



# The Good Shepherd Crèche

Porayar, Tamil Nadu, India

June 2019

## Water & Heat

Porayar sits on the edge of the Bay of Bengal in the delta of the disappearing Cauvery River. Once the agricultural backbone of south India, overuse of the river upstream has emptied its channels in the delta. The once rich delta region is watching cultivable land shrink and deteriorate into wasted land. Sand in the old river beds is now being mined to make concrete. "The river is in its deathbed," says one involved official.

Making matters worse is the contamination of ground water by the sea, which creeps in with rising waters and pours in during the string of devastating storms fueled by climate change.

The people with the least responsibility for emissions causing climate change are suffering the most. Out in the fields around Porayar, many Good Shepherd parents look for work. They are day laborers, with no assurance of work tomorrow or next year. This week the daytime temperature in Porayar has hovered at 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The monsoon, bringing water, slightly cooler temperatures, and sultry weather, is a slow starter this year.



At the creche teachers carry on with their 70 little charges. The heat makes them less active, but still, they are children. Keeping them hydrated is the first priority. Outdoor activities are curtailed, and indoors the sea breeze through the open windows is very welcome. This is teaching and child care at its finest, when discomfort borders on suffering, yet the work goes on, modified but not compromised.

Everyone welcomes naptime.