



## Maximising the Benefits of India's Blue Economy

This article is based on "[Developing the blue economy requires collaborative effort](#)" which was published in Hindu Business Line on 02/01/2022. It talks about India's Blue economy and related challenges.

**For Prelims:** Sagar Mala Project, Sustainable development, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Overfishing, Indian Ocean Dipole, Palk Bay, Deep Ocean Mission, India-Norway Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development, Sagarmala Project, O-SMART, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, National Fisheries Policy, NavIC.

**For Mains:** Significance of the Blue Economy, Challenges Related to India's Blue Economy, Steps taken by the Government to Promote the Blue Economy.

As the world's **seventh-largest country by land area**, it's no surprise that **India has a vast and diverse maritime territory**. From the **bustling port cities along the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal to the idyllic beaches of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands**, the country's **blue economy** plays a vital role in its economic growth and development.

The government has also launched a number of initiatives to **support the growth of the blue economy, including the Sagar Mala Project**, which aims to modernise India's port infrastructure and improve connectivity to coastal areas, and the **Blue Economy Program**, which focuses on promoting **sustainable economic development** in coastal areas.

There are a number of challenges related to the blue economy in India including **climate change, marine pollution and overexploitation of marine resources**. Therefore, there is a need to scrutinise the potential of the Blue economy to play a significant role in India's economic development and contribute to the country's long-term prosperity.

### What is the Blue Economy?

- **Blue economy refers to the sustainable use of marine resources** for exploration, economic growth, improved livelihoods, and transport while preserving the health of marine and coastal ecosystems.
  - In India, the blue economy encompasses a wide range of sectors, including **shipping, tourism, fisheries, and offshore oil and gas exploration**.
- **80% of world trade happens using the seas, 40% of the world's population live near coastal areas**, and more than 3 billion people access the oceans for their livelihood.

### What is the Significance of the Blue Economy?

- **Transport:** 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)**.
- **Expansion of Shipping Industry:** India is looking to expand its **presence in the shipping industry** and increase its capacity as a hub for **ship repair and maintenance, which can come with various economic and geopolitical benefits.**
- **Offshore Energy Production:** There are also opportunities to develop **offshore wind and solar energy in India**, which could help to meet the country's growing energy needs.
- **Aquaculture and Marine Biotechnology:** The blue economy can support the growth of these sectors, which have the **potential to contribute to the country's food security** and improve the health of the ocean ecosystem.
- **Synergy With SDG:** It supports all of the **United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, especially **SDG14 'life below water'**.

## What are the Challenges Related to India's Blue Economy?

- **Lack of Infrastructure:** There is a lack of **ports, airports, and other infrastructure in many coastal areas of India**, which can make it difficult to develop and expand economic activities in these regions.
- **Overfishing:** **Overfishing** is a major challenge in India's coastal waters, as it can **lead to the depletion of fish stocks and harm the marine ecosystem.** This can have negative impacts on the fishing industry and other sectors of the blue economy.
- **Marine Pollution:** Pollution from sources such as **oil spills, plastic waste, and industrial effluent** can harm marine ecosystems and have negative impacts on the blue economy.
- **Climate Change:** **Rising sea levels, negative Indian Ocean dipole** and other impacts of climate change can pose risks to **coastal communities** and also have negative impacts on the blue economy.
- **India-Sri Lanka Fishing Conflict:** The boundary between **Indian and Sri Lankan waters in the Palk Bay is not clearly defined**, which has led to confusion and conflict between Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen.
  - To address this issue, both **India and Sri Lanka have attempted to negotiate agreements** to regulate fishing in the Palk Bay and establish clear boundaries. However, **these efforts have not always been successful in resolving the issue.**

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

- [Deep Ocean Mission](#)
- [India-Norway Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development](#)
- [Sagarmala Project](#)
- [O-SMART](#)
- [Integrated Coastal Zone Management](#)
- [National Fisheries Policy](#)
- [NavIC](#)

## What Should be the Way Forward?

- **Sustainable Resource Management:** Implementing sustainable resource management practices, such as **setting catch limits, establishing marine protected areas, and enforcing regulations** to prevent overfishing and other forms of resource extraction, can help to ensure the **long-term viability of marine resources** and the industries that rely on them.
- **Investment in Infrastructure:** Investing in infrastructure such as **ports, airports, and other facilities in coastal areas** can help to support the growth and expansion of economic activities in these regions.
- **Research and Development:** Investing in **research and development to improve technologies and practices in the blue economy** can help to increase efficiency and reduce the negative impacts on the 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.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Working with other countries, international organisations, and other stakeholders to **exchange knowledge and expertise, and to collaborate on projects and initiatives**, can help to support the growth and development of the blue economy.
  - Also, India should not look at its **oceans as just water bodies**, but as a global stage for continued **economic, social, and cultural dialogue**.

### **Drishti Mains Question**

Examine the challenges and opportunities for India's blue economy and suggest innovative strategies for the sustainable development of this sector.

## **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 have these revolutions 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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