

# Coastal Security of India and Sustainable Development

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## Abstract

Vital geo strategic location of India, long coastline and strategic long term vision of Indian government made it logically essential to give utmost importance to the coastal security of India. Post-independence the attention of policy makers remained close to land borders of the country especially after boundary disputes with our neighboring countries. However, among others, the vulnerability of our coastline and terrorist activities have led to the emphasis on strengthening the coastal security of nation as well. Central government in cooperation and coordination with state governments has taken various steps in ensuring and strengthening the security of our land from traditional and nontraditional threats originated from sea. In view of this and new challenges, it is imperative to emphasize on sustainable development of our policies and initiatives in securing the water borders of our country. This paper is an attempt to consolidate the efforts and initiatives taken by various agencies in strengthening our coastal borders and the way forward.

**Keywords:** Coastal Security, Sustainable development, Oceans

India shares approximately 15,106.7 Km of land borders with its neighboring countries including Bangladesh (Km 4096.7), China (Km 3488), Pakistan (Km 3323), Nepal (Km 1751), Myanmar (Km 1643), Bhutan (Km 699) and Afghanistan (Km 106) and a coastline of 7,516.6 Km including island territories.<sup>1</sup> Reasonably, the security of our land border has remained the top priority on the agendas of security forces and policy makers and accordingly the Indian government, since independence has made significant efforts in securing our long land borders especially in north and north eastern part of the country.

However, long Indian coastline of 7,516.6 Km including island territories has been exposed to inbound in outbound threats in recent decades. The long coastline has become vulnerable to external threats leading as major cause of concern to the national security. In recent decades, the cases of smuggling of goods, drugs, other narcotics substance, arms, ammunition and explosives through sea routs have been reported in big numbers. The reported cases involves the

large quantity of drugs and narcotic substance through waters as never before.

For instance, owing to its closeness with golden crescent the western coast of Gujarat has become a preferred route for smuggling high quality heroin meant for domestic consumption and for smuggling into other international markets.<sup>2</sup> In april 2022, Gujarat's Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) in a joint operation with the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence has seized around 260 kg of heroin worth ₹1,500 crore at the Kandla port in Kutch district of Gujarat.<sup>3</sup> In a joint operation on 24/25 april 2022, with Anti-Terrorism Squad Gujarat, the India Coast Guard ships held a Pakistani boat '*Al Haj*' with 9 crew on the Indian side of the Arabian sea carrying heroin worth approximately INR 280 crores.<sup>4</sup> The Indian Coast Guard on April 9, apprehended a trawler with an Iranian registration near the islands of Andaman and arrested nine Iranian nationals on which the Narcotics Control Bureau has initiated the probe.<sup>5</sup> 18 packets of *charas* recovered along Kutch coast between 2-3 May 2022.<sup>6</sup> Its harsh reality to note that above figure are of

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, available at <https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/BMIIntro-1011.pdf> (as on 04 May 2022)

<sup>2</sup> The Hindu, 21 April 2022

<sup>3</sup> The Hindu, 21 April 2022

<sup>4</sup> Statement of DGP Gujarat on 25 April 2022 (the Indian Express)

<sup>5</sup> The Times of India, 10 April 2022

<sup>6</sup> The Print, 4 May, 2022

approximately one month and further, across the borders of Gujarat in 2021, sizeable narcotics worth RS 1,466.18 crore were seized. In consideration of above substantial reported cases, the sensitivity and the importance of enhancing the coastal security mechanism may be understood easily. In agonizing incidents of terrorist attack in Mumbai on November 26, 2008 and the landing of explosives near Raigad coast in Maharashtra which were used for 1993 serial blasts in Mumbai have their close linkage and questions to the coastal security of nation and pose evident examples of vulnerable Indian coastline.

Our physical closeness with politically and economically unstable nations including Pakistan, Srilanka and Bangladesh enhances to its susceptibility. The little distance of India with politically disturbed gulf countries and Myanmar also adds to the vulnerability to our security. On southern side, internal unrest, economic crisis, failure of political regime in ensuring basic need of citizens, past violent insurgency drive by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and their long war with government security forces has enhanced the unprecedented smuggling of arms, ammunition and mass illegal migration to the coast of Tamil Nadu. This mass level migration through waters has been seen as a major setback and challenge to the national security.

