



## 423 km of TN coastline eroding, says report

*Shoreline changes assessment shows that anti-erosion structures like groynes, seawalls, breakwaters not working*





According to the report, Tamil Nadu ranks fourth in India experiencing worst coastal erosion after West Bengal, Puducherry and Kerala. (Photo | EPS)

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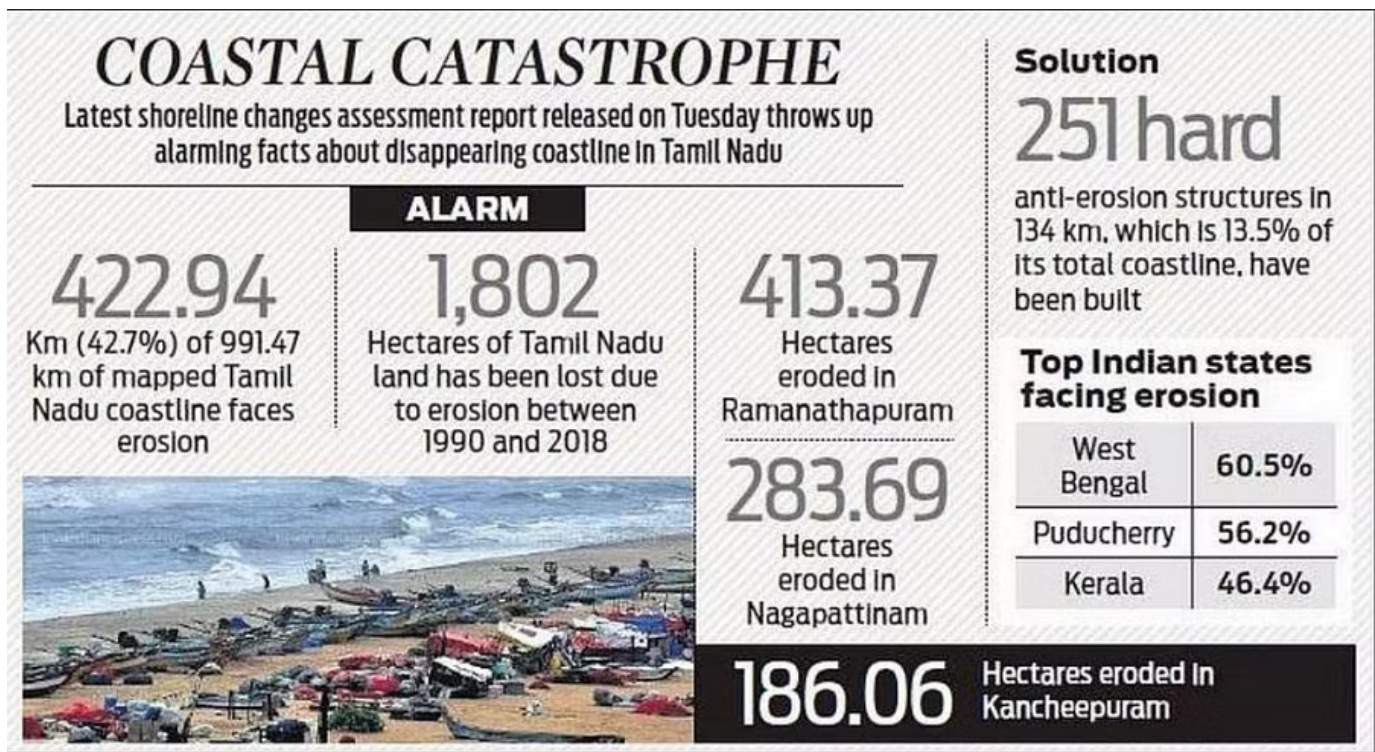
CHENNAI: It seems that the Tamil Nadu government's efforts in the past two decades to address the problem of coastal erosion by building hundreds of hard structures like groynes, seawalls and breakwaters haven't yielded desired results as the latest shoreline changes assessment report released on Tuesday throws up alarming facts. Of the 991.47 km of Tamil Nadu's mapped coastline, a whopping 422.94 km (42.7%) continues to experience

erosion and now the state policy makers are grappling for more nature-based soft or hybrid solutions.

The shoreline changes assessment along Tamil Nadu coast was conducted by the National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR) as part of the National Shoreline Assessment System. The report was released by EV Velu, Minister for Public Works, Highways and Minor Ports Department at a workshop on "Marine Spatial Planning for Tamil Nadu", which was attended by multiple stakeholders.

According to the report, Tamil Nadu ranks fourth in India experiencing worst coastal erosion after West Bengal (60.5%), Puducherry (56.2%) and Kerala (46.4%). Overall during 1990 and 2018, Tamil Nadu has lost 1,802 hectares of land due to erosion. The worst affected district is Ramanathapuram, which lost 413.37 ha, followed by

Nagapattinam 283.69 ha and Kancheepuram 186.06 ha. On the other hand, Chennai lost just 5.03 ha.



NCCR director MV Ramana Murthy, who is also a member of Expert Appraisal Committee (CRZ) of Union environment ministry, said in recent years, the hard structures due to their negative impacts are discouraged, instead 'soft' alternatives like beach nourishment are becoming favourable. Hybrid solutions with a combination of hard and soft solutions are implemented to minimise the impact of these man-made structures. The artificial reef project, which brought back the Puducherry beach to life, is a standout example.

Another NCCR analysis shows Tamil Nadu has already built 251 hard anti-erosion structures in 134 km, which is 13.5% of its total coastline. Pradeep Yadav, Additional Chief Secretary, Highways and Minor Ports Department and Sandeep Saxena, Additional Chief Secretary, Water Resources Department, who participated in the technical sessions, have called for synergy among the policy makers, administrators and the scientists for scientific management of the coastline. Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary, Environment, Forests and Climate Change Department, said: "We understand the problem of coastal erosion is real and going to aggravate due to projected sea-level rise and climate change."