

STATE POLICIES, TRANSNATIONAL ADAPTATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT FUTURE OF COASTAL COMMONS IN INDIA

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Abstract

The common property nature of coastal commons continues to challenge the governance process in India. The spatial restructuring envisaged in the Indian Marine Fisheries Regulation Act 1980 which partitioned the Indian exclusive economic zone between coastal states and the central government did not succeed enough to resolve complexity of management and needs of various coastal communities. Commons ruined further, economic disparities widened and social conflicts escalated many fold. Nation State blamed its federal counterparts for the degradation of coastal commons and decided to strengthen centralized management authorities further. Policy makers on the other hand strongly believed that more centralized powers and controls are essential to manage the problems and proposed a number of legislations to strengthen Central government's control over marine commons and to protect the customary rights of traditional fishermen. This paper critically explores the implications of the newly proposed legislations and policies to accommodate and promote transnational interests in coastal commons in India. The paper analyses the salient features of the proposed bills with special reference to the roles envisaged to fisher communities, industrial fishing enterprises and non- governmental organizations in the management of coastal commons. It summarizes the probable risks and opportunities of the shift in policy.

Key words: Coastal commons, nationalization, transnationalism, policy evaluation, governance

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Introduction

Transnational changes in emerging Asian countries, particularly the experiences of China and India, have been one of the favorite themes of international academic research in the recent past. Many argue that such changes are inevitable in these countries and they have to restructure themselves to benefit from the process of transnational growth. Although many countries struggle hard to expand their economic and political hegemony to take lead in their 'transnational race', few perish due to internal and external conflicts. The Indian transnationalist development agenda has been uphill since it liberalized its economy in the early nineties. Political elites have realized that India's transnationalist change demands quick restructuring of national landscapes and evolved spatial restructuring policies compatible with the broad neoliberal agenda. Selected metros at the sub national level emerged as the nodal centers of the new national and transnational investment and growth (Nanda, 1995; Jenkins, 2007; Kumar, 2007 and 2008; Kennedy, 2009).

Transnational changes envisaged through the domestic 'restructuring project, no doubt have been the outcome of collective initiative of the Indian transnational class and the Nation State. Ever since the introduction of liberalization policies in India, transnational economic interests and allied forces have intensified their pressure on the use of common property resources, ecosystem/environmental services, which were traditionally used by the economically weaker sections of the rural communities for livelihoods. Although privatization of commons and market mechanisms were the primary channels through which transnational interests exercised control over natural resources, these strategies turned out to be expensive due to high transaction costs and market and state failures. Moreover privatization strategies have been vehemently objected by local communities who traditionally relied on the use of commons for their livelihoods (Thomson, 2009).

As these footprints of globalization were expensive both economically and politically, transnational interests have been exerting pressure on the Nation State to craft strong policies and institutions to speed up the process of globalization and transnational development. The recent initiatives of the Nation State in hastily modifying its formal maritime/coastal policies and institutions to fasten the uses of coastal commons and marine fisheries have to be viewed in this milieu² (Kurien, 1998). Although most of the aspirations of the Nation State towards economic expansions are legitimized from a transnationalist perspective, what is intriguing in such expansionist strategies is the hidden agendas and lack of transparency. Coastal and maritime policies, which used to be the joint outcome of consultations between the Nation State and its federal

² There are a number of reasons that prompted the Nation State to restructure its maritime zones and coastal areas. First, opening up the maritime and oceanic regions is unavoidable for evolving a transnationalist exchange economy, as the country has signed a number of regional and international trade and environmental treaties. Second such infrastructure development provides the necessary edge over the rivals in transnationalist competition, especially China.

counterparts, got replaced by authoritarian process of institution building. Deviating from the ongoing practice of participatory policy making for the prudent use of coastal and marine resources, the Nation State has unilaterally announced a set of major policy changes to fasten the process of transnationalist development. Many coastal states, non-governmental organizations and coastal community/fisher organizations had expressed their reservations and apprehensions against the manner in which Nation State sidelined them from the process of making crucial decisions that concern their lives and ecosystems. Despite these concerns, the restructuring processes are still continuing in full swing reaffirming the strong commitment of the Indian state to expedite the transnational transformation of the Indian economy. One of the major concerns, however, relates to the increased use of common property resources under the transnationalist regime. It is pointed out that transnational transformations necessitate a variety of economic, institutional and political restructuring of coastal commons from the domain of traditional communities to the transnational domain to equip various actors to reorient existing economic activities or to organize new transnational ventures. Could state-sponsored transnationalism bring fortunes to millions of poor fisher folk and coastal communities? It is often argued that in the absence of transnational institutions, global commons might be abused by modern enterprises and transnational capitalists.

