

### **Theme 3 : Coastal Zone Management**

## **Coastal Zone Management of India**

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Coastal zone is commonly defined as the region between seaward margin of the continental shelf and the inland limit of the coastal plain. We have a large coastal zone associated with our coastline of over 7000 km. Its effective management requires well planned strategies based on a sound scientific data base. It is a common knowledge that inadequate planning and management, cursory coastal environmental impact assessments, indifference to environmental issues, ever increasing population pressures and industrial activities and economic compulsions have exposed our coastal zone to considerable risk.

We have several regulations and notifications aimed at the management of the coastal zone. The important ones are: (a) general standards for discharge of wastewaters in marine coastal areas (1993), (b) notifications declaring certain coastal localities as marine sanctuary or marine national park, (c) notification declaring coastal stretches as Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) and regulating activities in the CRZ (1991, 1994), (d) environmental impact assessment notification (1994), and (e) Indian Ports Act (1963). However, effective implementation of these legislative measures is far from satisfactory. The reasons for these are many.

For the purpose of effective control, there are obvious advantages in adopting the concept of classifying areas depending on their number and potential usage and subsequent environmental quality requirements. Thus, areas could be set aside for primary uses such as (a) conservation, (b) fish harvesting, (c) tourism and recreation, (d) ports and harbours, (e) industries, (f) oil exploration and mining, and (g) ocean dumping. If

such a classification system is adopted, great care would be required in formulating and administering legislation because of a number of technical and political problems inherent to this approach. Moreover, environmental protection

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requirements must be vigorously defined and ecological criteria identified for each particular station.

Several steps are required for augmenting national policies and management capabilities for regulating multi-sectoral activities in our coastal zone. For this purpose it is necessary to (a) define landward and seaward boundaries of the coastal zone, for the purpose of management, (b) treat coastal zone as a single unit for effective administration and control, (c) classify coastal areas based on potential use, (d) undertake long term ecosystem monitoring to develop a sound scientific data base, (e) develop linkages between scientific findings and policies, (f) encourage wide participation from different environmental groups including NGOs, scientists, administrators and individuals, (g) evaluate assimilation capacity of specified coastal areas, (h) undertake more comprehensive marine EIAs, and (I) strengthen institutional framework.

