description of study area
4. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA

The Indian Peninsula has long coastline of over 8000 km. The coastal length of state of Tamil Nadu is 1076 km. Tuticorin is located at Lat. $8^\circ45'N$ and Long. $78^\circ13'E$ and enjoys a unique position along the Gulf of Mannar in the Southeast coast of India (Fig.1). Gulf of Mannar is the first Marine Biosphere Reserve in South and Southeast Asia. Two coastal fishing villages, namely Tharuvaikulam (Station 1) and Thirespuram (Station 2) in Tuticorin District were selected for the present study.

Fig.1: Study areas, Tharuvaikulam and Thirespuram fishing villages in the Tuticorin coast

Tharuvaikulam (Lat.$78^\circ11'51''E$ and Long.$8^\circ53'17''N$) is located about 15 km from the Tuticorin town. The village has a shoreline of about 1 km, where the entire fishery related activities are carried out. Two islands namely Vaan and Koswari are at the vicinity of this village blessed with a wide variety of flora and fauna.
Thirespuram (Lat. 08° 48.957' and Long. 078° 009.795') is located about 1 km from the main town of Tuticorin. It is one of the oldest fishing villages of Tuticorin district. This village is under the Tuticorin town limit and so all basic facilities like drinking water, electricity, road and transport are available in this fishing village.