India is the 3rd largest fish producing and 2nd largest aquaculture nation in the world after China<sup>7</sup> and therefore, fishing being major source of livelihood for majority of population in coastal areas of India involves mass population from coastal areas to venture in ocean across the coast line which pose a major challenge to national

security agencies. Besides fishing industry, other major industrial units including but not limited to shipbuilding, ship scrapping, ship recycling, boat manufacturing, oil stocks, exploration and refining etc. are also remained in coastal areas across the India coastline.

In spite of cordial relations with Bangladesh, many security challenges are posed from eastern front including illegal migration, infiltration, smuggling and the movement of Bangladeshi vessels in the Sundarbans delta off the bay of Bengal has always remained a cause of concern for the coastal security mechanism in the eastern coast of the country.<sup>8</sup> However, the cordial sustainable political relation between two nations has always helped in minimizing the threats to both nations. In this direction and in order to have closer maritime security partnership and to establish Coastal Surveillance Radar System in Bangladesh, India and Bangladesh signed seven agreements in New Delhi on 06<sup>th</sup> October 2019<sup>9</sup> which certainly will go a long way in ensuring the security of both nations.

In pursuant to the threats across the coastline, Indian government has taken several measures and initiatives in last decades and thereby leads to the evolution of coastal security culture among the policy makers. As never before, making Indian coastal security impenetrable is the government's top priority agenda.<sup>10</sup>

First time ever, post-independence a comprehensive review of the national security system in its entirety has been undertaken by government of India through the Kargil Review Committee (KRC) on National Security<sup>11</sup> consisting of Shri L K Advani, the then Minister of Home Affairs; Shri George Fernandes, the then Minister of Defence; Shri Jaswant Singh, the then

<sup>7</sup> The Department of Fisheries, Government of India, <https://dof.gov.in/inland-fisheries> (06 May 2022)

<sup>8</sup> Deccan Chronicle, 3 February 2020, <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/030220/coastal-security-bangla-vessels-cause-for-concern.html>

<sup>9</sup> DD News, [https://ddnews.gov.in/national/india-bangladesh-sign-mou-setting-coastal-surveillance-radar-system-bangladesh,\(06 October 2019\)](https://ddnews.gov.in/national/india-bangladesh-sign-mou-setting-coastal-surveillance-radar-system-bangladesh,(06%20October%202019))

<sup>10</sup> Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of

Home Affairs <https://government.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/governance/making-coastal-security-impenetrable-govts-top-priority-home-minister-amit-shah/87366122>, (29 October 2021)

<sup>11</sup> Prime Minister set up a Group of Ministers (GoM), vide Cabinet Secretariat OM No.141/1/2000/TS dated April 17, 2000, to review the national security system in its entirety and in particular, to consider the recommendations of the KRC and formulate specific proposals for implementation.

Minister of External Affairs and Shri Yashwant Sinha, the then Minister of Finance. The Committee in its elaborated and extensive report brought to light many serious shortcomings in overall national security management system of India particularly in the areas of intelligence, border management and defence management.<sup>12</sup>

It is also pertinent to mention that the committee holistically highlighted that the traditional notion of national security has undergone a significant change in modern world. More so, committee emphasized on adoption of more realistic and comprehensive approach to national security which includes economic strength, internal cohesion and technological prowess. The broader dimension of national security as depicted and highlighted by the committee in believing that fundamental security of the individual citizen includes security of life and property, food security, energy security, clean environment, education and health including a strong sense of nationalism and good governance exhibits the horizons of national security<sup>13</sup> which is now has no defined circles and pose new challenges on regular basis from all angles including from waters.

