

Puducherry Port Disaster

A Man-Made Tsunami

Coastal Erosion at Puducherry

& neighboring beaches of Tamil Nadu

Pondicherry Citizens Action Network

February 2007

Once upon a time ...

Pondicherry had a beautiful beach



Nature's gift to the citizens of Pondicherry



OUR BEACH...

- Protected us from cyclones and tsunamis.
- Prevented our ground water from becoming saline.
- Supported the livelihood of fishermen.
- Was natural recreational spaces.
- And an essential part of the natural ecosystem.

Then a harbour was built.....and neglected

Harbour entrance

North



Pondy was never the same ...a precious gift was lost.



How did we lose our beach?

There is a natural movement of sand along the coastline

3 months a year
0.1 million cu. m of sand
moves southwards.

Pondicherry

New Harbour

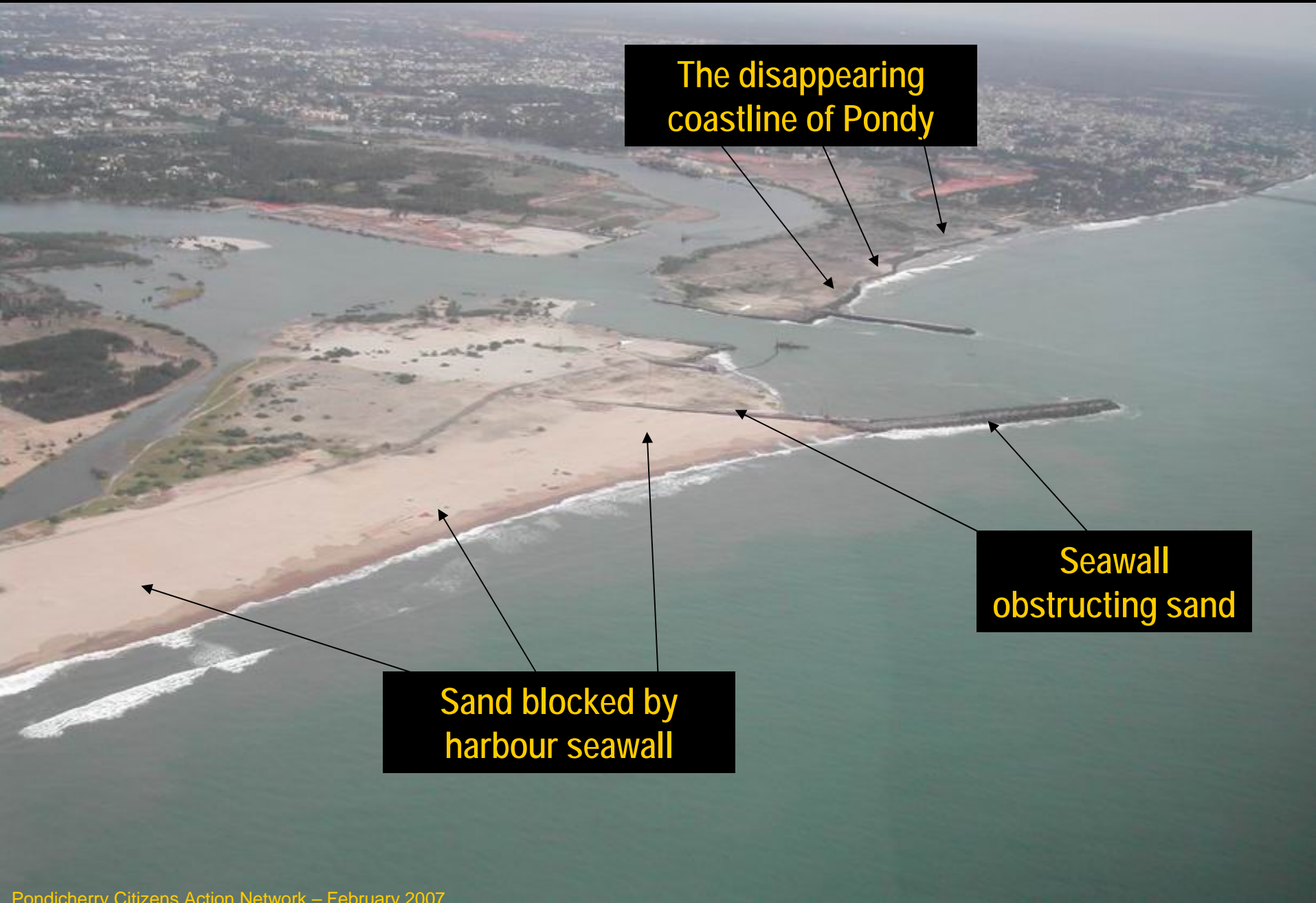
9 months a year
0.6 million cu. m of sand
moves northwards.



0 2 4 Kilometers

A False Colour Composite of the
May 2001 LISSIII satellite image.

The harbour breakwater blocks the natural movement of sand.

