



# Blue Economy

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**For Prelims:** Blue Economy concept, Deep Ocean Mission, Sagarmala project, Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

**For Mains:** Concept of Blue Economy and its significance, Need for a Blue Economy Policy and related steps taken.

## Why in News?

Recently, the union minister of science and technology and earth science said that the **Blue Economy is the sixth dimension** of Government of **India's Vision of New India by 2030**.

- A [Draft Policy document on Blue Economy](#) has been prepared by the Ministry of Earth Sciences taking into consideration the reports of the expert working groups which emphasizes holistic development and growth of India's Blue Economy.

## What is Blue Bond?

- It is a debt instrument issued by governments, development banks etc., **to raise capital from investors to finance marine and ocean-based projects.**
- It will help in expansion of marine protected areas, improved governance of priority fisheries and the development of the blue economy.
- The blue bond is **inspired by the green bond concept.**
- Seychelles **became the first country in the world to launch sovereign Blue Bonds.**
- According to the [Securities and Exchange Board of India \(SEBI\)](#), in India, the concept of blue bonds is a mode of sustainable finance, such securities can be utilised for various blue economy-related activities, including oceanic resource mining and sustainable fishing.

## What is Blue Economy?

- The concept was **introduced by Gunter Pauli in his 2010 book- "The Blue Economy: 10 years, 100 innovations, 100 million jobs"**.
- It is the **sustainable use of ocean resources** for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health.
- It advocates the **greening of ocean development strategies** for higher productivity and conservation of ocean's health.
- It encompasses–
  - [Renewable Energy](#): Sustainable marine energy can play a vital role in social and economic development.

- **Fisheries:** Sustainable [fisheries](#) can generate more revenue, more fish and help restore fish stocks.
- **Maritime Transport:** Over 80% of international goods traded are transported by sea.
- **Tourism:** Ocean and coastal tourism can bring jobs and economic growth.
- **Climate Change:** Oceans are an important **carbon sink** (blue carbon) and help mitigate climate change.
- **Waste Management:** Better waste management on land can help oceans recover.
- Blue Economy **emphasizes on integration of development of ocean economy** with social inclusion, environmental sustainability, combined with innovative business model.
- This is reflected in [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG 14\)](#), which calls to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

## What is the Need for Blue Economy?

- Oceans **cover three-quarters of the Earth's surface**, contain 97% of the Earth's water, and represent 99% of the living area on the planet.
  - Oceans protect biodiversity, keep the planet cool, and absorb about 30% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
    - At least **3-5% of global GDP is derived from oceans.**
- Blue economy, through sustainable use of oceans, has great **potential for boosting the economic growth** by providing opportunities for income generation and jobs etc.
- It can support food security, and diversification to address new resources for energy, new drugs valuable chemicals, protein food, deep sea minerals, security etc.
- It is the next **sunrise sector**.
  - Sunrise Sector is a sector **that is expanding rapidly** and is expected to be increasingly important in the future.

## What are the Factors that affect Blue Economy?

- **Threat of Sea Borne Terror:** Piracy and armed robbery, maritime terrorism, illicit trade in crude oil, arms, drug and human trafficking and smuggling of contraband etc.
- **Natural Disasters:** Every year tsunamis, cyclones, hurricanes typhoons etc leave thousands of people stranded and property worth millions destroyed.
- **Man-Made Problems:** Oil spills, climate change continue to risk the stability of the maritime domain.
- **Impact of Climate Change:** Changes in sea temperature, acidity, threaten marine life, habitats, and the communities that depend on them.
- **Marine Pollution:** In form of excess nutrients from untreated sewerage, agricultural runoff, and marine debris such as plastics
- **Overexploitation of Marine Resources:** Illegal, unreported, and unregulated extraction of marine resources.

