

Press Release

The Draft Report Presentation meeting for the Research Studies on **“An analysis of Land Use changes in Agro climatic zones of Tamil Nadu”** and **“Satellite Image based vegetation cover in the urban areas of Tamil Nadu”** was held under the Chairmanship of ***Thiru. C. Ponnaiyan, Hon’ble Vice Chairman, State Development Policy Council (SDPC), Chennai*** on 15.12.2020 at the HDV Conference Centre, SDPC(erstwhile SPC), Chennai-5. Tmt.Jayashree Raghunandan, IAS., Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Planning and Development Department, Thiru. Anil Meshram, I.A.S., Member Secretary, State Development Policy Council, Dr. B.C. Archana Kalyani, IFS., Head of Division (Land Use) and TNSLURB Members were participated in the above meeting.

From the year 2011-2012 to 2020-2021 a total of 67 research studies have been sanctioned in the various sectors viz., Land Use, Water, Livelihood, Agriculture, Environment, Wetland, Climate Change, Urbanization, Forest, Waste Management and Health, of which 42 Research Studies have been completed, 15 research studies are in progress and 10 New Research Studies have been approved in the year 2020-2021 (First and second round). In addition 12 workshops / seminar have been sanctioned for the above period in the sectors viz., Climate Change, Water, Agriculture and Waste Management.

The studies that are being presented for the meeting were sanctioned under Tamil Nadu State Land Use Research Board during the year 2016-2017.

The following outcomes of the above studies have been highlighted by the Vice Chairman, State Development Policy Council.

The study on “**An analysis of Land Use changes in Agro climatic zones of Tamil Nadu**” was carried out by Institution for Financial Management and Research, Chennai.

This study broadly comprised of two phases of activities. The first phase involved the analysis of the secondary data available during the period 2002-2015. The second phase involved the field survey of blocks of seven districts (Theni, Coimbatore, Vellore, Salem, The Nilgiris, Thanjavur and Kanyakumari) in Tamil Nadu.

Analysis of the secondary data showed that land use conversion is progressing at different pace across different districts of the state. This analysis also resulted in identifying nine clusters across Tamil Nadu based on land use change.

It is found that, 38 blocks falls in cluster 1. where 47% area under net area sown, 43% area under non agricultural uses and 10% under current fallows and other fallows. This cluster shows agriculture having more priority than non agriculture. This trend may be preserved towards sustainable agriculture. 61 blocks comes under cluster 2, where net area sown is more than 84%, which shows agriculture is predominate, hence other development activities and industrial activities can be restricted to protect agriculture. In Tamil Nadu 59 blocks of cluster 3, are showing sustainable forest cover along with significant agricultural activities. 47 blocks of cluster 4 having significant percentage of land parcels under other current fallows, which seems to be moving away from agriculture. Hence, they can be reversed to agriculture or used for non agriculture purpose. Cluster 5 shows that 24 blocks have already moved away from agriculture which may be used for non agriculture purpose. Blocks which are adjoining to major cities and towns are comes under cluster 6 with 25 blocks. Here non agricultural areas are in growing trend. This needs immediate attention by making policies and preventing encroachments due to urban expansion. In 23 Blocks, agriculture is

under suspension which is due to deficit water table and other issues categorized under cluster 7. Agriculture oriented action plan could still bring back into agriculture. In Cluster 8, 16 Blocks are under dry land with poor water table. Dry land agriculture oriented action plan may be helpful.

Blocks with land under agriculture and land under current fallows are likely to be same. Hence, large agriculture oriented plan with alternate cropping pattern could be seen in 53 blocks of Cluster 9.

