



Thamirabarani River

Why in News?

The district administration of Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu along with **Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)**, a non-profit Organisation, are using a 'hyper local' approach called TamiraSES to restore the **Thamirabarani River**.

What is the Project About?

- **Need:**
 - The Thamirabarani is of great importance to southern Tamil Nadu environmentally and historically. But it too has suffered, which is why the restoration project has been started.
 - While the Thamirabarani landscape, in general, appears water-rich, it **faced severe drought in 2016 despite** the diverse water storage systems in place.
 - Settlements have been on the rise, **which has led to the shrinkage of agricultural land** and water bodies.
- **TamiraSES project:**
 - It is a district level initiative, which aims to **restore the Social Ecological Systems of Tamiraparani river riverscape from head-waters to the estuary to enable conditions for native biodiversity to thrive** and maintain and enhance multiple ecosystem services to local stakeholders.
 - Five social ecological observatories will be set up **as part of the first phase of the project**. These will serve as pilots to scale up from the learnings from these sites.
 - The idea is to rejuvenate not just the **Thamirabarani but all the water bodies in the riverscape of Tirunelveli**.

What are the Key Points of Thamirabarani River?

- The Thamiraparani is the **only perennial** (continuous flow of water) **river in Tamil Nadu**.
- This is the shortest river in the state, the Thamirabarani **starts in Pothigai hills of the Western Ghats** in the Ambasamudram taluk, flows through Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts and empties at Korkai into the **Gulf of Mannar (Bay of Bengal)**. It thus **originates and ends in the same state**.
- The river supports wildlife such as the Nilgiri marten, **slender loris**, lion-tailed macaque, white spotted bush frog, galaxy frog, Sri Lankan Atlas moth and the **great hornbill**.
- Besides the ecosystem services it provides, the river also has **historical value for the people of the state**. It is mentioned extensively in **Sangam Era literature**.

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Source: DTE

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