

# THE HINDU

## MSU and CMFRI sign MoU

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SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



### To offer PG, Ph.D. programmes on marine biodiversity

**K. Baskar (left) Vice-Chancellor, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, exchanging the Memorandum of Understanding with A. Gopalakrishnan, Director, CMFRI, in Tirunelveli on Thursday.**

The Manonmaniam Sundaranar University has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Kochi, to offer post-graduate and research programmes on marine biodiversity with special reference to the richness of Gulf of Mannar.

Its Vice-Chancellor K. Baskar and CMFRI Director A. Gopalakrishnan signed the MoU on Thursday. Registrar A. John De Britto; Head, Department of Geotechnology, MSU, Dr.N. Chandrasekar; Scientist (in-charge), CMFRI, Thoothukkudi, Dr P.P. Manoj Kumar; and Principal Scientist, CMFRI, Thoothukkudi, I. Jegadish, were present. The mandate of MoU is to recognize the CMFRI as a sister institute of MSU to jointly conduct PG courses and Ph.D. programmes. The scientists of CMFRI will act as the supervisor and the faculty member of MSU will act as a co-supervisor.

According to Dr. Chandrasekar, who played pivotal role in signing this MoU, the Gulf of Mannar is known to harbour rich marine biodiversity of global significance and is the world's one of the richest region from the marine biodiversity perspective. The region comprises of 560 square kilometre core area of coral islands, shallow marine habitat and 21 uninhabited islands. The Gulf's estimated 3,600 plants and animal species make it one of the richest coastal regions in India.

There are 17 different mangrove species living within the reserve and act as an important nursery habitat. Similarly sandy shores of the islands of Gulf of Mannar provide nesting habitat for sea turtles. Of the 2,200 fish species in Indian waters, 450 species are found in the Gulf of Mannar making it the single richest coastal area in the Indian subcontinent.

"Such a rich biodiversity area is facing serious threats, mainly habitat destruction due to excessive harvesting of marine resources and potential localized marine pollution. Recently there was a publication in a scientific journal suggesting that emissions from ships could impact monsoon activity over Bay of Bengal. This can be expected in the Gulf of Mannar in the near future," he said. So, MSU is planning to develop educational programme on 'Marine biodiversity assessment and conservation' for regulating the use of marine resources to ensure a sustainable catch. It has been planned to develop comprehensive curriculum on climate change studies and its impact on marine resources as part of this MoU.

The MSU and the CMFRI are actively pursuing a range of researches in the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere separately for several decades. The Department of Geotechnology, MSU, has done collaborative projects with CMFRI on coastal agro ecosystem, coloration of pearls, coral reef mapping, sub bottoms characterization etc.

"Now, the MSU has come forward to collaborate with nationally reputed laboratories like CMFRI for carrying out multidisciplinary research in marine science and technology. The signing of MoU between MSU and CMFRI will lead to setting up of a research centre in CMFRI, Thoothukkudi, for academic and Ph.D. research programme in marine sciences and technology," he added.