

Coastal Commons and their Ensuing Decline

Prabhleen Gurunay

National Law School of India University, Bangalore, India.

***Abstract:** Coastal commons constitute the backbone of the fishing communities. However, the recent trends point towards their decline. This decline can be observed at two levels. One, at the community level. Two, at the external level, i.e., the intervention of external actors like the government or the private players. The paper looks at the plausible solutions to the aforementioned causes of decline. Alternatively, it also looks at the problematic Indian legislations on coastal commons which have not only failed to factor in the interests of the fishing communities, but have also proved to be counterproductive.*

1. Introduction

The coasts constitute as the resource base or source of livelihood for various communities of fishermen in the coastal states of India. The coastal commons are equally prone to the “tragedy of commons” as demonstrated in the case of agricultural or forest land. Urbanization dawned on the coastal commons as a bane. Real estate developmental projects, tourism, and beautification projects place immense pressure on the coastal commons which is leading to increased tension between the fishermen communities and the state and private players.

The researcher looks into the role of government, private players, growth of the fishing industry and disintegration within the fishing community itself due to external interventions, leading to the decline of coastal commons.

Furthermore, the paper elucidates the preposterous solutions to the breakdown of coastal commons, both at the external and internal level of disintegration or the “tragedy of commons”. At the internal level, in other words, at the community level, the problem of decline may be solved by adapting the Sri Lankan model of Padu System. This model has been in practice in Tamil Nadu, however, with certain discrepancies leading to its utter failure. At the external level, vis a vis the intervention of the government and private parties may be regulated by strict rules and regulations that are currently lacking in the country.

2. The Dynamics of the Decline of Coastal Commons

The development of coastal states into metropolitans and the growing fishing industry has deep impact on the coastal commons and the fishing communities dependent on them.

2.1. Encroachment by the State and Private Players

The coasts which were traditionally viewed as unsuitable for residential and other real estate projects are now the prime location for all these ventures with the bourgeoisie and the state claiming stakes to it.

In 1985, several fishermen were driven of the Marina Beach by the then Tamil Nadu government on the pretext of beautifying the beach. The fisher folk pitched a month long agitation against the government. At least five people lost their lives and many suffered injuries during the police violence. Thereafter, the Tamil Nadu government has been beautifying beaches at the expense of reorganization of the livelihoods and living spaces of the fishermen for almost every decade before returning to status quo on the order of a Court of Law [1].

Similarly, in 2008, the central and state governments authorized expressway projects over the beaches and river banks of coastal cities. The proposed 7.5 Km elevated beach expressway running from Marina Beach to East Coast Road in Kottivakkam, Tamil Nadu was by far the most controversial project. Apart from passing through a minimum of eight fishing villages on the Chennai coast, it also deemed the possibility of displacing thousands of working class families dependent on the commons in Foreshore Estate and Srinivasapuram. The government on the other hand was only mobilizing “worthless” pieces of land to create “worth” by relieving the congestion in the hinterland by diverting it through the coast [1]. However, the fishermen remained successful in challenging this proposal by a series of agitations against the government of Tamil Nadu.

It is notable that, the customary rights of the fisher folk were not only obliterated but had become invisible before the parochial interests of the state. Even though the fishermen communities remain successful against the government claims, they are mere spectators to private parties grabbing chunks of coastal land for resorts, beach houses, sprawling lawns and swimming pools. The modus operandi is plain simple. The private parties buy a small part of the coastal land with a valid legal title from the state government. Then they contact some influential members of the concerned fisherman community who eventually allow the private party to take over the land for a handsome consideration [1].

Apart from these the transnational initiatives of the government due to processes of liberalization and globalization, the coastal commons face a constant threat. Much of the coastal commons suited for building ports for low investment may be eroded due to development of SEZs and EEZs leading to the displacement of thousands of fishermen.

2.2. New Claimants to the Coasts

The urbanization and gentrification of the beaches has given rise to new stakes of claim to the coastal commons. It acts as a place of recreation for a number of people who throng to coasts to play frisbee, to walk and to breath fresh air. The state furthers their claims by spending crores of rupees in providing roads to beach resorts and houses and in beautification of the beaches. It uses the tax payers' money to prop up the value of the coastal property in order to regularize illegal constructions. The state intervention is only to further the interests of private players under the veil of public welfare. The state intervention also acts as a mode of converting a community regulated common space into a state regulated public space. The coastal commons are instead facilitating the cause of rental monopoly and accretion. Thus opening up new sources of revenue for itself through rent and accumulation [1].

