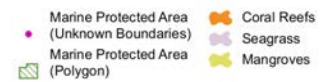


Indian Marine Protected Areas in the Bay of Bengal



Human impacts lead to degradation and depletion of natural resources

- Unsustainable harvest of resources, overexploitation, destructive fishing methods like pair trawling, dynamite fishing and juvenile harvest badly affect many fisheries.
- Change in water and sediment flows of rivers due to various hydro projects affecting the required nutrient inputs to estuarine and mangrove habitats.
- Damage to coral reefs by fishing practices like roller trawling, cutting of mangroves, destruction of sea grass ecosystems and climate change.
- Pollution in coastal waters from untreated sewage, sediments, industrial effluents, fertilizer residues, pesticide and petroleum residues released into the coastal waters result in drastic and undesirable alterations to ecosystems.

MPA management effectiveness

- Lack of clarity in MPA classification which results in a complex set of rules limiting fishing to small areas and causing hardship for fishers.
- Legal issues, boundary demarcation, protection of infrastructure and absence of science-based management plans are major issues.
- There is a lack of capacity and funding to actively implement integrated and participatory management of MPAs.

- MPAs are managed by the concerned State Forest Department which is largely trained to manage terrestrial PAs; wildlife protection has been strong but integrated management of MPAs has not fully evolved.
- Fisheries regulations are not fully implemented except for those concerning closed seasons.
- MPAs were mostly established without consensus of dependent communities resulting in conflicts.

Recommendations for improving MPA management and effectiveness

- Efforts should be required to secure and strengthen community participation in managing India's MPA network.
- It is important to take livelihood issues of communities who depend on the resources into consideration. Communities should be involved in the planning, governance and management of MPAs and also made aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- Necessary amendment of The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 is required to promote sustainable management of MPAs in the country with active participation of local communities in their governance.
- Recreational fishing in line with the Code of Conduct for

- Better awareness and capacity building programs for various stakeholders including enforcement agencies, policy makers, user agencies etc are required.
- Sustainable use of resources to be encouraged through incentives and penalties for violations.
- Satellite-based fishing vessel monitoring systems should be put in practice which can monitor vessel movements and minimise violations.
- Assessment of MPA management effectiveness should be carried out periodically to assess the performance of MPAs as has already been done in the case of Terrestrial PAs by Wildlife Institute of India.

For more information

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