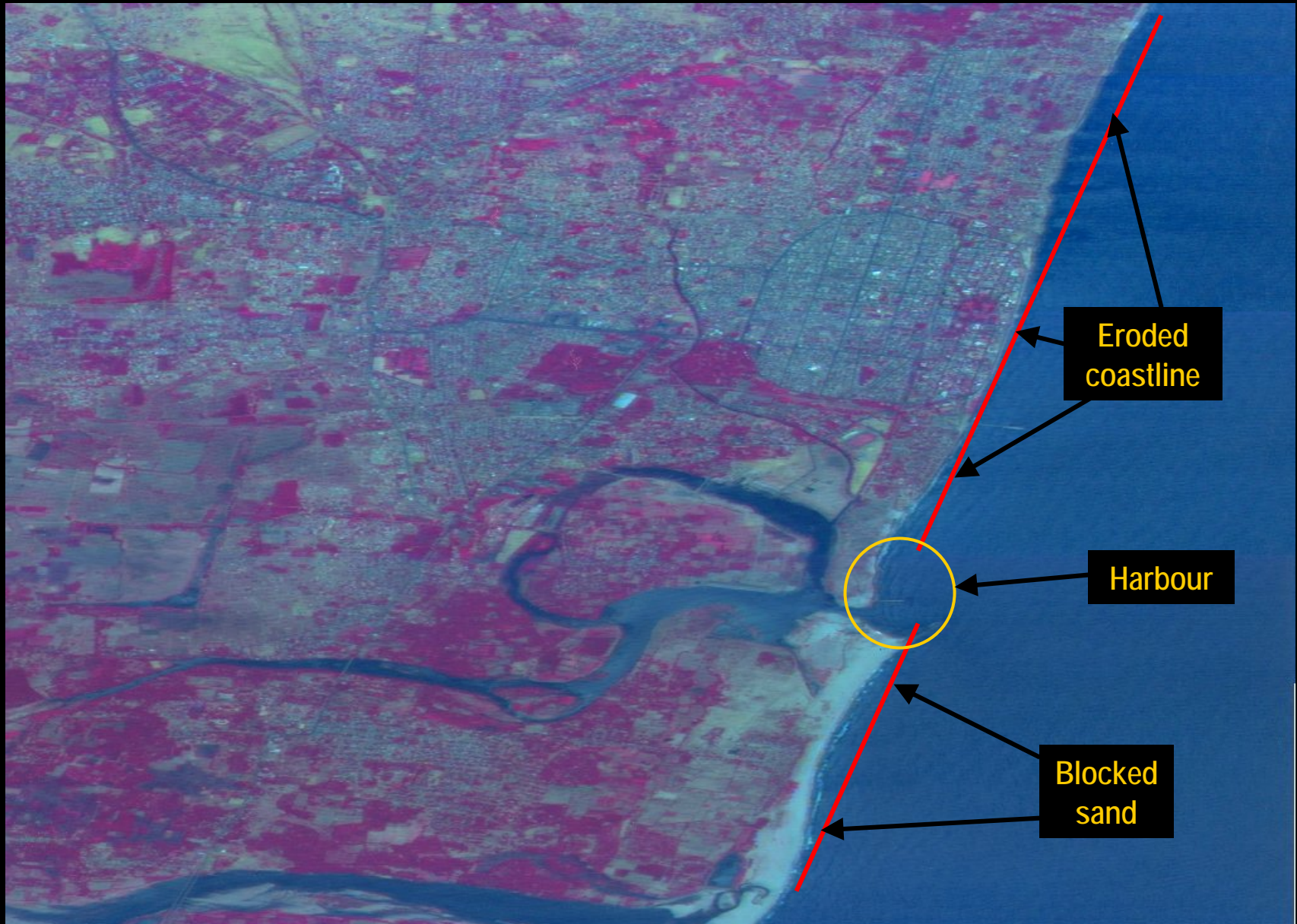


The disappearing
coastline of Pondy

Seawall
obstructing sand

Sand blocked by
harbour seawall

This sand has accumulated south of the breakwaters



Satellite image of Puducherry coastline (Year 2000)

Because of this harbour, Puducherry has
lost approximately 9 million cu.m of sand
(about 1.5 million lorry loads)

How is this erosion affecting Puducherry?

Sand bar protected us from big waves

Waves break on sand bar



As sand bar has eroded the waves crash on to the road



- Salt water is intruding into ground water
- Town has no protection from cyclones and tsunamis
- Our coastal environment is fast degrading



Waves spilling over seawall during cyclone - 2000



Le Café destroyed due to beach erosion.

What has been done to solve this problem?

An artificial seawall was built along the coast



Dumping rocks is only a temporary measure

- They sink in the soft sand.
- This work has to continue forever.
- Requires huge sums of our money.
- Does not protect us from big waves.
- Aggravates erosion and hinders regeneration of the beach.

Is this sustainable?

More than 7 kms of Coastline has eroded in 17 years
in Puducherry and Tamilnadu



Satellite image of Puducherry and Tamil Nadu coastline.