2.3. The Growth in the Fishing Industry

Further, a boom in the fishing industry due to technological advancements like mechanized fish boats and mechanized fishing nets did away with the requirement of traditional skills in this occupation. This decentralized the fishing industry by attracting mercantile capital class belonging to non-fisher communities into the fishing occupation.

Export of prawn is very lucrative in the fishing industry. Many mercantile capitalists of Kerala shifted their capital from coir and cashewnut

processing ventures to prawn fishing, processing and exporting [2]. Rapid entry was facilitated by the open access to the sea. The absence of any need for license or registration for plying mechanized boats in the seas and no regulation for restraining the proprietorship of fishing assets only to active fishermen facilitated the rapid entry of non-fishermen into the fishing industry. In fact, the state gave greater impetus to entry into the fishing industry [2].

Trailing the path of modernization in the fishing industry, the states actively encouraged investments in this sector [2] The government of Kerala has invested in capital intensive and long gestation infrastructure facilities like harbors, landing centres, etc. It also provided training facilities and subsidies to owners of modern crafts. It subsidized 25 per cent of the cost of the hull of the boat and 50 per cent of the cost of its engine. The rest was treated as loan to be paid in 64 installments over a period of eight years at 7 per cent interest. Such state incentives attracted capitalists from a variety of sectors into this industry building pressure on the finite coastal commons.

2.4. Breakdown of the Fishermen Communities

Such encroachments go on decreasing as one goes further from the cities. The village communities are more wary of practices which may lead to an erosion of their commons [1]. But in urban centres, it is not only difficult to contain the violations of community ethics by opportunists but also the state intervention which continuously tries to expand the boundaries of a metropolitan due to the pressure of growing population. The dissidents in the fishermen communities who give way to state intervention represent the collapse in the very fabric of the community [1].

Erosion of the commons is the inevitable result of this breakdown of the community stronghold. As a matter of fact, the commons are identified with their communities. Thus, the commons need their communities to maintain their identity and integrity. The government and the private sector step in only where the community recedes [1]. Resultantly, the commons which were once the livelihood base of fishermen are reduced to notions of worth dictated by capital and the markets.

3. The Two-Pronged Tragedy of Commons

The coastal commons create a distinct “*tragedy of commons*” which operates at two levels. *First*, at an internal level, burden is imposed on the common property resources by the conflict of interests among the local fishermen. The coasts are comparable to the finite “*pasture open to all*” and the fisherman to the “*herdsman*” who will exploit the pasture to the fullest extent in order to maximize his individual gains [3]. This remains the rational thought for every fisherman entitled to that coastal common. Therein lies the tragedy [3]. *Second*, at an external level, the common property resources are laden with the intervention of non-fishermen and the state who also stake claim to the coastal commons due to its crucial utility to the nation in matters of trade, tourism and natural resources. This adds to the already bad situation of coastal commons.

This uncontrolled permeation by capitalist classes into this sector also obfuscates any possible “*collective action*” by the community controlling the commons to prevent the ensuing “*tragedy of commons*” [4]. According to R. Wade there can be a successful “*collective action*” only where the size of the user group is small and the relationship between the user group and the commons is close and compact. The instant case lacks both these prerequisites. Therefore, the exploitation of the commons cannot be solved by “*collective action*”.

On the other hand, a study on privatization of common property resources shows that it results in more land being concentrated in the hands of the influential in the community [5]. The proportion of poor households in the total recipients of common property resources was higher but the proportion of land received by them was relatively less than that received by the influential among the community. The proportion received by the poor was a hectare on an average. Whereas, the corresponding area received by others ranged from 2 to 3 hectares.

State regulation also fails to produce the requisite results in this sphere. Outsourcing management to a withdrawn authority which is only dimly aware of the prevailing local conditions or needs of the traditional users of the said commons may only have adverse results [4]. In fact, the government intervention in the cases of Tamil Nadu and Kerala points towards the erosion of commons catering to interests of private players and the state itself.

