Project Update: February 2018

The Cauvery river stretch within Karnataka from the origin at Talacauvery to Mekedatu before it enters Tamil Nadu is approximately 320 km. The vegetation study followed Sunil (2012) and divided the 320 km stretch into 80 sampling points, with 40 sampling points each on left and right bank. Approximately eight km interval is the distance between the sampling points. Ground truthing was carried out in majority of these 80 sampling points along with a couple of tourist locations. Also, focus group discussions and qualitative interviews were held with communities residing along the riparian buffer (mostly near the above mentioned sampling points) to understand the ecosystem services derived and also communities perception towards riparian buffers. Riparian buffer was associated with three major types of land use systems:

(i) coffee-agrosystem,
(ii) agricultural land
(iii) protected area. Based on the focus groups and qualitative interviews 10, 12 and 10 villages have been identified in coffee-agrosystem, agricultural and protected area respectively. These locations are distributed almost equally on left and right bank of the river.

Field observations:

A few communities harvested honey and fruits mostly for subsistence. In several locations along the river, waste dumping was a common sight. Many number of temples were observed along the river in the agricultural landscape and waste dumping was common here as well. Certain locations had thin strips of vegetation in the riparian buffer. Sand mining was observed in a couple of locations. These villages have not been shortlisted for the questionnaire survey due to the risk factor associated with it.

Outreach:

- I attended the symposium on 'Can inter-linking rivers and greening their banks save our cities?' organised by Environment Support Group - Trust, Bangalore, India, 16th December 2017.
- I acknowledge Rufford Small Grants for my web page on their website which helped The Mahseer Trust, United Kingdom to identify my work and invited me to deliver a talk on 'Why do we need (to conserve) Riparian forests?' at Regional Natural History Museum, Mysore, India, 13th February 2018.
- My article on 'Multiple Ecosystem Services of Riparian Forest along river Cauvery, South India' was published in Deepthi, N & B.C. Nagaraja. (2018). 'Multiple Ecosystem Services of Riparian Forest along river Cauvery, South India', in Sharathchandra, R.G. & H. Raja Naika (eds.) 'Biotechnological solutions for sustainable environmental management', Tumkur University, India, 79 - 82.

Qualitative interviews with farmers

Focus group discussions with farmers

Left: Interaction with women stakeholders. Right: Talk at Regional Natural History Museum, Mysore, India.