

# Impact of Megacities on the Coastal Zone of India

**A. G. UNTAWALE**

National Institute of Oceanography, Goa

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Most of the ancient civilisations selected the mouths of the rivers or estuaries for their settlements, as the deltic soil was fertile for agriculture and the transport, fishing, etc., were of great benefit to the human beings. Gradually the population of these settlements increased and facilities were created for better living and utilization. This sequence continued and townships developed into cities and finally into megacities. The rapid pace of development of such megacities attract more and more population. All the unplanned and uncontrolled activities in these megacities create lots of pressures like increase in population density, which result in more demands, socio-economic problems, depletion of living and non-living resources, etc.

The most significant factor of such megacities is their "carrying capacity". The pressures listed above disturb the carrying capacity of megacities in all the fields like housing, food, health, tourism, industry, sewage production and disposal. The two major megacities like Bombay along the west coast and Calcutta along the east coast are two glaring examples of megacities, which bring severe pressure on the coastal zone. In particular, the pressures have been observed in these two megacities on fisheries, pollution, groundwater, coastal vegetation like mangroves, ecologically sensitive ecosystems like coral reefs or deltas and the sand dunes. All such activities have also changed the coastal configuration.