That being the issue, the primary focus of this paper is to describe how the proposed shifts in public policies exert pressure on the Indian coastal and maritime ecosystems. The objective of this paper is to examine the implications and probable impacts of the proposed policies on access rights and livelihoods of artisanal fishers and fishing enterprises. This paper examines transnational processes initiated by the Nation State on the coastal and marine ecosystems and explores the implications of these actions.. The paper is divided into five sections. Section 1 introduces the problem and objectives of the paper. Section 2 narrates the theoretical framework and the methodology. In section 3 we examine how the Indian state adopts centralization and nationalization as its strategies to implement its transnationalist agenda from above and impounds coastal and maritime eco systems. Section 4 discusses the implications of centralization policies to various actors and activities undertaken under the emerging transnational economic regime. A summary and conclusions follow.

Theoretical framework and methodology

In the context of the emerging economic prosperity in the Asian region, India's transnational transformation to a great extent is state sponsored and the major issue therefore is to explore how these changes impact local coastal communities and ecosystems? Transnationalism is a multi-faceted, multi-local process that affects economic interactions, power relations, cultural constructions, and, more generally, social organization at the level of the locality (Guarnizo and Smith, 1998). The term has been used in a variety of ways in the social science literature (). However, we use the term to denote to processes that evolve in emerging economies through which state or

non-state actors respond and benefit from the process of globalisation³. Social theorists distinguish between *transnationalism from above* and *from below* as two distinct fields of transnationalism and discuss how these variants evolve under different sets of policy settings. Transnationalism from above discusses how the authoritarian state crafts policies and management institutions and use indigenous communities and ecosystems to achieve transnational economic expansion while transnationalisation from below examines the strengths and weaknesses of local communities to benefit from the process of globalization (Portes, 1997; Vertovec, 2001; Radcliffe, Laurie and Andolina, 2002).

Strategic adaptation to the new transnationalist realities may result in a reduced role for the positive, interventionist state and the rise of a regulatory state (Majone, 1997). Transnational changes necessitate a variety of internal and external restructuring both spatial and institutional. Changing the enactment and practice of national law, changing the boundary of the state and the market, changing the institutional architecture of the state, shaping markets for knowledge and knowledge community's role in governance and shifting accountability mechanisms and normative frames are essential to fasten the process of change (Shaffer, 2002). In most cases, such changes are materialized through the collective efforts of public and private sector actors

Transnational changes are initiated by the Nation State through two broad restructuring streams; what Wonders (2007) describes as the "*special national restructuring project*" and the "*border reconstruction project*". The former revitalises the internal agents and activities while the second expedites state-sponsored strategies to reinforce and/or reconstitute borders in response to challenges of globalization. The first category of measures includes centralisation or nationalisation policies of the Nation State to restructure coastal commons and maritime territories. The border reconstruction project, on the other hand includes physical (re)construction of existing geographic borders to keep out non-beneficiaries through forced evictions involving militarization and securitization of border regions, constructing cultural and rhetorical borders that separate insiders from outsiders, citizens from noncitizens and by de-territorializing national boundaries and territories., the Indian scenario reveals in fact a mix of both these patterns. This section provides some information and details to demonstrate how the state constructs its internal and external strategies to effectively introduce transnational changes of the Indian economy.

Since transnationalisation is a top down state sponsored agenda the Indian drive towards, executed in alliance with its emerging transnational classes, we begin our paper by describing how the Nation State proposes to use coastal and maritime territories with special reference to the provisions contained in its policy documents related to coastal area development. Preliminary evaluation of public policies involving

³ Robinson (1998: p: 468) reminds that "globalization involves transnational processes in each country and region of the world". He pointed out further that a transnational state apparatus could emerge under globalization from within the system of nation-states (Robinson, 2001:p164).

the use of coastal commons and maritime ecosystems for transnational growth of the Indian economy has also been attempted.

