

## Impact of Cyclone Gaja

### What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- Recently, Cyclone Gaja made its landfall between Nagapattinam and Vedaranyam in Tamil Nadu. Click [here](#) to know more.

\n

- The extent of damage caused by Cyclone Gaja is much worse than what was believed earlier and thus calls for an integrated relief effort.

\n

\n\n

### How severe is the disaster?

\n\n

\n

- The impact was not considered to have been this severe in the initial days after the cyclone struck as the death toll was relatively low.

\n

- But Cyclone Gaja is a major disaster, and its economic impact in Tamil Nadu is comparable to that of the tsunami of 2004.

\n

- **People** - The suffering, the loss, and the displacement are of an enormous magnitude.

\n

- People are distraught as houses have collapsed, farms lie ruined, water sources are contaminated and electricity supply remains disrupted.

\n

- The Tamil Nadu government has estimated the number of people rendered homeless at 3.7 lakh, and houses destroyed at 3.4 lakh.

\n

- **Livelihoods** - The cyclone has crippled agriculture and livelihoods, felling thousands of productive trees and killing livestock.

\n

- The districts of Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Thanjavur and Pudukottai are the severely affected.

\n

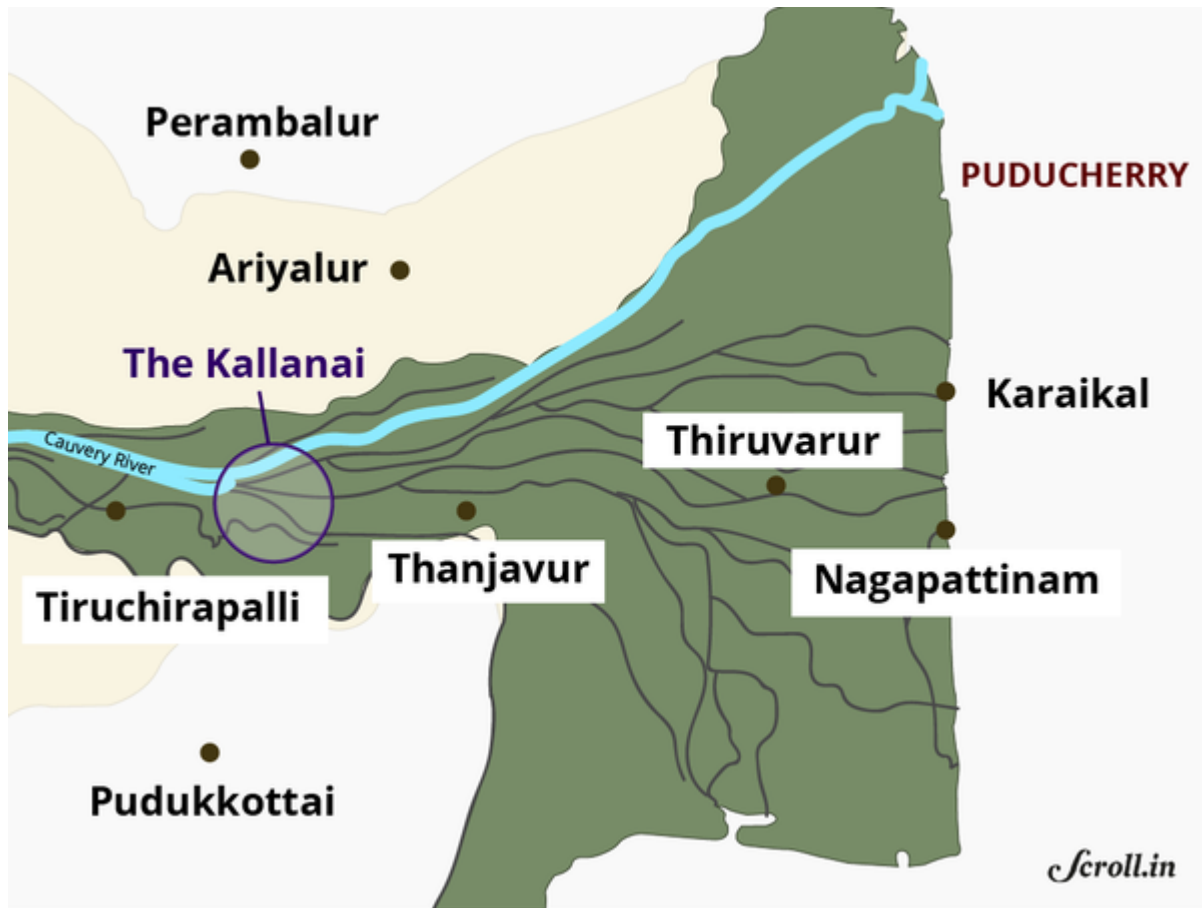
- These are the fertile Cauvery delta districts which are considered the

granary of the state of Tamil Nadu.