For the first time at government level it was found that our long coastline has remained largely unprotected and unguarded and accordingly the need of strengthening the Indian Coast Guard was realized due to its minimal deployment in consideration of huge cost line.<sup>14</sup> Committee highlighted the major challenges faced by our security forces across the cost line and more particularly on western coastline. Committee went on to found that the resources available to the BSF, Police and the Customs are inadequate to meet new challenges in coastal and creek areas

and thereby calls for urgent and immediate attention on coastal border management.<sup>15</sup>

In furtherance of overall review of national security and recommendations therein, government of India took several measures in strengthening national security including coastal security. Post 26/11, the government has revamped the entire coastal security mechanism by establishing robust multilayer system. Now, the government is striving to make India's coastal security impenetrable using technology and by coordinating with all the states and other potential stakeholders.<sup>16</sup>

In new setup, Coastal security is ensured by Coastal Police, Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy. The jurisdiction of Coastal Police is up to 12 nautical miles from the baseline. At broader level, Indian Navy is responsible for overall Maritime Security of nation which includes coastal and offshore security. In 2009, Indian Coast Guard has been additionally designated as authority responsible for coastal security in India's territorial waters including areas within the jurisdiction and patrolled by State Coastal Police.<sup>17</sup> The Director General of the Indian Coast Guard has been designated as Commander-Coastal Command and is responsible for overall coordination between Central and State agencies in all matters relating to coastal security.<sup>18</sup>

At policy level, Indian government has taken several far reaching initiatives in order to have sustainable coastal security culture in India. Indian Coast Guard has developed a very comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for various agencies which are involved in Coastal Security for ensuring coordination and interconnection amongst them. Indian Coast Guard has initiated several other initiatives such

<sup>12</sup> Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security, 2001, Pg 1

<sup>13</sup> Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security, 2001, Chapter II, Pg 6

<sup>14</sup> Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security, 2001, Chapter V, Pg 61

<sup>15</sup> Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security, 2001, Chapter V, Pg 63

<sup>16</sup> Statement of Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs, (29 October 2021)

<sup>17</sup> Annual Report of Ministry of Home Affairs (2020-2021), Government of India, pg 24

<sup>18</sup> Indian Coast Guard, [https://indiancoastguard.gov.in/content/1727\\_3\\_CossatalSecurity.aspx#:~:text=As%20part%20of%20Coastal%20Security,established%20by%20the%20Indian%20Coast](https://indiancoastguard.gov.in/content/1727_3_CossatalSecurity.aspx#:~:text=As%20part%20of%20Coastal%20Security,established%20by%20the%20Indian%20Coast) (06 may 2022)

as regular exercises, community interaction programmes (CIPs) with the fishers, awareness programmes etc.<sup>19</sup> it is pertinent that Indian Coast has been mandated with additional responsibility amongst other to protect and preserve environment thereby ensuring the environmental security.<sup>20</sup>

Consequent to the recommendation of Kargil Committee report and recommendations, a dedicated Border Management Division has been setup within Ministry of Home Affairs. While, Border Management Division-I deals with issues relating to strengthening of international land borders, their policing, guarding and overall management, the Border Management Division-II deals with border area development programme, coastal security schemes and land ports authority of India.<sup>21</sup>

A major step with an aim to strengthen and augment coastal security, government of India under the aegis of Ministry of Home Affairs launched comprehensive Coastal Security Schemes I and Coastal Security Scheme II. The Coastal Security Scheme (Phase-I) was implemented from 2005-06 with provision of INR 646 crore for almost 6 years. Scheme was launched to strengthen the infrastructure and basic equipment's for coastal patrolling and surveillances. Under the first scheme, coastal States and Union Territories were provided with financial support for 73 Coastal Police Stations, 97 check posts, 58 outposts, 30 barracks and 204 interceptor boats, 153 jeeps, 312 motorcycles and 10 Rigid Inflatable Boats.<sup>22</sup> Coastal Security Scheme I in coordination with state Governments has established a coastal security culture in coastal areas and has laid the foundation of security infrastructural development in coastal

vulnerable areas for ensuring better coastal security.

For further augmenting the initiatives and to further develop the coastal security infrastructure, the second phase of coastal security scheme was approved by the cabinet committee on security with an outlay of 1579.91 crore. In Coastal Security Scheme II, the coastal States and Union Territories were provided with 131 Coastal Police Stations, 60 jetties, 10 Marine Operational Centers, 150 boats, 75 special category of boats, 131 four wheelers and 242 motorcycles.<sup>23</sup> The Coastal Security Scheme I and II have enabled coastal states to play a more pivot and active role in relation to coastal security having policing as state subject. Both schemes got success to establish much needed coordination, infrastructure, support and coherent coordination system among the stakeholders.