This paper is based on secondary data and information drawn from various government departments related directly or indirectly to coastal area and marine fisheries development and management. Policy documents from the ministry of environment and forests, agriculture, commerce, industries, shipping etc were also used. Selected interviews were conducted to elicit the views of various fishermen and coastal community organisations. A survey of literature was organised to tabulate various views of academicians and policy makers. Concluding remarks are based on such analysis and evaluations.

Transnationalism and state control on coastal and maritime ecosystems

We mentioned above that transnational changes are institutionalized from above with active state sponsorship or from below where communities and the private sector cooperate in the national restructuring Project. Basic aim of this project is to erect the most modern infrastructure along the coastal areas as a necessary pre-condition for transnational growth of the Indian economy. Obviously, this would require a complete revamping of coastal infrastructure and restructuring of marine and inland fisheries for providing increased access to the modern shipping industry. Installing these facilities along the coastal areas might obviously be problematic as these domains were traditionally used by artisanal communities for their livelihoods. It is interesting to note that the Indian state has been, in the recent past, substantially increased the infrastructure capacities along the coast for handling the transnational trade flows expected in future⁴. Development of major and minor ports, promotion of coastal area special economic zones, liberalizing the shipping industry, investment on manpower development for the shipping industry, establishing coastal police stations for enforcing security and protection to the emerging industries are only a few programs designed and implemented recently.

National maritime development policy: Development of ports and port based special economic zones

In order to accelerate the globalization process in India, the Nation State, of late, has announced a comprehensive national maritime development policy to encourage private

⁴ Ever since the Indian State adopted measures to liberalize its economy in 1991, there have been several measures to improve its coastal infrastructure. To strengthen the transnational development process, the state formulated a comprehensive National Maritime Development Policy which aimed to enhance private investment on ports, improve service quality and promote competitiveness. So far, 50 projects have been completed under the National Maritime Development Program in the port sector at a cost of Rs 5,717.28-crore. In addition, 74 projects are under progress envisaging an investment of Rs 18,502.68-crore.

investment on port projects at substantially higher level (Ramesh, et.al., 2009)⁵. Supplementary projects to improve the related infrastructure development networks were also planned in association with the National Highway Authority of India, Railways and Inland waterways. Since port projects generally involve long gestation period and high costs, the Indian government encouraged public-private-partnerships and foreign direct investments in port privatization and development projects, subject to certain restrictions. Foreign direct investments that qualify under this category are permitted under the automatic route wherein, foreign equity up to 51percent is permitted in projects providing supporting services to water transport. Foreign equity up to 74 percent is allowed in the construction and maintenance of ports and harbors. In addition, a cent percent foreign direct investment under the automatic route is permitted for port development projects. The primary objective of this policy is to pave way to the a massive plan of transnationalisation through the special economic zone program

Special economic zones and industrial clusters along Indian coasts

The special economic zone program of the Nation State announced in 2005 has sweeping influence on Indian coastal zones and communities (Aggarwal, 2007). A review of proposals under this scheme in various coastal states shows that large tracts of coastal areas from Gujarat in the west to West Bengal in the east have been under the control of national and multinational corporations dealing with petrochemicals and steel⁶. Corporate houses operating in the coastal regions of, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal have already procured operational permits from the Nation State The Gujarat petroleum, petrochemical and chemical investment region (PCPIR) is being specially built with financial support from US corporations such as Dow Chemicals, Dupont and Raytheon to house their production units which have failed to procure environmental clearance in the US for a long time. In Kerala, these activities were entrusted to the Cochin Port. The Ministry of Commerce notified Vallarpadam and Puthuvypeen areas within the port limit as two separate port based special economic zones. Major port based Projects like international container transshipment terminal (ICTT), LNG re-gasification terminal, crude oil handling facilities, free trade warehousing and process industries have also been proposed. The port, a public private partnership venture with IGTPPL (DP World), is currently establishing the infrastructure and amenities for the zone⁷. The Andhra Pradesh PCPIR is being built over a 140 km long

⁵ India has 12 major ports and 187 minor ports along its extensive coastline. The major ports, that handle about 74% of the total traffic handled cargo of over 463 million tons in the last fiscal year, which was an increase of 9.5% over the previous year. Out of the total investment of Rs 55,804.00-crore in the port sector, a major portion of investment is envisaged to come from the private sector.