4. The Padu System among Preponderant Solutions to the Tragedy of Commons at the Internal Level

At the internal level of tragedy of coastal commons, i.e., among the local fishermen themselves, the problem can be dealt with a system of usage called the Padu system as best experienced in Sri Lanka. Padu is a traditional system of giving entitlements to the eligible members of the said community to carry out their fishing activities at a given fishing ground of the lagoon for specific seasons [6]. Padu systems are managed by a body called “*sanghams*”. Their basic functions are to facilitate equal access, provide collective social responsibility, and provide apparatuses for conflict resolution and rule making.

One of the essential features of the padu system is the bid to allocate the catch fairly among the fishers by rotating access to fishing locations. The sanghams usually constitute a lottery system that ensures rotational access to fishing locations providing equal opportunity to access crucial fishing locations. Annual meetings are convened by the sangham for all members to draw the lots. These draw of lots is marked by high participation because these meetings are determinative of the fisher’s livelihood for the coming season. Further, the sanghams have a measure of collective social responsibility integrated into its structure and function. This includes financial support for families in the event of death of a family member or in meeting the expenditure of marriage. Sanghams also contribute towards important festivals. Another important and most crucial function of the sanghams is to resolve conflicts amongst the local fishermen [6]. They are dealt in meetings convened by sangham officials. Issues are presented orally or in writing and usually relate to allocation of fishing sites and the right to use another fisher’s location. When the sangham officials fail to settle the disputes between the two parties through these meetings, the matter is placed before the sangham headed by elected leaders serving as arbitrators [6].

While functioning as the dispute redressal bodies relating to the coastal commons itself, the sanghams also ensure sustainable resource management. It prohibits fishing during the incoming tide when shrimp are migrating in from the sea to the backwaters. Sanctions are levied to ensure compliance. They may range from written warnings to fines of 100 rupees or more. In case of repeated offence, the infractors are expelled from the sangham [6].

The Negombo fishing site in Sri Lanka has survived through cycles of conflict and crunch by

acknowledging its presence and simultaneously adapting to the changing conditions. It has been able to remain biologically, economically and socially successful under these structures not because these structures are impeccable, but because they provide a degree of elasticity to local common property institutions [6].

On the other hand, the Padu systems have also been a failure in the Pulicat Lake fishery and the Vallarpadam fishery in Tamil Nadu. Although the Pulicat Lake fishery in Tamil Nadu and the Negombo fishing site in Sri Lanka share certain common features. The three villages entitled to use the Pulicat Lake conduct their lotteries at the local level which is further informed by the caste organization. Even though the entry into the fishery at both the village and lagoon level are dealt with, the problem of exclusion persists because of lack of legal recognition of its management principles. Resultantly, this obstructs the capacity of fishers to enforce their own rules and mechanisms. Furthermore, the fishery is burdened by the intervention of non-locals, and the conflict has only heightened with the growth in shrimp markets in the 1970s [6].

The problem with the Vallarpadam fishery in Tamil Nadu is even more profound. It also is plagued by the problem of exclusion. There is no mechanism which allows coordination between the illicit group of users of the fishery. Individual sanghams are adept at limiting their own membership, but there is no apparatus to control the overall fisher numbers in the area. The sanghams and the licensed stake net fishers do not interact with other gear groups, or with the various levels of government. This is largely due to the non-recognition of the sanghams as regulatory and dispute redressal institutions by the government. However, it does not exclude them from the fishery, either [6]. Even though the sanghams may be commended for dealing with the matters in the most elaborate and well-articulated rules which base themselves on the principles of equity, social responsibility and conflict management among its members. But the lack of legal recognition and cross-scale coordination takes away the positive features from the sanghams. Which essentially entails that subtractability or exclusion shall remain a problem at the regional level, and may eventually result in an unsustainable fishery. Thus the government may improve the condition of the coastal commons by legally recognizing the sanghams as legitimate institutions of redressal and management [6].

