



INTACH

MAJOR LANDFORMS OF INDIA - COROMANDEL COAST



The Coromandel Coast, with the Eastern Ghats on its backdrop, is on the eastern coastline of India extending over the state of Tamil Nadu and parts of Andhra Pradesh. The coast extends over an area of about 8,800 square miles (22,800 square km). It is bound by the Utkal Plains to the north, the Bay of Bengal to the east, the Kaveri delta to the south, and the Eastern Ghats to the west.

ETYMOLOGY

The region derives its name from the Tamil Chola Mandalam (“Land of the Chola,”) an ancient dynasty that ruled the region in the ancient and medieval period. It also has been known since ancient times as the “land of the temples,‒ due to the sheer number of



temples located on the coast. The Tamil Nadu coast and part of Andhra coast together are known as the Coromandel Coast or Payan Ghat.

Interestingly, there is another theory about how the coast got its name. According to local folklore, it is believed that the first Dutch ship to India stopped at a village called Karimanal - an island village to the north of Pulicat. The sailors spelt the name of the village as 'Corimondal' and the name stuck thereafter.

LAND



The Coromandel Coast has an average elevation of 264 feet (80 metres) and on its backdrop lays the Eastern Ghats, a chain of low, flat-topped hills. The shoreline is relatively straight, with several sandbars and an offshore chain of coral islands. The sand dunes consist of quaternary to recent

sediments and are a major part of the various coastal landforms such as lagoons, estuaries, bays, beaches, spits, bars, deltas, marshes, tidal flats, mud flats, etc. These dunes make up a large part of the Coromandel Coast and have a key role in the morphology and land use planning of this coastal zone. These dunes are an important source of ground water, heavy minerals, silica (glass) sands and are also potential avenues for social forestry, mixed forests and plantations.

The coastline mainly remains dry during the summer. The lower courses of the Palar, Ponnaiyar, and Cheyyar rivers and their tributaries, the Pamban and Ponnai, which rise in the Ghats, remain dry during most of the year. There is hardly any forest cover,



but marshes, swamps, scrub woodlands, and thorny thickets can be found along the coast.

HISTORY

At the height of the Chola Empire, it encompassed around 3.6 million sq. km. which included India's eastern coastline that stretched between Point Calimere (in present-day Tamil Nadu) in the south to Gangam (in present-day Odisha) in the north.

Later on, European traders began establishing themselves on this coast. The Portuguese were some of the first on the scene and they were the ones who began calling this region by the Tamil word for 'Realm of The Cholas' or



Cholamandalam. This name is also mentioned in the rock inscriptions of Emperor Ashok, the great temple inscription of Tanjore and on the walls of the temple cities. Finally, the name Coromandel was given by the British who translated Cholamandalam into Coromandel and started using it to refer to the coast.

RIVERS AND BEACHES



The important deltas in this region are formed by the River Cauvery (Kaveri). The major rivers in this coastal area are the Kaveri, the Penner, the Palar, etc. There are also some unique beaches like Marina Beach,

Besant Nagar Beach, the beaches of Mahabalipuram, Dhanushkodi, Kovalam Beach, Auroville Beach (Pondicherry), etc. The Marina beach has the distinction of being the longest beach of India and probably of Asia too. The Kovalam beach has received the Blue Flag Certification tag.

DID YOU KNOW...

Interestingly, a seaside town in New Zealand's North Island is named Coromandel Harbour after HMS Coromandel. A ship of the British Royal Navy, it stopped at the town in 1820 to purchase kauri spars and was itself named after India's Coromandel Coast.

ACTIVITY

1. What are the coasts that make up the East Coast of India? What do you think makes the Coromandel Coast unique?
2. Make a list of rivers that drain into the Coromandel Coast. You can also mark them on a physical map of India.
3. What is the reason for the Coromandel Coast receiving rainfall in the winters?

REFERENCES

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