⁶ Special economic zones along Indian coastal areas are shown in the map 1

⁷ .The new terminal developed by Cochin Port Trust under the PPP mode is located at Vallarpadam & Puthuvypeen, in a land area of 401 ha (115.25 ha at Vallarpadam & 285.84 ha at Puthuvypeen) with an investment of Rs.7500 crores. The Vallarpadam SEZ targets handling mainline and feeder container vessels (ICTT), while the Puthuvypeen SEZ is aimed for unloading and storage of crude oil, Liquefied Natural Gas and Liquefied Petroleum Gas A Multi-User Liquid Terminal caters to Free Trade Warehousing. The Distribution Park has direct access to network of National Highways, Railways and

tract of coastal land from Visakhapatnam to Kakinada. Five special economic zones are being established in this region in an area of sixth thousand hectare More than 10,000 acre of coastal land south of Kakinada has been handed over to the G M R group for setting up another SEZ. Local communities have already sold off the entire coastal lands between these two SEZs to real estate lobby. The West Bengal PCPIR, promoted by the Salim Group of Indonesia, has been shifted from Nandigram to the deltaic island of Nayachar and the contiguous areas of Haldia. In addition to these direct procurement of coastal zone lands, the Nation State has also agreed in principle to hand over the deltas of various rivers (estuaries) to private corporations for the setting up of captive ports, as is being done for the Jatadhar river delta in Orissa, which has been handed over to POSCO for its special economic zone near Ersama.

Transnational opportunities, centralisation agenda and spatial restructuring of marine fisheries

The facts and figures published in the web sites of various multinational industrial enterprises and Ministries of the Nation State clearly establish that a large percentage of the Indian coastal belt will be used by transnational enterprises in the coming decades for organising production and warehousing at global scale. In addition to these changes, transnational growth and fortunes also necessitate restructuring of marine fishing territories to promote the fast emerging shipping industry. Since maritime space has been the traditional domain of artisanal fishing communities and fishing industry, the process of state invasion of this property was not easy. Instead, a spatial restructuring of maritime space has been attempted by the nation state with the release of two major formal decrees⁸. The following section details the major features and provisions of these Acts.

Major provisions of the Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Act, 2009 that attempted an overhauling of marine fishing and territories are: (1) "No vessel shall engage in any fishing or fishing activity within any part of the maritime zone (territorial waters, contiguous zone, continental shelf, exclusive economic zone) of India except with the prior written permission of the Central Government given in accordance with the rules that may be prescribed in this regard.....", (2) The Central Government may cancel or suspend a permit granted in case of violation of provisions and (3) The Central Government may from time to time....notify one or more plans for management of one or more fishing activities or fisheries in relation to any such area of maritime zones of India,....with the aim to enable conservation and regeneration of fish stock, ensure fishing in an environmentally sustainable manner and maintenance of law and order in the maritime zones of India".

National Waterways for the activities of consolidation/distribution of cargo including Free Trade Warehousing.

⁸ These are known as the Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Act, 2009 and the Traditional Coastal and Marine Fisher folk (Protection of Rights) Act 2009

The Traditional Coastal and Marine Fisher folk (Protection of Rights) Act 2009, on the other hand is “an act to recognize and vest the traditional rights and the occupation of fishing through traditional means in fisher folk who have been residing in coastal areas for generations and carry on regular fishing activity in coastal and marine areas and to provide a framework for protecting the rights so vested”. Rights recognized by the state include among other things, rights to hold and live in the coastal areas under the individual or common occupation for habitation or for fishing for livelihoods by a member or members of such family, rights of ownership and access to areas, other community rights of uses or entitlements such as fish and other products of water bodies, and traditional seasonal resource access of nomadic or pastoralist communities, rights of settlement and conversion of all villages, old habitation, unsurveyed villages and other villages in coastal areas, whether recorded, notified or not into revenue villages, right to protect regenerate or conserve or manage any community resource which they have been traditionally protecting and conserving for sustainable use and right to access to biodiversity and community right to intellectual property and traditional knowledge related to biodiversity and cultural diversity....” (Draft documents of the Bill).