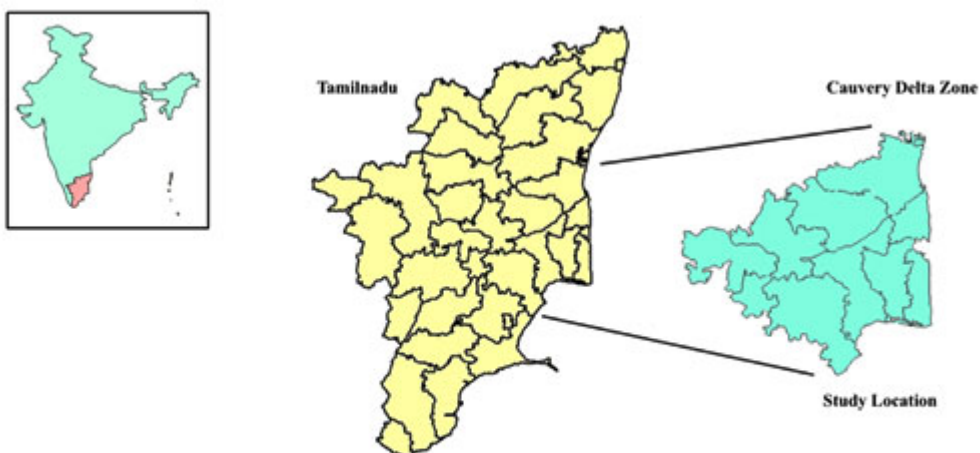
\n

\n\n

\n\n



\n\n



*Fig 1. Cauvery Delta Zone Highlighted from Tamil Nadu*

\n\n

- \n
- The cyclone swept in wind and water, destroying lakhs of trees.
- \n
- These include commercial coconut, banana, cashew, mango, jackfruit, casuarina, betelvine, eucalyptus, teak and sugarcane on thousands of hectares.
- \n
- Between 60% and 80% of the coconut trees in the region have fallen.
- \n
- Notably, these contribute a quarter of India's coconuts with the highest unit yield.
- \n
- Unlike paddy or many other crops, bringing coconut plantations back to life will take years.
- \n
- The paddy crop of the samba/thaladi seasons was also damaged in some places.
- \n
- Boats and huts of fishermen were destroyed. Nearly a lakh tonne of stocks in salt pans in Vedaranyam in Nagapattinam district were washed away.
- \n
- **Ecosystem** - The Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary, a Ramsar site (a wetland of international importance for conservation), was ravaged.
- \n
- Carcasses of blackbuck, spotted deer, feral horses and birds were washed on the shores of Karaikal in Puducherry.
- \n

\n\n

## **What lies ahead?**

\n\n

- \n
- **Infrastructure** - Tamil Nadu government's top priority should be to restore administrative systems and service delivery in the affected areas.
- \n
- Many areas still remain inaccessible because fallen trees have blocked roads.
- \n
- Physical access, electricity connections and public health facilities are essential for effective relief work to be undertaken.
- \n
- **Compensation** - The farm insurance under Centre's *Fasal Bima Yojana* covers only food crops, oilseeds and annual horticultural crops.
- \n

- But many of the farmers have invested in various trees and livestock, expecting long-term returns.  
\n
- The large number of stricken farmers should thus be assured of a moratorium on any agricultural loans that they have taken.  
\n
- A fair and special compensation scheme should be prepared.  
\n
- The state government has given the Centre a memorandum seeking nearly Rs. 15,000 crore for restoration, rehabilitation and mitigation, besides Rs. 1,431 crore for immediate relief work.  
\n
- The State's requirements should be met in full.  
\n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n\n

\n\n

**Quick Fact**

\n\n

**Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana**

\n\n

- The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (Prime Minister's Crop Insurance Scheme) was launched in 2016.  
\n
- It envisages a uniform premium of only 2% to be paid by farmers for Kharif crops and 1.5% for Rabi crops.  
\n
- The premium for annual commercial and horticultural crops will be 5%.  
\n

\n



**SHANKAR**  
**IAS PARLIAMENT**  
*Information is Empowering*