

25.06.2026

Sriperumbudur – Rejuvenation of Water Bodies: A Tool for Social Initiatives, a promising ESG case in the making

Puthiya Thalaimurai Foundation & Hyundai Mobis

Though late for a nation like India – that is endowed with a rich culture and heritage- the first water body census conducted in 2018 (seven decades after our Independence) by the Ministry of Jal Sakthi was revealing and enlightening in many ways.

According to the Census report, Tamil Nadu has the maximum number of lakes in India that Tamil Nadu has the maximum number of States and

However, many traditional water bodies that once supported villages have gradually deteriorated due to encroachment, silt accumulation, weed growth, and inadequate maintenance.

Through the Government Schemes and Corporate CSR programmes of Indian Inc, Tamil Nadu is actively undertaking massive **water body rejuvenation** initiatives to combat urban flooding, prevent seawater intrusion, and secure long-term drinking water supplies.

The CSR Project undertaken by Puthiya Thalaimurai Foundation for Hyundai Mobis through an MoU signed in April 2026, is an important initiative.

The project focuses on the restoration and rejuvenation of **Kannan Thangal Eri in Thathanoor Village, Puthu Eri in Palnallur**

Village, and Nayakan Thangal Eri in Echoor Village, all located in **Sriperumbudur Taluk, Kanchipuram District**. While the primary objective is water conservation and ecological restoration, the initiative goes beyond lake rejuvenation and aims to create a comprehensive model for rural social development.



Water Body Rejuvenation – A Catalyst for Change

For generations, lakes have played a critical role in supporting agriculture, livestock, groundwater recharge, and domestic water needs. However, neglect and environmental degradation have reduced their effectiveness. Through scientific restoration measures such as weed removal, desilting, strengthening of bunds, and improving water retention capacity, the project seeks to revive these lakes and restore their ecological balance.

The rejuvenated lakes are expected to improve groundwater levels, increase water availability for irrigation, and support sustainable agricultural practices. More importantly, they will contribute to long-term water security for the surrounding communities, benefiting nearly 1,000 rural families.

The restoration of water bodies is not merely an environmental activity; it is a powerful tool for social transformation. Improved water availability directly impacts agriculture, livelihoods, health, education, and overall quality of life in rural areas.

Education Through Rural Tuition Centres

As part of the integrated development approach, Puthiya Thalaimurai Foundation have set up Two **Rural Tuition Centres (RTCs)** in the villages of Thathanur & Echoor. These centres will provide free evening educational support to school-going children between 5 PM and 7 PM.

Puthiya Thalaimurai Foundation has started a Rural Tuition Centre in **Thathanoor Village** to support the educational needs of rural students. The centre is currently attended by **20 students** under the guidance of **Ms. Jercial**. The initiative has received a positive response from parents and the local community, as it provides a dedicated space for learning and academic improvement. According to Ms. Jercial, the students are showing increased interest in their studies, improved attendance, and greater confidence in classroom activities. She expressed her appreciation to Puthiya Thalaimurai Foundation for creating an opportunity that helps children strengthen their educational foundation and develop essential life skills.



Puthiya Thalaimurai Foundation has established a Rural Tuition Centre in **Echoor Village** to enhance educational opportunities for rural children. The centre currently serves **25 students** and is managed by **Mrs. Jeyanthi**. The programme has been well received by parents, who value the additional academic support provided to their children. Mrs. Jeyanthi shared that students are actively participating in learning activities and have shown noticeable improvement in their academic performance, discipline, and self-confidence. She conveyed her gratitude to Puthiya Thalaimurai Foundation for introducing this initiative in the village and helping students achieve better educational outcomes. The objective is to improve academic performance, reduce learning gaps, and encourage regular school attendance among rural students. Beyond academics, the centres will focus on hygiene awareness, discipline, value education, and leadership development.

Puthiya
Thalaimurai
Foundation is
currently
operating 28 Rural
Tuition Centres
across Tamil Nadu

The initiative also encourages the formation of local volunteer groups under the “Nammal Mudiyum” movement, motivating young people to participate in environmental conservation and community development activities. By investing in education, the project aims to create confident, responsible, and socially conscious future citizens.

Empowering Women Through Micro Entrepreneurship

Economic empowerment is another key pillar of the project. To address this need, Puthiya Thalaimurai Foundation plans to support women-focused micro entrepreneurship initiatives. Training programs in advanced embroidery and tailoring are being planned.

Kurungadu Valappu Thittam – Creating Micro Forests

Environmental sustainability remains central to the project’s vision. Under the **Kurungadu Valappu Thittam**” micro forests will be established around the rejuvenated water bodies and in community spaces.

Native tree species such as Mango, Pungai, Iluppai, Neer Maruthu, and Poovarasu planted on June 5, 2026 to enhance biodiversity and strengthen climate resilience. Community tree-planting drives, school participation programs, and environmental awareness campaigns will encourage local ownership and long-term maintenance.



