

MPAs

The view from below

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A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in a teal color, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Introduction

- ◆ MPAs are becoming an important instrument to protect marine habitat, biodiversity and fish resources
- ◆ MPAs are being set up with differing objectives in differing eco-systems and different socio-economic contexts—making generalisation difficult
- ◆ This presentation is about a specific context but issues raised and learning might apply to other contexts as well

The Context

- ◆ Asian tropical fisheries
- ◆ Large number of small scale fishermen dependent of fishing; huge population employed in post harvest
- ◆ Decentralised and dispersed production/landing
- ◆ Fishing part of “informal” sector; no social security system and limited occupational mobility
- ◆ State regulation of fisheries very weak
- ◆ Conflicts between “big” and “small” fishermen—trawlers often being the “big”

The Indian Fisheries Scenario

- ◆ 6000 km coastline with 750,000 full time sea going fishermen; 10-12 million dependent on marine fishing
- ◆ Fishing a caste based occupation with 3-4 castes exclusively in marine fishing in each of the 9 maritime states
- ◆ Traditional fishermen are among the poorer sections, socially marginal and have low political clout
- ◆ Post independence—promotion of enhanced production, introduction of trawl fishing
- ◆ Marine fishing regulation acts in all states but poor implementation—no effective control over fleet size or capacity, no-trawl zone ineffective
- ◆ Six week monsoon fishing ban on “mechanised boats” the only regulation that is enforced

India



- Bathymetry: 0 - 200m
- Bathymetry: 200 - 2000m
- Bathymetry: over 2000m
- Coastline
- Coral reefs
- Mangrove
- Mangrove



Orissa

- ◆ 489 km coastline on the Bay of Bengal
- ◆ Northern coast—Bengali fishermen, mostly those settled from East Pakistan at time of partition
- ◆ Southern Coast—Telugu fishermen linked to fishermen in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh
- ◆ Fishing is largely done by communities that are poor and are linguistic minorities

Three sub-sectors, but two interest groups

- ◆ Mechanised boats—trawlers and gill netters, operating from harbours or safe anchorages, owned by richer fishermen
- ◆ Motorised boats—small traditional beach landing boats with small motors
- ◆ Non motorised sailing vessels
- ◆ However both motorised and non motorised form one interest group considering themselves “artisanal” or “traditional”
- ◆ Artisanal sector in perpetual conflict with trawlers that stray close to coast and deplete coastal fish resources











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Panch Ratna

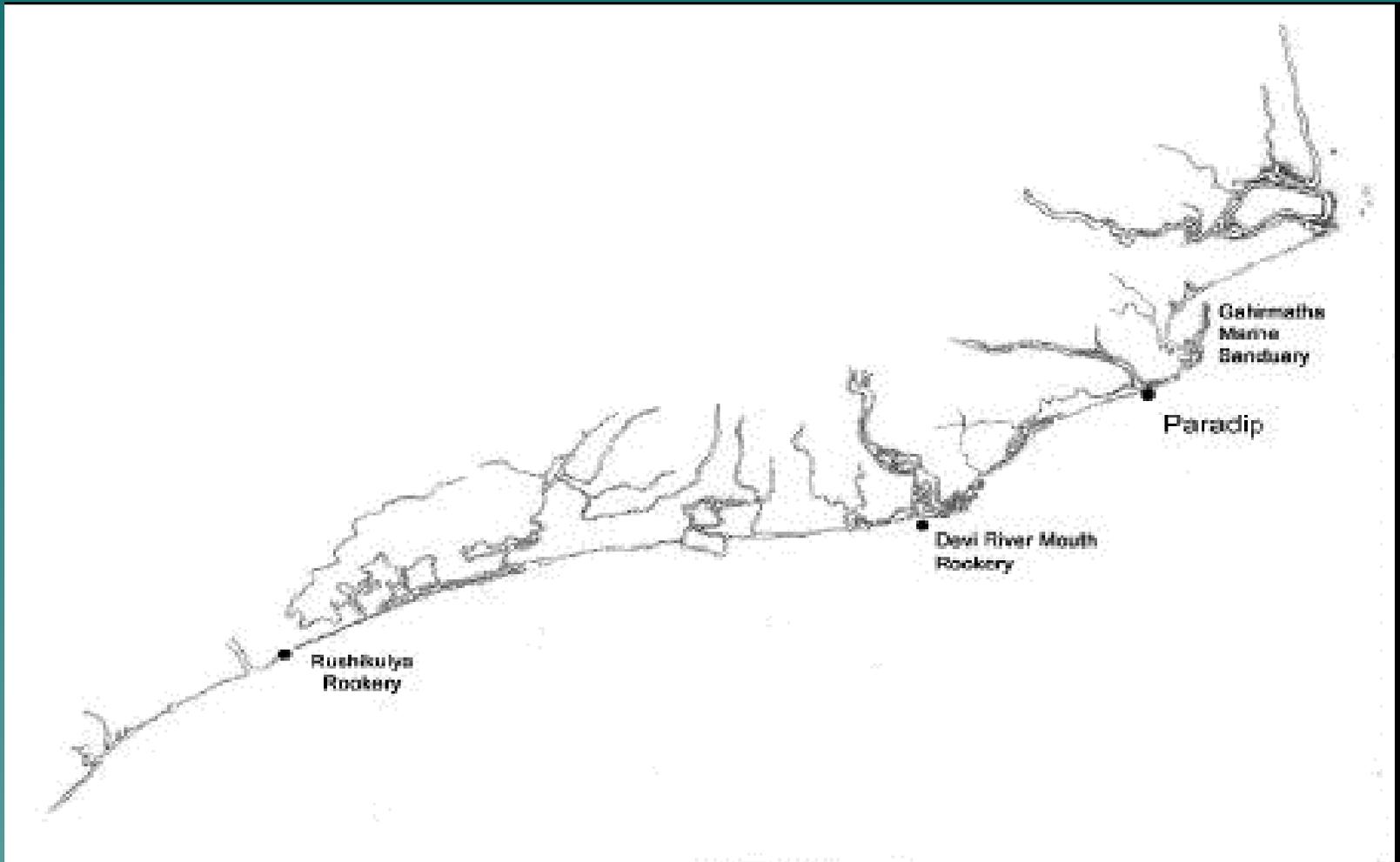
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Turtle conservation

