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Life at Munroe:

Holding on to the Sinking Islands of Kerala



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Introduction

- Munroe is a small island group of 8 islets; 13.4 sq km in the area- some parts are high lying and some low lying

- Primary issues: recurring floods, the lack of employment opportunities, improper infrastructure facilities, and the possibility of a mass exodus (Sudhishi, 2020).

- It has become a popular tourist destination in recent years and is also known for its rich cultural heritage and green landscape.

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Literature Review:

- The factors that have led to Munroe "Sinking"
- Tourism on the Island
- Suggestions to improve house foundations
- Shrimp and Fish Farming

- Secondary research available lacks in volume
- Skips over public opinion and local perspectives on developments at Munroe.
- Details available on all aspects being explored are sparce



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Research Question:

"How have Munroe Islands' environmental and socio-economic vulnerabilities impacted the livelihood and lifestyle of its citizens?"



Subresearch Questions:



History & Geography

“What are the natural features of the islands and how do they affect the way of life?”

“What is the influence does the British play in the history of Munroe Islands?”

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Environment

“How has global warming indirectly or directly impacted climate change at Munroe?”

“The direct influence of the construction of Thenmala dam on saltwater intrusion in the islands?”

“The direct influence of the construction of Thenmala dam on saltwater intrusion in the islands?”





Lifestyle & Livelihood

“How do the residents of Munroe Island view the future of their community in terms of development and the phenomenon of mass exodus?”

“How has tourism taken over as an important source of livelihood for the island?”

“How have the environmental vulnerabilities impacted traditional forms of livelihood on the island? What are the alternative emerging industries?”

“What impact have the changing environmental conditions of Munroe Island had on the availability and quality of healthcare, education and finance facilities?”



Infrastructure

“How is the Industrial Infrastructure on the Island coping with the environmental changes?”

“What is the current state of connective infrastructure on the island and how is it impacting the residents?”

“How sustainable are the houses on Munroe against the climatic forces?”

Policy

“What is the status of implementing the regulatory policies employed at Munroe?”

“What is the general satisfaction of the residents with the government’s response to the situation at the island?”



Methodology

- Inductive theory with a mix methods approach.
- Phenomenological, interpretive, and descriptive statistical analysis.
- Snowball and convenience sampling.
- *Data collection methods:* One-on-one interviews, close-ended questionnaires, observation, and surveys.
- *Data analysis methods:* Thematic analysis, discourse analysis, narrative analysis, and descriptive statistics



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On-Field Findings and Analysis



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Environment

- Mandri (Fungus) --> Coconut Trees
- Role of the Mangroves
- Soil Erosion and deficiency of clay/ silt
- Salinity of water and it's consequences
- High Tides and Low tides
- Low lying areas vs High lying areas

Lifestyle & Livelihood

- Satisfaction with Education and Healthcare
- Immigration and Migration
- Tourism is a large part of their lives
- Shrimp and Fish Farming
- Agriculture and Coir Production has suffered



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Infrastructure

- Condition of Railway Lines
- Condition of houses and their foundation
- Need for better roads
- Infrastructure for tourism
- Underdeveloped connective infrastructure

Policy

- Panchayat's Financial Crisis
- Environmental Policies- soil settlement & Mangroves
- Social Welfare schemes towards poverty, education & job opportunities.
- Satisfaction with Health Policies
- Law enforcement



Limitations



- Time- constraint
- Lack of literature → vast research avenues on field → less depth
- Insufficient socio-political insights
- Opinion outside the island and their difference in daily lives
- Insights from government officials

Future Scope

- Government attention on climatic changes with intervention
- Use of natural resources to sustain livelihood
- Implications of Environmental Vulnerabilities
- Literature of Lifestyle
- Development in Industrial, Connective and Social Infrastructure
- Targetted policy for local communities



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Learnings & Reflections

- Be more open to finding new information on-field
- Everyone does not have the same standard of living therefore satisfaction and perception defer.
- Starting work early helps with quality of work.
- Communication between group members- helped us widen scope and avoid dispute.
- Respect and purpose-driven tone can you get answers from anybody and everybody.

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Thank You