7.35 PUDUCHERRY

7.35.1 Introduction

Puducherry is a Union Territory having geographical area of 480 km^2. It is distributed over four locations - Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam and Mahe. The main territory lies on the east coast, about 180 km south of Chennai. Karaikal is about 150 km south of Puducherry on the east coast, Mahe on the Malabar coast on the Western Ghats and Yanam on the east coast adjoining Godavari district.

Physiography is almost plain and the climate is tropical. Puducherry and its surrounding enclaves lie on the drainage basin of the Gingee river. Karaikal, located in the fertile Cauvery delta is fed by the waters of the Arasalar, the Natter, the Vanjiar and the Nulur rivers. The Mahe river forms the northern boundary of Mahe town. The Gorinagar river flows through the town of Yanam.

As per Census 2001, the total population of the UT is 974,345 of which the rural population is 33.43%. The population density is 2,034 persons per km^2. The projected population of the UT is 1.27 million (as projected by the Office of RGI for 2009). The livestock population is 133,000 (Livestock Census 2003), which has decreased by nearly 6% since the census of 1992.

Land use pattern of the Union Territory is given in Table 7.35.1.

7.35.2 Recorded Forest Area

The recorded forest area of the UT is 13 km^2. Reserved Forests constitute 30.77%, Protected Forests 15.38% and Unclassed Forests 53.85% of the total forest area. About 2.71% of the UT's geographical area is under recorded forests.

7.35.3 Protected Areas

There is only one Wildlife Sanctuary - Fudam, covering an area of 2,008 ha, which constitutes 4.18% of its land area.

7.35.4 Forest Cover

The forest cover in the UT, based on interpretation of satellite data of Mar - May 2007, is 43.87 km^2, which is 9.14%of it's geographical area. In terms of forest canopy density classes, the UT has 12.94 km^2 moderately dense forest, and 30.93 km^2 open forest. The distribution of forest cover of the UT is shown in Fig. 7.35.

Comparison of the current forest cover (satellite data of Mar - May 2007) with the previous assessment (satellite data of Feb 2004) shows a gain of 1.52 km^2 of forest cover.

The change matrix, given in Table 7.35.2,

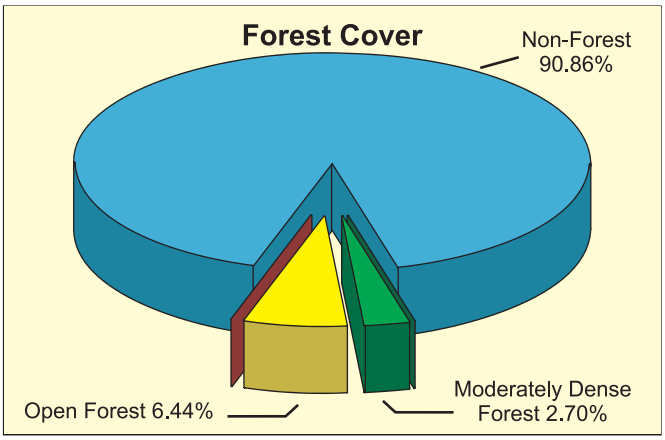
Table 7.35.1: Land use pattern

Land Use	Area in '000 ha	Percentage
Total geographical area	48	
Reporting area for land utilization	49	100.00
Forests	0	0.00
Not available for cultivation	18	36.73
Permanent pastures and other grazing lands	0	0.00
Land under misc. tree crops & groves	1	2.04
Culturable wasteland	4	8.16
Fallow lands other than current fallows	3	6.12
Current fallows	2	4.08
Net area sown	20	40.82

Source: Land Use Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, GOI, 2006.

reveals that there has been a decrease of 0.7 km^2 in the moderately dense forest and an increase of 2.22 km^2 in open forest.

On the basis of ground truthing by the officials of FSI and the information gathered from the UT Forest Department, main reasons for the increase in forest cover are successful plantation and protection.



District wise forest cover in different canopy density classes and scrub along with the changes compared to 2005 assessment is given in the Table 7.35.3.

