



# Coasts: the final frontiers

The challenge of regulation of India's coast line, the **habitats** of millions of fisherfolk in the age of **climate change** and the **race for development**

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Sunita Narain, CSE, New Delhi

# Coasts: Doubly vulnerable

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Our coasts are doubly vulnerable today

- ⑩ **Unprecedented pressure** for  
‘development’ – industry, thermal and  
nuclear power plants, hotels etc
- ⑩ New threats of **climate change** – cyclone  
intensity is increasing, storm surges and  
sea level rise



# Double jeopardy: people

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Our fishing community is doubly vulnerable

⑩ From development on the one hand

⑩ From conservation on the other hand

Taking away their land and livelihood

Coasts are their habitats

# Twin challenges: Regulations?

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- ⑩ In 1991: Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification issued under Environment Protection Act
- ⑩ Prohibits and regulates activities within 500 metres of High Tide Line
- ⑩ Four categories
  - a. CRZ 1 (ecologically fragile: minimum development allowed)
  - b. CRZ II urban areas
  - c. CRZ III rural areas
  - d. CRZ IV A&N and Lakshadweep islands

# Regulations: CRZ-CMZ

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- ⑩ CRZ 1991 amended 25 times
- ⑩ 2004: Committee under Dr MS Swaminathan set up
- ⑩ 2008: MoEF issued draft Coastal Management Zone (CMZ) notification (not in accordance with committee but using its words selectively)
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# Regime change: CMZ

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1. Management, not by regulation but by planning
2. Area of regulatory control would be demarcated based on setback line
3. Setback line would be determined by doing vulnerability surveys
5. In all areas, development would be allowed, if it followed the coastal zone management plan.
6. Management plan would be cleared by Central government
7. Development on the landward side of the setback line frozen based on the date of the notification of the plan.

# Regulations: CRZ-CMZ-CRZ

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In **June 2009**, MoEF set up committee headed by Dr M S Swaminathan to review committee received on CMZ

In **July 2009** Committee submitted its report

It recommended:

*“CMZ should be allowed to lapse. MoEF should strengthen the CRZ notification”.*

# Regulations: CRZ-CMZ-CRZ-CMZ?

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In April 2010: MoEF issues a pre-draft Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) 2010

Now consultations are ongoing. Based on this MoEF will issue a notification soon

Careful scrutiny shows this is not different from the CMZ. Is divergent from Dr M S Swaminathan report and national consultations.

**The stakes are high**



# Issues and questions: special

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- ⑩ Coasts under pressure from development
- ⑩ Regulations and prohibitions are constraint
- ⑩ Governments would like '**special dispensation**'
  - license to be outside the law
- ⑩ Goa: wants one-time exemption to legalise violations
- ⑩ Mumbai: wants no FSI restrictions – build as high, justified by high cost of providing housing for slums



# Mumbai: Special case?

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- ⑩ Swaminathan (II) committee had said “resolve Mumbai redevelopment based on locale specific development”
- ⑩ Recommended
- ⑩ No special case for Mumbai as it would **“jeopardise regulatory controls for coasts”** but government could permit redevelopment of specified buildings in some specific areas, but only with public finance and no change in FSI”

# Mumbai: 'specialness' extends



- ⑩ Pre-draft notification: Areas requiring special consideration
- ⑩ A. CRZ within Greater Mumbai and Navi Mumbai
- ⑩ B. CRZ of Kerala including backwaters and backwater islands
- ⑩ C. Sunderbans
- ⑩ D. CRZ of Goa

What is the rationale for this? **Why is all India CRZ then not special?**

# Enforcement: improved..

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- 10 Swaminathan (II) report: Check violations through better enforcement and monitoring
- 10 Pre-draft: includes tighter systems for clearance; remote sensing data, clear responsibility for monitoring of projects for compliance and powers for enforcement
- 10 **But**
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## But with a twist?

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### 10 A. **Coastal Zone Management Plan**

To be approved by MoEF every five years, and to regulate all future development

So why do we need CRZ? Back to CMZ?

### 10 B. **Hazard mapping**

Will this ‘vulnerability line’ be used to replace 500 m line? How scientifically credible is this ‘line’?

Will this not be again open to scientific misinterpretation and abuse?



# Issues: fishers and livelihood

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⑩ CRZ III: rural and fishers habitation

Only repairs of authorised structures, not exceeding FSI of 1991 allowed.

⑩ **Should allow?**

Higher FSI?

Economic activities (tourism? Or only fishing-related activities)

# Protect rights of fishers and conservation?

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- ⑩ **Jambudwip** (West Bengal): fishers thrown out of mangrove island
- ⑩ **Bitharkanika** national park (Orissa): marginalised fishers, cases of suicides

Caught in pincer attack:

Development throws them out

Conservation does not want them



# Ports and erosion

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- ⑩ National ports, minor ports, state ports...
- ⑩ Leading to impacts on coasts, erosion of beaches etc
- ⑩ Swaminathan II committee recommended
- ⑩ Study the cumulative impact of ports to take careful decisions on which port is really needed and has least impacts..



# New and old threats: pollution and climate change

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- ⑩ The sea is cheap dumping ground – no city has adequate sewage treatment facility; industries are being invited to set up “so that they can cut costs of pollution control”
- ⑩ Current laws weak
- ⑩ Pre draft introduces new provisions to prohibit disposal: **how effective will it be?**



# Pollution: high seas

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- ⑩ Recent oil spill in Mumbai
- ⑩ Is not new and not uncommon: accidental spills contaminate our beaches
- ⑩ What do we do?
- ⑩ Are the laws adequate? Institutions empowered and equipped?
- ⑩ **Must fix. Quickly**

# Climate Change: **real and urgent**

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- ⑩ How climate change will impact and when is uncertain and complex
- ⑩ But we need to know from science and from the field what is happening, what is changing
- ⑩ We need to know to plan differently. Need adaptation strategies

# Final frontier

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- 10 Conflicts, crisis and challenges
- 10 For development that is equitable and sustainable
- 10 **Our final frontier – to make or to destroy**