

## **Pollution in South Asian Seas: Need for Regional Coordination**

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### **ABSTRACT**

There is an urgent need for regional coordination with respect to policy and enforcement among the South Asian nations in tackling the issue of marine pollution in the seas surrounding South Asia. A study of the developments since the early 1980s reveal that the pollution levels, instead of exhibiting a reverse tendency has been steadily increasing, owing to the appearance of new-found sources of pollution, increasing waste disposal and developmental activities. The Karachi Coastline, the Indian Coast and the seas surrounding the other South Asian nations with economically vital coastal areas are under the threat of severe marine pollution resulting in inflicting considerable damage to the marine ecosystem and the communities exclusively depending on it.

Almost all of the international conventions and agreements have been barely efficient in this regard. Despite the treaties, conventions and agreements, the South Asian Nations continue pursuing their policies of unstudied, unbalanced and reckless expansion resulting in the deterioration of the marine flora and fauna surrounding them. The ever expanding shipping traffic through the major ports in these regions, the unregulated sewage dumping both directly and through inland sources and the occasional oil laden ship disasters are expanding the dead zones, contaminating the sea food and diminishing the aesthetic quality of these coasts.

The paper attempts to analyse the voids and inefficiencies in the existing regulatory framework, domestic, regional and international, concerning the activities and policies with respect to the marine environment. Besides, the paper discusses the recent developmental activities which bears significance on the issue of increasing marine pollution with due consideration to the contentions and claims of the parties involved. The Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project is critically analysed focusing on its merits and demerits and its impact on the marine ecosystem surrounding the Palk Strait, Gulf of Mannar and the Adam's Bridge. The paper concludes with certain suggestions as to the feasibility and environmental viability of the existing and the future shipping projects, additions and alterations to the existing legal regime and regional measures to be adopted with respect to the activities in the seas surrounding South Asia.