Government of India in order to have national-level forum and a periodic review mechanism at apex level for maritime and coastal security has constituted a dedicated National Committee for Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security (NCSMCS) consisting of all major stakeholders including concerned ministries and government agencies<sup>24</sup>.

Department of fisheries, government of India has launched a programme to issue biometric identification cards whereby all marine fishermen going into the sea upto Territorial waters, Exclusive Economic Zone or High Seas are essentially required carry a QR enabled Aadhaar Card or bio matric identification card.<sup>25</sup> Government of India has also initiated the mandatory installation of Automatic Identification System (AIS) equipment's in all vessels above 20 meters length.

On the basis of successful trials conducted by Indian Navy and the Indian Space Research

<sup>19</sup> Indian Coast Guards, <https://indiancoastguard.gov.in>

<sup>20</sup> Section 14(2) C of the Indian Coast Guards Act, 1978: Duties and functions of Coast Guard- taking such measures as are necessary to preserve and protect the maritime environment and to prevent and control marine pollution.

<sup>21</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs, Annual Report 2019-20, Chapter 1, Pg 1

<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs, Annual Report 2019-20, Chapter 3, Pg 42

<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs, Annual Report 2019-20, Chapter 3, Pg 42-43

<sup>24</sup> Release of Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Defence dated 05 March 2022,

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=176953> (7 May 2022)

<sup>25</sup> Resolved in 24th meeting of the Western Zonal Council held at Panaji on August 22, 2019, under the Chairmanship of Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah.

Organization (ISRO) on Proof of Concept, a dedicated indigenous satellite-based tracking system, a project for installation of 1050 satellite-based transponders in sub 20-meter fishing vessels registered in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat (500 terminals each) and Puducherry (50 terminals) has been completed<sup>26</sup> which sets a milestone on the way of ensuring enhanced coastal security. Following the same, Government of India aims to complete the same for remaining coastal states and Union territories.<sup>27</sup>

Union ministry of Home Affairs has also evolved and circulated very exhaustive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for security of Single-Point Mooring. Ministry has asked all Coastal States and Union territories to make Non-Major Ports within the jurisdiction of states for International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) compliant in accordance with the Compendium of Guidelines on Security of Non-Major Ports as issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2016 and in furtherance of guidelines issued by the Ministry of Shipping.<sup>28</sup>

The visionary decision of establishing National Academy of Coastal Policing, Okha and India's first internal Security University with the name of Rashtriya Raksha university by Government of India through Ministry of Home Affairs will also go a long way in ensuring overall internal security of nation including coastal security.<sup>29</sup> Among others, the objective of government in establishing this specialized University as an

institution of national importance is to promote and provide global standards in teaching, research and training avenues in the areas of policing including coastal policing.<sup>30</sup> Pursuant to the mandate, a dedicated first of its kind school for teaching, research and training activities in the areas of coastal security has been launched by the University.<sup>31</sup>

Other multiple initiatives as set forth, including the National Committee for Coastal and Maritime Security (NCSMCS) in 2009, Steering Committee for Review of Coastal Security (SCRCS) in 2013, and the State and District level Coastal Security Committees in 2016, creation of Joint Operations Centres (JOC) at Mumbai, Cochin, Visakhapatnam and Port Blair, setting up of National Command Control Communication and Intelligence (NC3I) Network to enhance maritime domain awareness,<sup>32</sup> coastal mapping, development of integrated check posts, strengthening of Indian Coast Guard etc. have ensured the forward looking approach of the government.

In order to develop and enhance maritime domain awareness, Indian Navy which is key enabler and patron of Indian overall maritime sovereignty and sea activities<sup>33</sup> having its major objective to ensure coastal and offshore security has taken several effective measure including establishing of National Command Control Communication Intelligence (NC3I) Network inter-linking 51 stations of Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard. Indian Navy enhancing coordination between all

26 Ministry of Home Affairs, Annual Report 2019-20, Chapter 3, Pg 44

27 As resolved in the 17th meeting of National Committee on Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security against Threats from the Sea (NCSMCS), held on 23.09.2019.