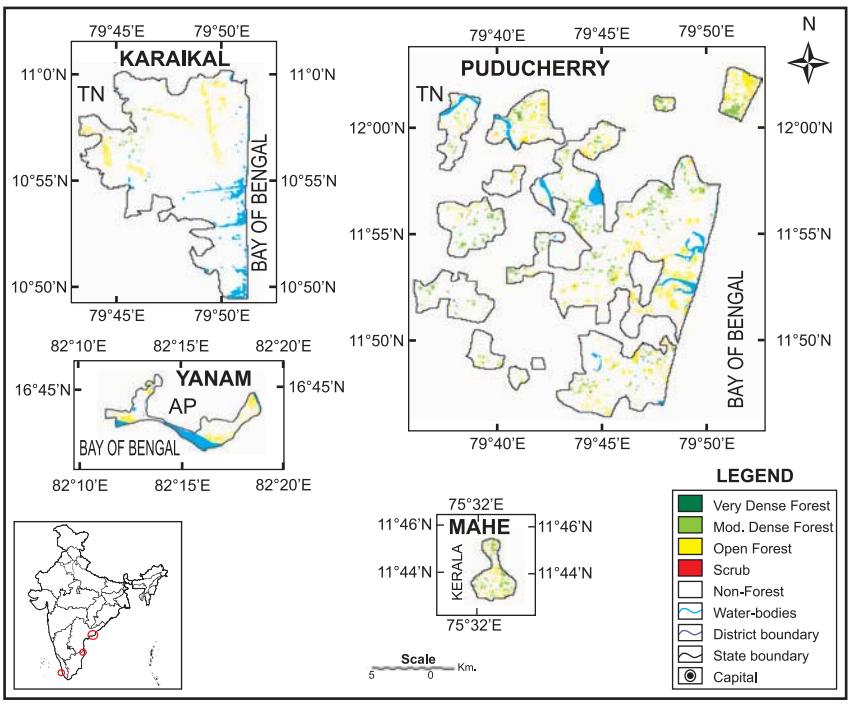


Fig. 7.35 : Forest cover map of Puducherry

Table 7.35.2: Forest cover change matrix (area in km^2)

2005 Assessment (Data of Feb 2004)	2007 (Data of Mar - May 2007)					Total of 2005
	VDF	MDF	OF	Scrub	NF	
Very Dense Forest	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moderately Dense Forest	0	11.16	0	0	2.48	13.64
Open Forest	0	0	28.46	0	0.25	28.71
Scrub	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-Forest	0	1.78	2.47	0	433.40	437.65
Total of 2007	**0**	**12.94**	**30.93**	**0**	**436.13**	**480**
Net Change	0	-0.7	2.22	0	-1.52	

Table 7.35.3: District-wise forest cover in 2007
Number of districts:4

(area in km^2)

District	Geographical area	Very dense forest	Mod. dense forest	Open forest	Total	% of G.A.	Change*	Scrub
Karaikal	161	0	0.56	4.48	5.04	3.13	0	0
Mahe	9	0	1.36	1.54	2.9	32.22	0	0
Puducherry	293	0	11.02	21.91	32.93	11.24	1.52	0
Yanam	17	0	0	3	3	17.65	0	0
Total	**480**	**0**	**12.94**	**30.93**	**43.87**	**9.14**	**1.52**	**0**

* Change compared to 2005 assessment (revised).

7.35.5 Altitude Zone wise Forest Cover

Forest cover of the UT in different altitude zones is given in Table 7.35.4.

Table 7.35.4: Altitude zone wise forest cover

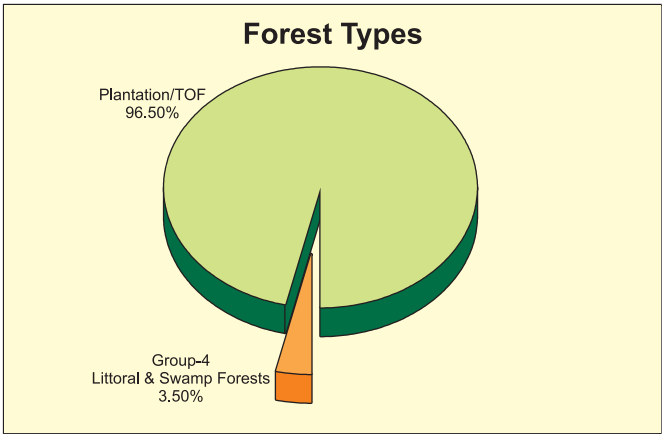
(area in km^2)

Altitude Zone	VDF	MDF	OF	Total
0-500m	0	12.94	30.93	43.87
Total	**0**	**12.94**	**30.93**	**43.87**

(based on SRTM Digital Elevation Model)

7.35.6 Forest Cover in Different Forest Types

As per Champion & Seth Classification (1968), the UT has all its forest cover belonging to Littoral & Swamp Forests type group. Distribution of forest cover in the above forest type group and plantation/TOF is given in the pie diagram.



7.35.7 Tree Cover

Tree cover of the UT has been estimated using sample data of TOF inventory collected over a period of six years i.e. 2002-08. The estimated tree cover in the UT is 34 km^2 which is 7.08% of the geographical area of the UT. Karaikal district of the UT has been inventoried .

The forest and tree cover of the UT is presented in the Table 7.35.5.

Table 7.35.5: Forest & tree cover

(area in km^2)

Category	Area	% of Geographical area
Tree Cover	34	7.08
Forest Cover	43.87	9.14
Forest & Tree Cover	**77.87**	**16.22**