## What is the Significance of the Blue Economy?

- **High Return on Investment:** According to research commissioned by the high-level panel for a sustainable ocean economy shows that **USD1 invested in key ocean activities yields five times i.e. USD5 in return**, often more.
- **Synergy With SDG:** It supports all of the [United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), especially SDG14 'life below water'.
- **Sustainable Energy:** Supporting the increasing demand for [renewable energy](#), offshore regions have tremendous potential in the form of offshore wind, waves, ocean currents including tidal currents, and thermal energy.

## How Blue Economy is Important for India?

- Blue economy **presents India with an unprecedented opportunity** to meet its national socio-economic objectives as well as strengthen connectivity with neighbors.
- Blue Economy **can help in focusing on livelihood generation**, achieving energy security,

- building ecological resilience, and improving health and living standards of coastal communities.
- Blue economy would reinforce and strengthen the efforts of the Indian government as it strives to achieve the SDGs of hunger and poverty eradication along with **sustainable use of marine resources by 2030**.
  - With an over 7,500-km-long coastline spread across nine coastal states, 12 major, and 200 minor ports, **India's blue economy supports 95% of the country's business** through transportation and contributes an estimated 4% to its **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**.
  - The Indian Ocean is a major conduit of trade with as much as 80% of global oil trade happening through it.
  - Better connectivity in the region will significantly **cut the transport cost and maritime** wastage of resources making the trade sustainable and cost effective.

## What are the Steps taken to Promote Blue Economy?

- **Deep Ocean Mission:** It was launched with an **intention to develop technologies** to harness the living and non-living resources from the deep-oceans.
- **India-Norway Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development:** It was inaugurated jointly by both the countries in 2020 to develop and follow up joint initiatives between the two countries.
- **Sagarmala Project:** The **Sagarmala project** is the strategic initiative for port-led development through the extensive use of IT enabled services for modernization of ports.
- **O-SMART:** India has an umbrella scheme by the name of **O-SMART** which aims at regulated use of oceans, marine resources for sustainable development.
- **Integrated Coastal Zone Management:** It focuses on conservation of coastal and marine resources, and improving livelihood opportunities for coastal communities etc.
- **National Fisheries Policy:** India has a National Fisheries policy for promoting '**Blue Growth Initiative**' which focuses on sustainable utilization of fisheries wealth from marine and other aquatic resources.

## What is Sagarmala Project?

- The **Sagarmala Programme** was **approved by the Union Cabinet in 2015** which aims at holistic port infrastructure development along the 7,516-km long coastline through modernisation, mechanisation and computerisation.
- The vision of the Sagarmala Programme is to **reduce logistics costs for EXIM** (Export-Import) and domestic trade with minimal infrastructure investment.
- Sagarmala could **boost India's merchandise exports to USD 110 billion by 2025** and create an estimated 10 million new jobs (four million in direct employment).
- The Ministry has started the ambitious **Project of Sagarmala Seaplane Services (SSPS)** with potential airline operators.

## What can be the Way Forward?

- India should **look to adopt the Gandhian approach** of balancing economic benefits with sustainability for meeting the broader goals of growth, employment generation, equity and protection of environment.
- India must focus on marine ICTs, and transport (shipping) and communication services, and the creation of a **knowledge hub for marine research and development**.
- An effective response mechanism to address humanitarian crises and natural disasters should be made for the **evolving Indian Ocean security strategy**.
- India should not look at its oceans as just water bodies, but as global stage for continued economic, social, and cultural dialogue.
- With its **vast maritime interests**, the blue economy occupies a **vital potential position in India's economic growth**.
- It could well be the **next multiplier of GDP and well-being**, provided sustainability and socio-economic welfare are kept center-stage.

- India should look to adopt the **Gandhian approach of balancing economic benefits with sustainability** for meeting the broader goals of growth, employment generation, equity and protection of environment.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year's Question (PYQs)

### **Mains**

**Q1.** Explain various types of revolutions, took place in Agriculture after Independence in India. How these revolutions have helped in poverty alleviation and food security in India? **(2017)**

**Q2.** Defining blue revolution, explain the problems and strategies for pisciculture development in India. **(2018)**

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