These micro forests will help improve air quality, reduce local temperatures, support wildlife habitats, and create greener village ecosystems. The initiative demonstrates how water conservation and afforestation can work together to combat climate change and environmental degradation.

Improving Community Health

In collaboration with SRM Hospital, the project includes the organization of regular medical camps in the project villages. These camps will provide free health check-ups and early detection of health issues.

By improving access to healthcare services, the initiative seeks to enhance the overall well-being of rural families and reduce preventable health challenges.

Strengthening Partnerships for Sustainable Development

An important aspect of the project is collaboration with local industries and institutions. Through engagement with the Sipcot Irungattukottai Manufacturers Association (SIMA), opportunities are being explored to strengthen Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) participation in nearby villages.

With more than 100 industries operating in the SIPCOT industrial cluster, there is significant potential for partnerships in education, healthcare, skill development, environmental sustainability, and livelihood enhancement. Such collaborations can create a larger impact and ensure the long-term sustainability of development initiatives.

Voices from the Villages: Local Leaders Welcome the Lake Rejuvenation Initiative

The rejuvenation of Kannan Thangal Eri in Thathanoor Village, Puthu Eri in Palnallur Village, and Nayakan Thangal Eri in Echoor Village has generated widespread appreciation among local communities. Farmers, women, youth, and village elders have welcomed the initiative, recognizing its potential to restore water security, strengthen agriculture, improve groundwater recharge, and enhance the overall quality of life in their villages.

Speaking about the restoration of **Kannan Thangal Eri**, **Mrs. Chandra Masilamani, Panchayat President, Thathanoor**, described the project as a significant milestone for the village. He noted that the lake has traditionally served as a vital source of water for agriculture and groundwater replenishment. According to her, the rejuvenation effort undertaken by Puthiya Thalaimurai Foundation and Hyundai Mobis will greatly benefit farmers, improve irrigation prospects, and support the long-term development of Thathanoor and its surrounding communities.

Commenting on the restoration of **Nayakan Thangal Eri, Mrs. Kumudha Dominic, Panchayat President, Echoor**, expressed her happiness over the initiative and highlighted its importance for the village's future. She observed that the restored lake would improve groundwater levels, support farming activities, and create a healthier environment for local residents.



Farmers Welcome the Rejuvenation of Traditional Water Bodies

Thathanoor (Kannanthangal), Palnallur, and Echoor villages, agriculture has become increasingly challenging due to the deteriorating condition of the local water bodies. Farmers reported that silt accumulation, pollution, poor maintenance of lakes, reduced water storage capacity, and inadequate irrigation facilities have significantly affected crop cultivation. In Palnallur, farmers stated that they are currently able to cultivate only one crop per year, whereas they previously grew paddy, millets, vegetables, greens, and pulses regularly. They also expressed concern about chemical effluents from nearby industries contaminating lake water and affecting soil fertility, fish populations, and crop quality. In Thathanoor and Echoor, farmers highlighted water scarcity, declining groundwater levels, irregular irrigation supply, and increasing dependence on monsoon rains, which have reduced agricultural productivity and income. Some farmers have even been forced to sell their agricultural lands due to the lack of a reliable water source. Overall, the farmers strongly emphasized that rejuvenating the lakes would improve water availability, support multiple cropping seasons, enhance agricultural productivity, increase income opportunities, and strengthen the livelihoods of rural farming communities.



Water Body Rejuvenation: Driving Environmental, Social, and Governance Impact

Water body rejuvenation is a powerful initiative that directly contributes to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) objectives. From an environmental perspective, rejuvenated lakes, ponds, rivers, and wetlands enhance groundwater recharge, improve water quality, increase biodiversity, reduce flood risks, and strengthen climate resilience. Socially, restored water bodies provide communities with access to cleaner water, support agriculture and livelihoods, improve public health, and create recreational and educational opportunities. Such projects also foster community participation, environmental awareness, and local stewardship, strengthening social cohesion and shared responsibility for natural resources. From a governance

standpoint, water body rejuvenation promotes transparent planning, stakeholder engagement, regulatory compliance, and long-term sustainability through collaboration among government agencies, corporates, NGOs, and local communities. Organizations investing in these initiatives demonstrate responsible resource management and commitment to sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly those related to clean water, climate action, and ecosystem conservation. As ESG performance becomes increasingly important for investors, regulators, and stakeholders, water body rejuvenation serves as a measurable and impactful intervention that generates long-term environmental value, social benefits, and governance excellence while contributing to the creation of resilient and sustainable communities.



Conclusion

The vision of Puthiya Thalaimurai Foundation and Hyundai Mobis extends beyond lake restoration. The initiative seeks to transform the three villages into integrated models of rural development by combining water conservation, education, livelihood promotion, healthcare, and environmental protection.

Continuous monitoring will ensure that all interventions achieve measurable outcomes. Student attendance and academic progress, women's income generation, tree survival rates, groundwater levels, and water quality will be regularly assessed to evaluate impact and guide future improvements.

**“If Climate Change is Shark
Water is its Teeth “**