Boarder reconstruction project of the Indian state

A critical examination of these bills reveals that there is a welcome move to protect the traditional fishing communities by formally accepting their community rights. Although both these bills appeared to deliver the necessary socio-ecological conditions enabling sustainable fisheries, a critical reading between lines clearly broach the spatial restructuration agenda of the Nation State. Apart from freezing the federal powers of sub states in fisheries governance, the provisions of the Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Act, 2009, set aside greater powers to the Nation State to regulate access to various fishing grounds. In fact, it gratuitously brings the marine fisheries sector into a centralized transnationalist regime. Such powers are essential not only for the centralized enforcement of transnational rules and regulations, but also to monitor transboundary fishing conflicts between India and neighboring countries. Moreover, the Bill provides authority to the Nation State to improve coastal security which is extremely important towards its transnational transformation. Since these are the necessary propositions of the “boarder construction project” of the nation State, we make a brief description of these issues (Wonders, 2007)

The boarder reconstruction project of the State focuses on three issues in the context of deep sea/marine fishing. First, it addresses the issue of illegal and unreported fishing undertaken within and outside the maritime boundaries of the nation. Second, it links costal security with maritime fishing in an attempt to regulate and monitor sea pirates and transnational terror links associated with cross-boundary maritime fisheries. Finally, it distinguishes between insiders and outsiders in an attempt to differentiate who and who should not benefit from the process of its transnational growth. This section presents a detailed evaluation of transboundary fishing conflicts, and explores how these conflicts triggers security concerns in the Indian sub continent

Illegal fishing in this region is due to the growing excess capacity and incursion of fishing fleets from Korea, Taiwan, China, Japan and European Union members. Fishing permits procured by China to fish in the rich fishing grounds near Sri Lanka inflated the security concerns in India and remain as a complex issue that calls for the intervention of transnational institutions. Another important security dimension of fisheries relates to the encroachment of coastal artisanal fishers between neighboring nations. Even though the marine jurisdiction between India and the neighboring countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, has been clearly demarcated, the fact that the waters at issue have by historical usage been fished by artisanal fishermen from both sides is a complicating social factor⁹. Detention of encroaching fishers now and again, itches diplomatic relations between these countries. In the case of Indian and Pakistani fishers, the mutual detention of impoverished fishers for long periods of time has proved to be a significant irritant in bilateral relations.

Transnational fishery disputes have escalated in the recent past in the Indian sub continent. Accidental incursions of fishing vessels from both India and Sri Lanka occur into each others' waters¹⁰. The number of illegal Sri Lankan tuna vessels operating in Indian waters has increased drastically and challenge the operations and economic viability of Indian tuna vessels (Pramod, 2010). Return of illegal fishing vessels on both sides does not stand in good stead as majority of these illegal multiday tuna vessels in Sri Lanka and illegal fishing trawlers from India are owned by commercial interests and are seldom owned by fishermen. Handing over of the apprehended crew on both sides is a good move to improving bilateral relations, but Governments on both sides should confiscate fishing vessels implicated in illegal fishing.

The facts and figures reported above clearly point towards the complex nature of modern cross- boundary fishing and security concerns in these countries. Illegal migration from Bangladesh and Pakistan through the coastal areas has compelled the nation State of India to monitor these activities systematically. Although, many temporary solutions¹¹ have been prescribed to manage these issues, sustainable solutions need to be evolved only as a part of transnational governance.

⁹ Disputed fisheries of this nature include those between India and Pakistan in the Arabian Sea between India and Sri Lanka in the Palk Straits, various disputes in the Gulf, and involving Sri Lankan fishers in Maldivian waters.

¹⁰ Such illegal fishing in the Palk bay and Mandapam region is due to increased patrolling along the international maritime boundary, the huge over-capacity of Indian trawlers operating along Palk Bay and Mandapam and also due to the existence of a narrow border separating India and Sri Lanka. A press release from Government of India revealed that 116 Sri Lankan fishing vessels were arrested in 2009 (Anon 2010c). Majority of the arrested vessels were multi-day tuna long liners. Data from GIFI database reveals that more than 100 of these apprehended Sri Lankan vessels in 2009 are tuna long liners. So, the Indian Government has lost (each multi-day Lankan tuna vessel has a current market price of US\$ 57,631 per vessel) US\$ 5,763,100 from 100 vessels which were handed over to Sri Lankan authorities after arrests.

¹¹ Declaration of 5-10 km, no fishing zones on both sides of border along Indo-Pakistan & Indo-Sri Lanka regions can help in preventing accidental intrusion of small-scale fishers into each others' jurisdiction. Indian fishermen in Gujarat stated that marker buoys with flags can help in preventing accidental intrusions into Pakistan and vice versa.

