

34% OF INDIA'S COASTLINE IS ERODING: MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Disaster and disaster management

File photo of the coastline of Alappuzha.

The Ministry of Earth Sciences, in a response to a question, informed the Lok Sabha earlier this week that of the 6,907.18 km long Indian coastline of the mainland, about 34% is under varying degrees of erosion, while 26% is of the coastline is of an accreting nature, and the remaining 40% is in a stable state.

“The National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), Chennai, an attached office of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) is monitoring shoreline erosion since 1990 using remote sensing data and GIS mapping techniques. About 6,907.18 km long Indian coastline of mainland has been analysed from 1990 to 2018,” the Ministry said in response to a question from Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from Bhubaneswar, Aparajita Sarangi, on April 6.

In terms of percentage, West Bengal, located on the eastern coast of the country, with a 534.35 km-long coastline, suffered erosion along about 60.5% of the coast (323.07 km) over the period from 1990 to 2018. This is followed by Kerala on the west coast, which has 592.96 km of coastline and 46.4% of it (275.33 km) faced erosion. Tamil Nadu, with a long coastline of 991.47 km, recorded erosion along 42.7% of it (422.94 km). Gujarat, with the longest coastline of 1,945.60 km, recorded erosion along 27.06% (537.5 km) of it. In the Union Territory of Puducherry, with a 41.66 km-long coastline, about 56.2% of its coast (23.42 km) recorded erosion.

Another organisation under the MoES, the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), has prepared and published an atlas of Coastal Vulnerability Index (CVI) maps for the entire coastline of India at a 1:100000 scale using data on sea level rise, coastal slope, shoreline change rate, coastal elevation, coastal geomorphology, tidal range and significant wave height, the Ministry informed the Parliament.

The reply said: “A report on ‘National Assessment of Shoreline Changes along Indian Coast’ was released in July, 2018 and shared with various Central and State government Agencies and Stakeholders for implementing shore line protection measures. The digital and hard copy of all the Maps is released on 25th March, 2022. Ministry through its institutes is also providing technical solutions and advice to the State Governments and UTs [Union Territories] to deal with coastal erosion threats.”

In response to the question of whether the government has formulated any plans to rehabilitate people from low-lying coastal areas, who may be adversely impacted due to rising sea levels in the coming decade, the MoES' reply stated that the XVth Finance Commission had recommended the creation of a National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) and State Disaster Risk Management Fund (SDRMF) comprising a Mitigation Fund at the National and State-levels (NDMF/SDMF), and a Response Fund at the National and State level (NDRF/SDRF) for the award period from 2021-22 to 2022-26.

“The Commission has also made specific recommendations for ‘Mitigation Measures to Prevent Erosion’ under NDMF and ‘Resettlement of Displaced People Affected by Erosion’ under NDRF,” the response pointed out.

The MoES in its reply added that the XVth Finance Commission had suggested, “The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and/or Ministry of Home Affairs “may develop suitable norms for mitigation measures to prevent erosion and both the Union and the State Governments develop a policy to deal with the extensive displacement of people caused by coastal and river erosion. At present, NDMA is in the process of preparing the suitable norms for mitigation measures and developing a policy to deal with the extensive displacement of people.”

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