Coastal erosion is advancing at 350 m/year Many villages in Tamil Nadu have been affected



March 2002

(3 months later)



July 2002

Kottakupam, Tamil Nadu

Affected villages in Tamil Nadu – Year 2002



The speed of erosion

1st August '02

... a week later

8th August '02



A house and trees...



...turned into rubble and lost.

Destruction of homes....

livelihoods

nature



Widespread destruction



Parking space for traditional fishing crafts....

is lost.



Seawall ends in Pondy... problem begins in Tamil Nadu



Erosion now affecting Thanthirayan Kuppam, Tamil Nadu, Villupuram Tk.

IMPACTS OF COASTAL EROSION

- Destruction and loss of property.
- Water scarcity / contamination.
- Loss of livelihoods for fishermen.
- Degradation of fertile agricultural land.
- Exposes the town to cyclones.

Studies by experts conclude that

A harbour should be avoided in Puducherry

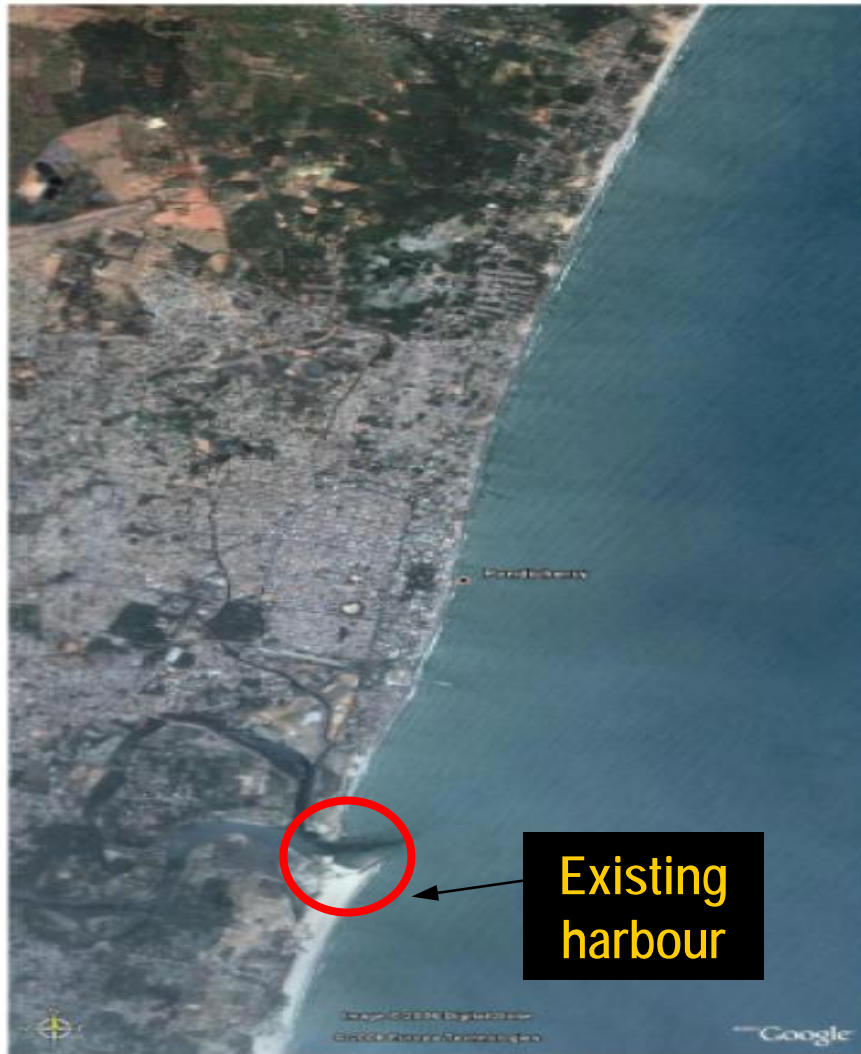
"...there are certain faults along this coast of Puducherry indicating chains of tectonically induced environmental problems such as ground water logging, coastal zone flooding, storm surges, harbor sedimentation etc".

"...construction of harbour must be avoided as the sedimentation will be a problem in the concave of Pondicherry coast."

Dr. S.M. Ramasamy et al., 2001.

The New Threat !

Proposal to construct a new Deep Water Port TEN TIMES bigger



Existing view of the Pondy Harbour.



"Artist's impression" of the Proposed Pondy New Port Development Plan. Created from a personal interpretation of descriptions of the New Port development Plan described in newspapers.

Citizens' Concerns

If the existing harbor is so devastating...

what will happen with a port 10 times bigger?

More concerns...

- Project is being proposed without assessing sand movement.
- The 9 million cu.m of sand required for rehabilitation of the beach is being given to the developer for reclaiming land for their project.
- Government (citizens) will bear the cost of maintaining the eroded beach.
- Technical and economic viability of the project is questionable.

Does Puducherry need a development that will

- Benefit only a few
- Endanger our lives
- Pollute our town and sea
- Damage our environment
- Change the soul of our town



With its rich cultural and spiritual heritage Puducherry
should be a model for an integrated development
that is holistic, sustainable and eco-friendly.