- ◆ Orissa coast most important for Olive Ridley turtle nesting grounds
- ◆ Mass incursion of turtles between November to April every year, January the peak for nesting
- ◆ Turtle conservation, part of India's Wildlife Protection Act of 1972
- ◆ Practice of targeted turtle fishing stopped as well as sale of turtle eggs
- ◆ However, significant incidental catches of turtles from large mesh gillnets and trawls

Three nesting grounds



Turtle Conservation—contd.

- ◆ New measures adopted from 1994 onwards due to increasing international debate on turtle conservation
- ◆ Total year round fishing ban near Gahirmatha beach—1994
- ◆ 1997—“Core area” of 725 sq. km declared in Garhimatha area and 710 sq. km “buffer zone” declared beyond that
- ◆ Turtle excluding devises made mandatory for trawlers; 20 km no-trawling from Jan 1 to May 31 off two major nesting areas (half the coast)
- ◆ 1998– No fishing allowed within core area but motorised and non motorised categories can fish in buffer zone (10 km away)

- ◆ 2003—Committee appointed by Supreme Court intervenes after series of court cases related to Forests and conservation
- ◆ Further restrictions on fishing; five month (Jan-May) restrictions over two stretches of coast
- ◆ Currently 75% of the coast under major restrictions for at least 5 months—the peak season
- ◆ Confusion on scope and application of restrictions—category of boats, type of nets, “innocent passage” through core area, etc.
- ◆ Forest guards responsible for implementation, often arbitrary in interpretation of rules

Social Consequences

- ◆ Enforcement weak in early years, but increasingly tough under pressure from environmentalists and courts
- ◆ Serious disruptions to livelihood in peak seas and loss of incomes
- ◆ Fishermen increasingly treated as “poachers” and punished with fines
- ◆ 2006 saw 10 fishermen commit suicide due to indebtedness and economic pressure

Main Issues

- ◆ Imposition of MPA without any consultation
- ◆ Possible impacts on those involved in fishing not considered and analysed before imposition
- ◆ Ad-hoc imposition of rules from time to time
- ◆ Livelihood vs Environment; absence of alternatives
- ◆ “Punishment of the victims”

Community based MPAs in S.E.Asia

- ◆ South East Asia, especially Philippines, many examples of community declared MPAs
- ◆ Fisheries Code of Philippines gives local bodies (“municipalities”) the power to manage fisheries within their area
- ◆ Local bodies, fishing communities and NGOs are working together in many islands for managing the resources
- ◆ Decline of fish in coral areas due to unregulated fishing and use of harmful methods has led to many communities establishing “reserves” where no fishing is allowed

Learning from Community managed MPAs

- ◆ Awareness building followed by participatory management methods are more effective than state imposed MPAs
- ◆ Benefits actually accrue to local communities that make the necessary sacrifices or changes in their fishing operations
- ◆ However, overall resource management remains weak as communities managing small reserves without this being stretched across contiguous stretches of sea has severe limitations
- ◆ Micro-Macro level links vital for success of MPAs or fisheries management in general

MPAs—Larger Issues

- ◆ MPAs as single instrument of management will harm livelihoods and create social strife
- ◆ Unlikely to deliver conservation goals as MPAs not integrated into overall fisheries management framework
- ◆ Capacity controls, effort controls, gear restrictions, time and area zonation, etc. have to all come together for results
- ◆ Involvement of key stakeholders and adequate policies for rehabilitation and alternative employment essential