one side, and the hills (Western Ghats) on the other. Another interesting feature near the site is a beach of black sands.

Vivekananda Kendra

Finally we reached at this place and we were welcomed by Madam. Saraswati. Here the team leaders of each team read out the report. At last scientist Mr. Palvannan gave the special speech. With this the coastal study camp ended in a really successful and in a good manner with the concluding words of Mr. Mullanchery M. Velaian and with the blessings of Mrs. Saraswati.

Conclusion

The conclusion to which the young scientists have come out with is “The people have begun to feel that something dangerous is going around them. This can be proved that because they have reported a rise in sea level and also have found a decline in the presence of their natural wealth (fish). Hence it is necessary to make them aware about their mistakes and its effects and thus to make the remedy that has to be taken before the situation when time it is game over”