5. Solution to the Tragedy of Commons at the External Level and the Appraisal

of the Legislations Governing Coastal Commons

It is observed that state and private party intervention can be regulated by comprehensive legislations aligned to the recommendations of the M.S. Swaminathan committee report and incorporating learnings from past experiences. However, currently, the law in India is silent on the customary rights of the fishermen to the coastal spaces. Although the High courts and the Supreme Court have on multiple occasions upheld the customary right of the fishermen and other inland communities to common property resources. Taking cue from the English Common Law, the Indian Courts have also laid down that the ownership of the foreshore between the high tide line and the low tide line lies with the government. However, the fisher folk can ply their trade there without even owning that area. Access to the commons has been strictly regulated by the Supreme Court and High Courts. The Madras High Court in *Abbas v. Andi Chettiar & Ors* [7] rejected the plea of a property owner to take possession of and fence a particular foreshore area. It upheld the customary right of fisher folk to dry fish and park boats on the said shore land [7]. Similarly, in *Jagpal Singh v. State of Punjab* [8], the Supreme Court declared an enclosure of a village pond by real estate developers as illegal. It also directed all state governments in the country “to prepare schemes for eviction of illegal or unauthorized occupants of Gram Sabha/Gram Panchayat for the common use of villagers of the village [8].” However, like many other directives targeted towards the benefit of common people, this directive too largely remains unimplemented.

The first law in this area was the 1991 Coastal Regulation Zone notification. It was perhaps the first law to recognize the “traditional rights and customary uses such as existing fishing villages” [9]. However, this notification limited its scope to the dwelling units and built up spaces. It glossed over the need for acknowledging customary livelihoods, cultural and other usages of the commons by the fisher community [1]. Furthermore, what is really needed is an act passed by the Parliament and not an executive legislation that would be open to trifling [1].

Among other bills, the former Environment Minister, Jairam Ramesh introduced the Traditional Coastal and Marine Fisherfolk (Protection of Rights) Act, 2009. This bill followed the suit of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 [1]. However, the newly introduced bill was stillborn. It never caught popularity among the fishing

communities despite the lofty aims and objectives it sought to achieve [1].

5.1. Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Bill, 2009

There has been a law and order problem in the sea between mechanized boats and traditional cuttamarans and plank built boats since the seventies. Thus, the Government of India provided a high power committee called Majumdar Committee. It recommended the Marine Fishing Regulation Draft Bill to be enacted by the Parliament for EEZ in 1978. Its aimed at regulating the fishing crafts and gears and conserve fish resources in order to safeguard the interests of the traditional fisher folk. However, the Government of India delegated the work of legislating on it to the coastal states. They brought the CZR notifications into being, which as explained earlier largely remain ineffective or unimplemented. Thus, the law and order problem persisted.

In 2009, the Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Bill was brought forward. This bill emphasizes more on the promotion of SEZ and EEZ and the issues arising thereof. Virtually this bill too failed to safeguard the interests of the small and traditional fishing communities [10]. The central problems with this piece of legislation are two pronged. *First*, the bill lays down no concrete guidelines or directions for management, leaving all decisions to the absolute discretion of the Government of India. As long as these rules lack clarity and do not gain popularity with the fishing communities, these rules will remain a dead letter. *Second*, the main instrument of management as envisaged by the bill, is the “*management plan*”. Management plans can be formulated by the Government of India covering diverse zones of the sea and fisheries from time to time. Its objectives are to conserve fish resources and maintain the law and order at sea. However, the management plan does not envisage the protection of the customary rights of the traditional fishing communities as proposed by the Draft Bill of the Majumdar Committee in 1978 [10].

Such approach discourages the traditional fish workers from deep sea fishing, which in turn would help foreign fishing vessels to take over those waters. The Kerala Mechanized Boat Operators Association demanded in their memorandum to the Central and State governments that the act be redrafted. It pointed out that the Act fails to address basic problems of this sector, like resource degradation, livelihood security and economic profits of domestic fishing fleet. The bill would render the fishing folk in India further alienated from their occupation. Thus the association asserted the need for evicting foreign

fleets from Indian coastal waters and preserving the fish resources for the local fisher folk [11]. Further, the Green Peace stated that:

“The need for such a bill is clear, as India needs an instrument to regulate, manage and conserve fishery resources in its EEZ. However, the current draft falls short on several counts, fulfilling neither its regulation/management mandate, nor factoring in the livelihoods and aspirations of India’s three million marine fishing community.... Further it is vital that the regulation and management of fishing in the Indian EEZ is harmonized with national conservation laws and international laws to which India is party. The precautionary and ecosystem approach should be employed when decisions are taken on all marine resource extraction, including fisheries.” [11]

Nearly ten thousand artisanal fisher folk in Mundra, Gujarat are threatened by the possibility of displacement from their settlements, divesting them of their source of livelihood which has sustained them since times immemorial. Industrial units such as the Adani’s Mundra Port or the SEZ, OPG Power plant plan to take over the fisher folk’s settlements in flagrant abuse of human rights and the regulations of the CRZ [12]. Thus, considering such threats to livelihood of the traditional fishing communities, every attempt should be made to make an inclusive legislation that seeks to accommodate their interests as far as possible in the maritime zones including the SEZ and EEZ. However, like most other bills dealing with this sector of the fishing industry, the Ministry of Agriculture, has sent the above bill to cold storage.