Local responses and development future of coastal commons

The initial responses to the proposed bills from various quarters were alluring. Most of the fish workers, fisher associations and non-governmental organizations welcomed the contents of these bills. Moreover, they pointed out the limitations of these bills and demanded a refined version of the Bill for the sustainable use of fishery resources. The national fish workers forum, for instance pronounced that “the draft Bill contains provisions that discourage traditional fish workers from deep sea fishing, which in turn would help foreign fishing vessels to take over those waters. The draft Bill even proposes docking facilities for foreign vessels,”

The Kerala Mechanized Boat Operators Association in their memorandum to the Central and State governments, expressed their anguish and concern on the proposed Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Act 2009. The association pointed out that the Act does not address the basic problems of Indian marine fisheries sector, like resource degradation, livelihood security and economic profits of domestic fishing fleet. This bill would draw the fisher folk in India into further alienation and compel them to withdraw from the fishery sector. Demanding strong management strategies to address the basic issues of marine fisheries, the association asserted the need for excluding foreign fleets from Indian territories and reserving fishery resources for native fishermen. Pointing out the anomalies of the proposed bill the association demanded for an inclusive comanagement strategy for the better management of marine fisheries in a globalizing world.

The Green peace commented 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.” Another international nongovernmental organization, International Collective for the Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) remarked that “the proposed Bill is a welcome legal instrument, although it needs a great deal of improvement by changing some of its archaic provisions drawn from the maritime Zones of India (Regulation of Fishing by Foreign Vessels) Act, 1981, adding new provisions consistent with good fisheries conservation and management practices elsewhere, and by strengthening some of its socio-ecological elements. Every attempt should therefore be made to propose an inclusive approach to accommodate, as far as possible, sections of these fishers and their vessels in all maritime zones including the EEZ, subject to proper conservation and management measures. The Fisheries Bill, 2009 should propose a paradigm shift in India’s perspective on deep-sea fishing by enabling through training and capacity-building— in areas such as: fishing operations,

safe handling of catch, conservation and management of fishery resources, sea safety issues—for greater participation of small-scale artisanal fishers in EEZ fishing. The Fisheries Bill, 2009 thus should provide greater continuity – not kink – to fishing operations and fisheries management regimes in territorial waters

Future of coastal and maritime commons

On the whole, the initial responses of these associations appear to be very positive. Such responses are obviously the outcome of an evaluative process of fisheries policies in isolation from a larger transnationalist agenda of the Nation State and the inability of the concerned organizations in analyzing the potential impacts on the maritime and coastal ecosystems due to the influence of external drivers. However, two major impacts due to increased volume of maritime trade and the growth of shipping industry need special mention. First, pollutants emitted from the chemical and petrochemical industries situated within the special economic zones along the coast have the potential to damage the fragile ecosystems of these areas irreparably. This pollution is also going to cause the destruction of the marine life on which millions of fisher folk in the country are dependent for their livelihoods. The marine protected areas and reef systems will be badly affected causing biodiversity losses at the global level. Land acquisitions for special economic zones will displace millions of poor fishermen and other coastal communities from their coastal villages. The sheltered mouths of rivers are especially suitable for building ports at a low investment, but once these ports are built these will adversely affect the natural movement of river water in such a way that the areas situated upstream of the river will get completely inundated, causing the ruin of the farmers and fisher folk living on river banks. On the other hand the establishment of ports will destroy the ecosystems of the delta areas, as has happened in the case of the Dhamra port of the Tatas in Orissa.

Summary and conclusions

Transnational transformation of the Indian economy got revitalized with the declaration of the special economic zone program. Large areas along the coast got engulfed into the program to provide world class infrastructure facilities to organize production and warehousing at a global scale. The selection of coastal landscapes and maritime space was never accidental; to a great extent the choice was intentional and essential for the fast growth of Indian transnationalism. In addition to the coastal commons, (wetlands, marshy lands, creeks, deltas, estuaries and river mouths), transnational development also demanded a variety of spatial restructuring of maritime commons for the development of shipping industry and movement of cargo. Both these interventions would pave way for the speedy growth of Indian transnationalist class.