28 Ministry of Home Affairs, Annual Report 2019-20, Chapter 3, Pg 44

29 Established by enacting the Rashtriya Raksha University Act, 2020

30 The Rashtriya Raksha University Act, 2020, Section 6. The objects of the University shall be to promote global standards and to provide— (a) dynamic and high standards of learning and research; (b) working environment dedicated to the advancement and dissemination of education, research, training and scholarship of the highest quality in the domain of

policing including **coastal policing**, security, law enforcement, criminal justice, cyber security, cybercrime, artificial intelligence and related areas of internal security

31 [www.rru.ac.in](http://www.rru.ac.in), RRU-School of Integrated Coastal and Maritime Security Studies

32 The Economic Times, Nov 25, 2020, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-enhanced-coastal-security-significantly-post-26/11-terror-attack/articleshow/79406138.cms?from=mdr> (06 may 2022)

33 Ministry of Defence, Annual Report 2018-2019, Pg 32 <https://www.mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/MoDAR2018.pdf>

maritime stakeholders, including the Indian Coast Guard, Indian Air Force, Central and State maritime agencies, and national intelligence agencies for Maritime Domain Awareness.<sup>34</sup> Indian Navy as apex maritime security provider to nation and having enormous capacity, has been regularly offering its capacity and expertise to various security forces deployed for coastal security including Border Security Force, Central Industrial Security Force, Marine Police of various states and Indian Coast Guard in procurement, maintenance, use and training of equipment's and boats deployed for coastal security.<sup>35</sup>

In previous decades, the government of Indian with cooperation of state governments has worked significantly to enhance the coastal security culture in country. However, there is still a need to look much beyond from multidimensional perspective including all stakeholders specially the Marine or coastal Police. There is a significant need to sufficiently equip and strengthen marine police stations on the line of Indian Coast Guard. Since coastal security has its own dynamics and challenges alike other areas, the state governments must think on creating separate cadre for marine police stations rather to use regular police officers. Currently the Indian Coast Guard trains and provides technical training to state police officers however, State governments or central government must build the capacity to train police officers in adequate numbers.

There is still a gap in legislative framework in the areas of coastal security and overall maritime security of nation and region. The legislations such as the Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill<sup>36</sup>, the Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Bill 2021 and the Merchant Shipping Bill are required to be enacted and strengthen in order to ensure the comprehensive legislative support to the initiatives on coastal and maritime security.

Further there is a dire need to clearly outline the role and responsibilities, clarify and strengthen the statutory duties of government departments, port trusts, state maritime boards, state coastal police stations, non-major ports and private terminal operators and other stakeholders in order to have better and smooth coordination among the stakeholders.

Further, the regulations on Coastal Zones are required to be reinforced in accordance with the spirit of regulations in order to have better inclusivity on nontraditional security front including coastal areas. The development in Coastal areas promote livelihood, trade, commerce and employment however, pose major challenge to the security of individuals, nation, environment, ecology and species inhabited therein. Move on relaxing the norms as set out in various Coastal Zone Regulations<sup>37</sup> time to time by various government's leads to the cause of concern.

## Conclusion

For a country whose security, and economic wellbeing is inextricably linked to the sea has seen exponential growth in traditional and non-traditional threats through oceans in last few decades including crimes related to fishing, smuggling of narcotics, terrorist activities including heinous attacks. Area of coastal security which remained in shallows for long time after the independence however, gained the attention of policy makers especially after the Kargil incident and report thereon. Government of India has taken several measures and initiates to secure our long coastline at various levels including strengthening the Indian Coast Guard, establishing Coastal police Stations, deployment of technology based surveillance systems. Since 2005, Union territories and state governments have also demonstrated the utmost responsiveness in implementing the Coastal

<sup>34</sup> Ministry of Defence, Annual Report 2016-2017, Pg 27, <https://www.mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/AR1617.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Defence, Annual Report 2018-2019, Pg 35

<https://www.mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/MoDAR2018.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> The Anti Piracy Bill, 2019 introduces in Lok Sabha on 2 December, 2019

<sup>37</sup> The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification 2019 issued by Central Government in exercise of powers under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

Security Scheme I and II in respective states. However, there still needs a multidimensional approach in policy formation, coordination among stakeholders, capacity building and overall domain awareness in this area. Though delayed but the appointment of countries first National Maritime Security Coordinator (NMSC) will go a long way in this direction.