5.2. The Traditional Coastal and Marine Fisher folk (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2009

The scope of the Traditional Coastal and Marine Fisher folk (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2009 are inclusive in the sense that it covers coastal areas, estuaries, creeks, bays and others. The bill proposes to name the local panchayat as the authority to determine the nature and extent of rights of fishing communities over the coastal commons. The state government shall form a committee to assess the decisions of the panchayat. Further, the state’s fisheries department will be the appellate authority in case of any dispute or grievance [13]. However, the downside is that it intends to ghettoize the coastal

fishing communities. The preamble itself envisages that the activity of the traditional fisher communities shall be regulated to preserve the bio-diversity. Essentially the traditional fishermen have been carrying on this trade practice since time immemorial without affecting the bio diversity. What needs to be regulated is the operations of mechanized sector that affect the marine bio diversity the most.

5.3. M.S. Swaminathan Report on CRZ Notifications

An expert committee headed by Prof. M.S. Swaminathan was set up by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in 2004. The mandate of the committee was to research and provide a detailed review of the CRZ Notification. The report is a commendable piece of work keeping in mind all volatile issues that relate to coastal commons. It reviews any the status of enforcement, gaps that may exist and the plausibility of any mitigation mechanisms for the coastal zone management in India.

The report recommended several changes at the structural and institutional level. It suggested the creation of a separate division in the MoEF be created for coastal management issues. A National Board for Sustainable Coastal Zone Management be instituted along with National and State Coastal Zone Management Authorities. Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep islands should have separate regional centres of the same. Thus, setting up a three tier structure analogous to the current CZMAs but with the National Board for Sustainable Coastal Zone Management at the helm [14].

Further it has suggested the following structural changes within the coastal management system. *First*, distinguishing from mere regulatory management, there should be “*integrated management*”. Substituting the classifications of “*Coastal Regulation Zones (CRZ I to IV)*” with “*Coastal Management Zones (CMZ I to IV)*”. The zone demarcation should be founded on ecological significance, coastal susceptibility to exploitation and socio-cultural affairs. *Second*, there is need to protect and support the highly vulnerable ecosystems of the coasts in order to derive sustainable benefits from them. *Third*, the local communities should be encouraged to participate in the decision making vis a vis the coasts and its resources. This also entails that the local self-regulations should be encouraged. Varied issues like property rights, benefit sharing and equity from the coastal commons have been neglected by the existing CRZs. They need to be considered in the new notifications. Livelihood strategied need to be formulated such that the local

fisher communities are not compromised at the hands of developmental projects. Lastly, it envisages strict penal provisions to ensure the implementation of its objectives. And this punitive aspect has been brushed aside until now in all CRZ notifications.

5.4. The 2011 Coastal Regulation Zone Notification and Recent Amendments

Instead, the 1991 notification was superseded by the 2011 Coastal Regulation Zone notification. It only made little changes to the existing notification with offering a few concessions to the fishermen here and there. Its modus of operandi included mapping of the coastal regulation zone area by each coastal state. This CZMP would show the land use plan including the housing plan for fishermen in the CZR area. The CZMP shall also clearly distinguish the common properties of fishing and other communities in the area. Even though, the new notification provides for checks and balances in this domain, but all these clauses largely remain unenforced rendering them useless. The 2011 Coastal Zone Regulation notification makes mention of “*traditional rights and customary uses*” of the coastal spaces by coastal communities. However, it does not elaborate on what “*rights*” and “*uses*” encompass in this context.

The 2011 Coastal Regulation Zone notification provides both political closures and openings. Fisher folk argue that a detailed and effective planning of the land use of such commons can be done only by keeping the fishermen in the loop. They insist that effective plans can be manufactured only with the deep and exclusive knowledge of the ocean commons and its utility in their day to day lives [1]. Reiterating the opinion of R. Wade, that the villagers and the fishermen are the most knowledgeable about their immediate environment than any “*institutional expert*” roped in from outside [1].