The question however, remains whether the spatial restructuring project brings fortunes to coastal and fishermen communities. The paper throws some light on the probable impacts of this transnationalist project on coastal commons. The purpose of this paper is to raise some critical dimensions of this issue on the economy and society of coastal communities. The manner in which Nation State implements its transnational

agenda from above indicates that there exists limited chance for the majority of ordinary citizens along the Indian coast to benefit from the process. We argued that once the industrial activities proposed in various projects commence, it will generate a variety of environmental and social costs and further ruin the common property resources, which till date were the only source of livelihood to the millions of coastal dwellers of this country. Externalities of transnational development will soon be reflected on coastal ecosystems and population. Marine fisheries within and outside the territorial waters will also be badly affected and will ultimately lead to the evolution of transnational fishing industry. Unless managed carefully within the broad framework of transnational governance the Indian experiment will soon face serious resistance and setback. The dynamics of coastal commons in India is set under these circumstances.

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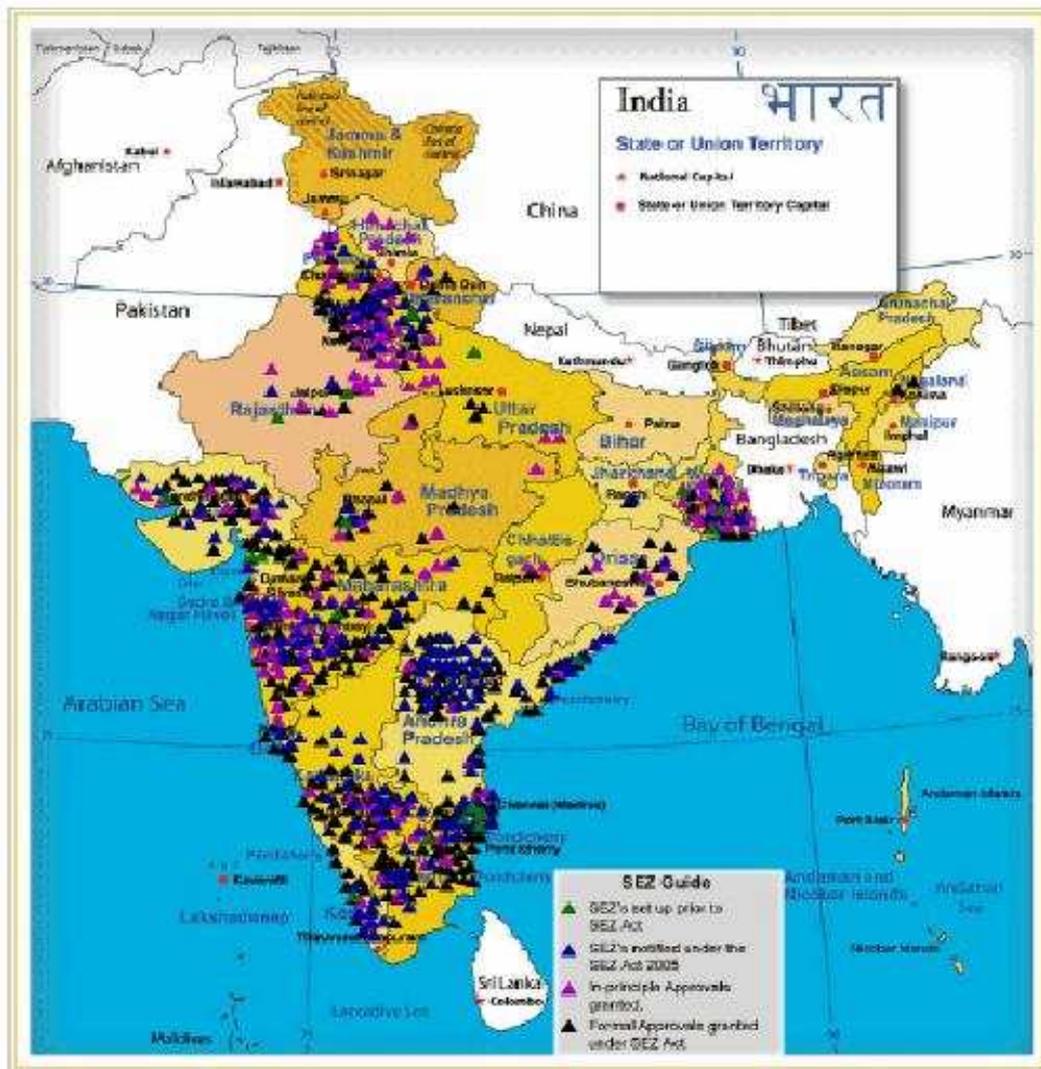
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Map 1 Special economic zones along Indian coastal areas



Source: Aseem Srivastava and Kashif Ali