

Effort to restore Thamirabarani river

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In news– The district administration of Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu along with Bengaluru-based non-profit Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) are using what they term as a **'hyper local' approach to restore one of south Asia's oldest rivers, the Thamirabarani.**

Key updates-

- The first phase of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) prepared by ATREE was launched on World Rivers Day September 25, 2022.
- The restoration project is called **TamiraSES**.
- The TamiraSES project 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.
- The Indian Institute of Human Settlements, Bengaluru and the Consortium for DEWATS Dissemination Society are also knowledge partners in the project.

The Thamirabarani river-

- The **Thamirabarani or Tamraparni or Porunai** is only **perennial river in Tamil Nadu** that originates from the **Agastyarkoodam peak of Pothigai hills of the Western Ghats** in Tirunelveli district.
- It **was called the Tamraparni River in the pre-classical period**, a name it lent to the island of Sri Lanka. The old **Tamil name of the river is Porunai.**
- The river flows through Tirunelveli and then neighbouring Thoothukudi and **ends in the Gulf of Mannar at Punakayil. 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.**
- Its many name derivations of Tan Porunai include Tamraparani, Tamirabarni, Tamiravaruni. **Tan Porunai nathi finds mention by classical Tamil poets in ancient Sangam Tamil literature Purananuru.**
- Recognised as a **holy river in Sanskrit literature Puranas, Mahabharata and Ramayana**, the river was **famed in the Early Pandyan Kingdom for its pearl and conch fisheries and trade.**
- One important historical document on the river is the **treatise Tamraparni Mahatmyam.**
- It has many ancient temples along its banks. A hamlet known as **Appankoil** is located on the northern side of the river.
- In the **Mahābhārata** (3:88) the **river is mentioned as** “Listen, O son of Kunti, I shall now describe Tamraparni. In that asylum the gods had undergone penances impelled by the desire of obtaining salvation”.
- A Miami-based Beta Analytic Testing Laboratory published a report on 2021 which claimed that the **Tamirabharani civilization along the banks of the river dates back to 3,200 years.**