The Ministry of Environment and Forests did not even make all the promised changes in the Coastal Regulation Zone notification 2011. The MoEF did not agree to prohibit Nuclear Power Plants in the CRZ, community based management for critically vulnerable coastal areas and prohibit roads on silt. The MoEF did not keep its promise to provide three representatives of the fishing community in the National Coastal Zone Management Authority and all the state and UT Coastal Zone Management Authorities, it only provided district committees for CRZ and diluted the representation of fishing communities by inserting “*fishing and other coastal communities*”. But this too is not being implemented.

It is observed that the 2011 notification barely acknowledged the recommendations provided by the

expert committee headed by M.S. Swaminathan in 2009. However it accepted a number of recommendations of the Nayak committee report that advocated a complete overhaul of the regulations relating to the coastal areas development while recommending changes in the existing 2011 Coastal Regulation Zone notification [15]. The Nayak committee extensively roped in the governments of coastal states like Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala for the formulation of the report. It also consulted a number of representatives from state and union territories. But the role of coastal communities, fishing unions who are most affected by these regulations were completely negated in determining the policy for coastal areas [15]. The changes will open the ecologically sensitive areas of the coast to develop tourist spots and lift the ban on reclamation for commercial and entertainment purposes [15].

As a result, the policy drafted is counterproductive to the interests of the local fisher communities. These amendments posit serious consequences for people living around the coasts. Fisher folk will be forced to alter their lives in terms of reduced income, longer distances to access their work sites or even shifting their work site in order to accommodate the so called “*new development opportunities*”. These amendments reflect the arbitrariness of the environment ministry in choosing only those changes that it wants to implement.

More recently, NGOs, community organizations have been extensively lobbying for a law that caters to the fisher community in safeguarding their customary rights. National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) is one prominent NGO among them. However, this too was far from reaching the objectives of the continued struggle of the fishing communities. NFF initiated the campaign for adoption, ratification and enforcement of the International Labor Organization convention on Work in Fishing. In 2008, the NFF organized multiple meetings with the fishermen while receiving support from CEC, ICSF and DISHA in different coastal states. Some of these meetings were also attended by ILO representatives from the South East Asia Office. These meetings conducted by NFF were highly appreciated by ILO.

The Steering Committee of Central Trade Unions for ratification of ILO conventions included Convention 188 in the list of conventions to be pursued with the Government of India, on the request of the NFF. It is noteworthy that the Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Agriculture have already started working towards the framing of a legislation for fisher communities in the backdrop of Convention 188 of the ILO. Furthermore, the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Agriculture also constituted a Task Force to look

into the gaps between the ground level situations of working in the fishing sector and the prescribed norms in the ILO Convention 188. The NFF has been a member of this Task Force and has been fighting for the cause of the traditional fisher folk's rights to the coastal commons.

6. Conclusion

The coasts are common property resources which constitute the backbone of fishing communities. It is observed that the coastal commons face a two pronged tragedy of commons operating at an internal and an external level. The internal level constitutes the problems that arise within the community vis a vis the coastal commons. At the external level, there is increasing pressure on the coasts due to metropolitan developments and increasing intervention of the government and private parties. It is observed that private players and the government tend to buy off influential members of the community who agree to the intervention of private players. This leads to the breakdown of the communities and the direct consequence of this infiltration is the erosion of the commons, which are represented by these very communities.

At the internal level, the problem could be solved by adapting a model similar to the one in Sri Lanka called the padu system. Padu is a traditional system of giving entitlements to the eligible members of the said community to carry out their fishing activities at a given fishing ground of the lagoon for specific seasons. This model has been in operation among some coastal communities of Tamil Nadu. However, it remains a failure due to the non-recognition of the sanghams as regulatory and dispute redressal institutions by the government.

It is observed that much of the problems even at the external level also stem from the lack of a set of concrete regulations and recognition of formal institutions integrated in the community itself. The traditional dependents of the coasts, i.e., the fishermen are not included in the policy making committees. The CRZs are amended time and again but they barely take the concerns of the fishermen into account. Thus, much of it could be solved by forming committees inclusive of all sections that have an interest in the coastal commons.

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