



**MIDS**  
Madras  
Institute of  
Development  
Studies

## NATURAL EVENTS; NATIONAL DISASTERS

The Real Cost of Wetland Abuse

**October 10, 2018 - 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm**  
**Madras Institute for Development Studies (MIDS)**  
79, Second Main Road, Gandhi Nagar, Adyar, Chennai - 600020

### BACKGROUND

If it rains, it will flood. If it doesn't, Chennai will suffer acute water shortage. Come rain or drought, the health of wetlands in the city will determine if the city will suffer. The 2015 floods have taught Chennai nothing. Since 2015 then and now, Chennai has lost at least 500 acres of wetlands in Ennore Creek alone as government agencies continue to act with impunity. By ignoring the role of river ecologies and coastal wetlands in disaster mitigation, our governments are condemning more than lakhs people to a watery grave. Extreme weather events are now a recurring event across India. Chennai is not alone in experiencing floods induced by poor land use and destruction of its natural defenses. In 2018, Kerala experienced its worst flood in 90 years. Destruction of natural buffers and poor land use turned rainfall into floods.

Fisher folk who are leading the struggles to protect coastal ecology are also in the front line as far as bearing the impacts go. However, during the Chennai floods, it was the fisher community that played a key role in rescue efforts. In Kerala too, their superheroes -- the fishermen -- helped lakhs of stranded people. This year, if it rains, we will once again call upon their help. Quick to jump to our rescue, fisher folk also have some words of advice to those of us that believe that the objectives of development justify the destruction of the environment.

### PROGRAM AGENDA

Session	Speaker	Time
Introduction	<b>Dr. Karen Coelho</b> Assistant Professor, MIDS	3:00 to 3:05 pm
The Ennore Creek Story	<b>Mr. R.L Srinivasan</b> Fisherman from Katukuppam, Ennore	3:05 to 3:15 pm
Key Note Address	<b>Mr. Shashi Shekhar (I.A.S)</b> Former Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation	3:15 to 3:45 pm Q&A – 3:45 to 4:00 pm
Victims before Heroes: Experiences of Kerala Fisher folks from Kerala Floods	<b>Mr. T. Peter</b> National Fish Workers Forum, Kerala	4:00 to 4:20 pm
Tea		4:20 to 4:30 pm
Responses:	<b>Shripad Dharmadhikary</b> Coordinator, Manthan Adhyayan Kendra, Pune	4:30 to 4:45 pm
	<b>Kanchi Kohli</b> Center for Policy Research, Delhi	4:45 to 5:00 pm
	<b>Jagdish Krishnaswamy</b> Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bangalore	5:00 to 5:15 pm
Open for Discussion		5:15 to 5:30 pm

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