The second phase of the project involved meeting farmers across seven districts of Tamil Nadu to understand their issues and challenges. The districts covered included Coimbatore, Theni, Thanjavur, Salem, Kanyakumari, Nilgiris, and Vellore. A survey report has been developed for each district covered, this summary intends to bring out some common issues faced by farmers. Farmers face water shortage in many districts except Theni and Thanjavur. However, farmers in these two districts have complained of industrial encroachment in these districts. Agricultural labour shortage is due to migration towards nearby towns, MGNREGA scheme, and other reasons in 7 districts. Few places, reported crop losses by peacocks, boars, monkeys and others based on their crop and geography. Notifying agricultural zones in certain districts would keep industries out of such area that are fertile for farming. This has since been done in Tamil Nadu. Organic farming should be encouraged and supported as it is more sustainable than chemical fertilizers-based farming. As per the primary survey, many farmers have expressed a need for extending the minimum support price for all crops grown across Tamil Nadu.

The Hon'ble Vice Chairman of SDPC has pointed out that, to protect the farmers and agriculture in Honourable Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru Edappadi K. Palanisamy made an announcement on February 2020 that making the Cauvery Delta region a Protected Special Agriculture Zone (PSAZ). The protected zone will include Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam districts and delta regions of Trichy, Ariyalur, Cuddalore and Pudukkottai.

Our Honourable Chief Minister also stated that, the legal experts and research means to do this and make it a law. And this Government will never allow the introduction of new projects like hydrocarbon in the region. Our Honourable Chief Minister also wrote to Prime Minister requesting him to

revoke the amendment in the Environment Impact Assessment Notification 2006.

Study on **“Satellite Image based vegetation cover in the urban areas of Tamil Nadu”** taken up by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department.

This study is to assess the tree cover of the five Corporation (Chennai, Madurai, Coimbatore, Tiruchirapalli and Salem) urban areas using satellite images.

Tamil Nadu ranks third in the list of urbanized states with 48.45% of its population living in urban areas.

Urban green cover or urban forestry is one of the prime ways to bridge the gap between city dwellers and environment on the one hand and sustainable development on the other. The biggest challenge for urban development is not only to ensure urban green cover but also to maintain the existing green cover. Trees are instrumental in greening the landscape, purifying the air, reducing energy use, etc.

For this purpose our Indian satellite image of IRS LISS-IV images with 5.8 metre resolution was used to analyze the vegetation cover in the five major urban areas of Tamil Nadu. The tree cover comprises of small patches of trees in plantations and woodlots, scattered trees, trees along linear features, such as roads, canals, bunds, etc. The present assessment of tree cover, carried out by digital processing of satellite imageries. As per Forest Survey of India (FSI) definition of tree cover, coconut plantations were also classified and included under tree cover.

As per the satellite based imaginary analysis, vegetation cover in Chennai Metropolitan area is 12,293.26 Ha (10.23%); Madurai Corporation is 1305.79 Ha (8.79%); Coimbatore Corporation is 4514.48 Ha (17.54%); Tiruchirappalli Corporation is 1826.53 Ha (12.62%) and Salem Corporation is 1629.73 Ha (16.60%). Coconut groves contributed to higher percentage of vegetation cover in Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli and Salem corporations.

The Hon'ble Vice Chairman of SDPC has highlighted that, the Government has been taking steps to increase the green cover in the State and as a part of the ambitious programme our Honourable Chief Minister of Tamil

Nadu Thiru Edappadi K. Palaniswami launched a mega tree plantation project at a cost of Rs 191.85 crore as part of 71st birthday celebration of Puratchi Thalaivi Amma. As a part of the programme 71 lakh tree saplings have been planted in the State. The State Government had planted 64 lakh tree saplings in 2012, 65 lakh tree saplings in 2013, 66 lakh in 2014, 67 lakh in 2015, 68 lakh in 2016, 69 lakh in 2017 and 70 lakh tree saplings in 2018. As the Government received good response from the people it has proposed to plant tree saplings in forest areas, school and college campuses, government campuses, parks, big housing colonies and by the roadside across the State.

In the concluding remarks the Hon'ble Vice Chairman of SDPC Thiru C.Ponnaiyan appreciated the speakers Professor G.R.Chandrasekar, IFMR and Thiru.K.Rammohan, IFS., Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests, Chennai for their valuable presentation.

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