4. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

Veerampattinam is the biggest coastal village in the union territory of Pondicherry situated between Pondicherry and Cuddalore. Pondicherry is one of the typical mangrove swamps from Ariyankuppam estuarine complex, covering an area of 168 ha distributed along the sides of Ariyankuppam estuary, which is a seasonal bar-built and semi diurnal type that flows eastwards and empties into the Bay of Bengal at Veerampatinam on south east coast of India. Veerampattinam receives neritic waters from the adjacent Bay of Bengal. The village is 7 km away from the Pondicherry city centre. The samples were collected at latitude 11°53'37.07 "N and longitude 79°49'40.0 "E. Most of the elderly citizens of the village are engaged in fishing profession. Around 70 motorboats have been operated. Fishing activities were carried out regularly. The clams were collected using hand picking method which mainly involves women workers.

![Map showing the collection area.]

**Fig. 1.** Map showing the collection area.