

International Training Program (ITP)

On-site Education of Practical Languages for Area Studies

Report in 2012

—Dhivehi, Center for the Study of Developing Societies, India
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Year of Enrollment: 2012

Graduate School of Asian and African Areas Studies

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My research theme

My research theme is how people are experiencing environmental change in the Maldives.

The republic of Maldives is located southwest of Cape Comolin in India, and its main industry is tourism in which the tropical sea acts both as a tourist attraction and as a place for fishery which has been their traditional profession. About this country, there are serious concerns about change in ecological environment that people have relied on: erosion of land due to the rise in sea level, extinction of corals or change in fish resources due to rise in sea temperature, and so on. Being a low-lying and narrow country, people in advanced countries see the Maldives as one of the countries which might be damaged the most severely when the sea level would rise. In previous researches, scientific arguments about change in the sea level, island morphology, fishing resource and so on have been made. However the question of how the Maldivians themselves recognize the change has not been seriously pursued so far.

Not only direct influence, but also indirect influence can be made by environmental change; for example immigration policy as a measure for environmental change in the future can have crucial influence on people. There is few report which survey such indirect influence from a view point of local people.

In my research, I want to describe how Maldivian people are experiencing environmental changes through studying about their recognition of the changes and direct or indirect influence on them.

Language Training

I stayed at a guesthouse which a Maldivian owns at Trivandrum, and was taught Dhivehi language by him. The class was held 5 days a week. First I mainly studied words and reading, and after that grammatical rules and expressions relate to my research theme. Outside the class, I could speak to Maldivian guests staying at the guesthouse and try expressions which I had just learned. I made 5 sentences in Dhivehi everyday, and I got them checked by the teacher.

It was very helpful to develop conversational ability and also to get information about the Maldives: their food culture, ecological environment, resource use, tourism, fishery and so on. Because all of the guests were people who came to India to access medical services, I could hear about Maldivian healthcare situation in detail. It was very fruitful that I could build many personal connections, and it helped me very much when I visited the Maldives later.

Picture 1 the language class

Picture 2 A guest at the guesthouse, Hussain (left) and Nepali cook Dipak (right)

Picture 3 Mas-huni, Maldivian food using coconut

Picture 4 Children playing at beach in the evening (Haa Daalu atoll, the Maldives)



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4