

## **Institutional Challenges In Marine Environmental Conservation: Special Reference To Sdg 14.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Oceans has become an important strategic and environmental space in the 21st century. Most of our earth surface is covered with water due to which most of the global trade were done through sea routes. Not only trade but also necessary items like fishes, marine biodiversity and others are helpful for consumption and attracting the tourists. The fishes are used for consumption purposes and medical purposes as well. Most of the treatment of chronic diseases made up of oils and parts of aquatic animals specifically fishes. As the ocean is so beneficial to us, hence it becomes our responsibility to protect and conserve the ocean. UN had made many institutions like UNCLOS. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was adopted in 1982 and entered into force in 1994.[1] India had also shown commitment by becoming part of this UN Institutions. Even India has also initiatives like SAGAR, MAHASAGAR. Despite the initiatives, the implementation of maritime environmental governance remains a significant challenge. Although each institution has specialized functions, overlapping jurisdiction and limited coordination frequently reduce policy effectiveness. This challenges that directly affect India's progress in SDG 14 (life below water)..

**Keywords:** Maritime Environmental Diplomacy, SDG 14, Blue Economy, Institutional Framework, Marine Biodiversity

### **1.INTRODUCTION**

Oceans have always played a decisive role in shaping the human history and fortunes of nations. The history is a proof of it. If we take an example of chola dynasty who ruled in the southern part of the India for around 1500 years.[2] One of the main reasons was they had strong control over the sea which helped them to dominate the sea trade routes, goods coming from the ships and minimized the foreign invasion. Even today, the ocean plays an exclusively important role in the regulation and transportation of goods and services all over the globe. It becomes more evident when we saw the USA, Israel, Iran war. When Israel attacked Iran Iran who controls the Strait of Hormuz which controls 20 percent of world trade routes [3], have retaliated the attack and led to stoppage of Strait of Hormuz which ultimately led to stoppage of world's trade shipments specifically of oils and natural gas which is essential in day-to-day life hence for once it felt like world is in its crisis. Hence, we can it is rightly said "For whosoever commands the sea commands the trade; whosoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself." — Sir Walter Raleigh, 1829 [4]

So, the countries like India, China, Vietnam and others have started to evaluate their maritime resources and its potential in order to strengthen their position in the world order.[5] In order to have inclusive and sustainable growth, the conservation of blue economy becomes necessary.

UN linked the blue economy into SDG 14 (life below water). UN had made UNCLOS (The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) was adopted in 1982 and entered into force in 1994.[1] India had supported UN and also formulated the institutions within the country which has targets is to conserve the organisms below water, maintain the marine ecosystem suitable for plants and other organisms, reduce marine pollution etc. India has made several initiatives like:-

Sagarmala Programme which was established in 2015 and aims to promote sustainable port-led development at the same time looking after coastal environmental management.[6]

The Deep Ocean Mission of the Ministry of Earth Sciences aims to advance marine research, developing deep-sea technologies and sustainable marine resource exploration. [6]

The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) by Department of Fisheries (DoF) is specifically designed to promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.[6]

Despite, taking initiatives we are still facing issues like marine pollution as we see the plastic bags, paper cups, food cans etc. Secondly, weak enforcement of environmental laws for example:- The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1974 is the primary statute for protecting rivers, lakes, groundwater, and other water bodies from industrial and sewage contamination [7], yet the condition of the water bodies is getting degraded. Thirdly, illegal fishing and overfishing is also an another concern. Fourthly, coral bleaching which is the part of marine biodiversity is also a matter of time it will become extinct.

#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

This study undertakes a review of existing literature encompassing multiple dimensions relevant to the research topic.

The research scholar has analyse that human activity is causing eutrophication, acidification, plastic pollution, oil spillage, decline in dissolved oxygen, climate change and many more are the causes which leading to decline in marine resources, marine aquatic plants and animals. The rising concern of coral bleaching is also considered as result of human activity. The human had assumed themselves as the above of the environment not a part of of environment , hence the root cause of problem. We need to understand that ocean is necessary for marine resources, food consumption day to day survival but it also ocean generates 50 percent of oxygen and consume 25 percent of carbon dioxide which is basic need for living on this earth.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was adopted in 1982 and entered into force in 1994. It lays down a comprehensive regime of law and order for the world's oceans, establishing rules for States which entitled them their respective rights and jurisdiction in maritime spaces, the peaceful and sustainable use of the oceans and the management of their resources.

Many countries like india china Vietnam and others have also started to develop their marine infrastructure and wanted to dominated the world market in terms of food consumption, infrastructure, monitoring trade route. In today times, oceans also have pivotal role in world affairs, as most of the transportation occur in sea route, lacking behind can be the major hindrance in the economic development of the country. So marine life conservation also become most important part of it. Conservation lead in the global level can be determined only through the attaining the SDG 14 targets

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The study adopts a qualitative and descriptive method to examine India's maritime environmental diplomacy and its contribution towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14).

#### **Data collection**

Secondary data has been used to gather the information. It includes articles, available information in government sites, UN and related sources to the SDG 14 It analysis institutional arrangements, policy frameworks, and diplomatic initiatives taken by Government of India. It also states what more steps can be taken to attain the SDG 14 targets. It also tells what initiatives had been taken through international diplomacy to contain the degradation of marine biodiversity especially the problem of illegal fishing and overfishing. The suggestions were also given so that they can be taken into account so that policies or programmes can be formulated.

#### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

According to the UN Sustainable Development Report 2024, India rank is 109 out of 167 total countries in the world [10] which clearly shows the condition of water bodies in our country. The Dissolved Oxygen (DO) means the amount of the oxygen present in the water for the aquatic plants and animals for their survival. Dissolved oxygen is inversely proportional to the nutrients present in it. More the nutrients, lesser the oxygen presence in the water. The ideal range for the DO is 6-8 mg/l. This range is suitable for aquatic animal for their survival. More the PH would lead the water become acidic, prone for increase in nutrients and decreased of oxygen.

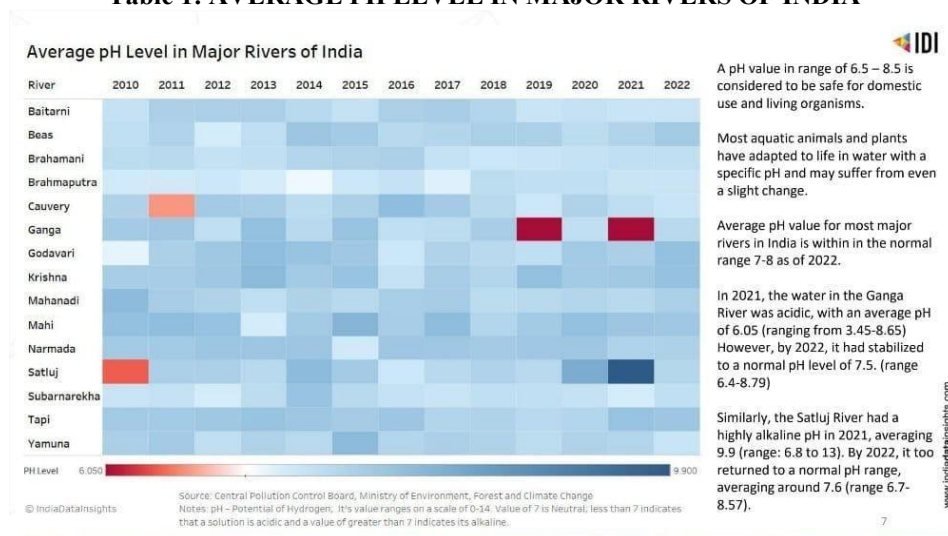
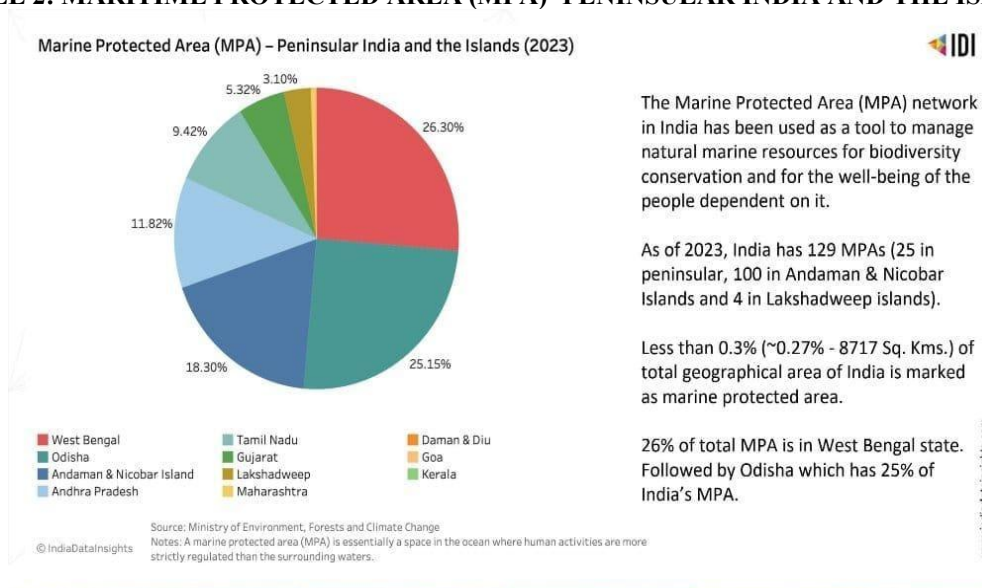
**Table 1: AVERAGE PH LEVEL IN MAJOR RIVERS OF INDIA**

Table 1 provides us the average pH value of the water in the rivers flowing in our country. Which states that more or less pH level lies in 10 mg/l except in the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka, which is highly acidic in nature for the marine life animals. Hence there is decline in the marine biodiversity. So, in these conditions we can protect those areas where conditions are already worse or about to get worse

**TABLE 2: MARITIME PROTECTED AREA (MPA)- PENINSULAR INDIA AND THE ISLANDS**

The MPA becomes more important when we look at the table 1. In order to improve our conditions Marine Protected Areas were declared to those regions where protection was needed so that natural marine resources can be conserved and protected. It will not only beneficial for the countries in achieving SDG 14 targets, increased in abundance of marine resources but also for the people residing in the coastal region especially for those people dependent on them. The table 2 states that the largest MPA is in West Bengal (26.30%), second largest Odisha (25.15%) and lowest is Maharashtra.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Presently the condition of the water is worse which leading to decline in the population of marine species. The major is the human activity on the earth. Oil spillage, plastic pollution, electric litter, climate change, not proper disposal of product had led to present condition of water. In order to undo the condition humans have to minimize their waste, spread awareness, make strict laws, find alternate ways to trade or limit their needs so that underwater

noise which made by ships and other issue can be limited and marine life can be revived. If not done today , then tomorrow we will become too difficult to revive

**CONCLUSION**

Marine environmental problems like habitat destruction, invasion species, underwater noise etc are the main reason for biodiversity loss. These problems can be solved when global action will be taken. India can solve it which lies in its part to its some extent. India can participate, preach the conservation and cooperation at the same time through the tool of diplomacy. If each country do its part in the protecting the marine environment. By this we can conserve the species from becoming vulnerable and extinct..

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