Malvan (marine) wildlife sanctuary: Fishing community perspective

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Malvan (marine) wildlife sanctuary

- Designated in 1987, with subsequent notifications in 1991 and 1992
- Protect coral reefs, mangroves and rocky shores
- Total area: 29.12 sq km
  - core zone 3.18 sq km – includes islands of Sindhudurg fort, Padamged island and other submerged rocky areas
  - Sindhudurg fort also a national monument, managed by the ASI
  - Buffer area: includes seven fishing villages
- According to recent newspaper reports, there is a new plan to extend the area of the sanctuary
Malvan: Fisheries

Malvan taluk has:

- Fishing villages: 19 (of which seven are within the limits of sanctuary)
- Total Fisher population: 9,012 (only within existing sanctuary limits)
  - Of which 7,000 are dependent on the resources of the sanctuary (acc to fishers)
  - Women are actively involved in fish drying and trade
- Fishing vessels: 1,068
- Types of gear used: trawl, rampans (shore seines), gillnets, hook and line

**Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1981**

- Implemented by Department of Fisheries
- Mechanized fishing is banned upto a depth of 5-10 fathom
- Prohibits purse seine operations within 12nm from the coast
- Annual closed season of 10 June to 15 August
Management issues within existing sanctuary limits:
- Comprehensive management plans yet, to be prepared
- Fishing communities not active in decision-making
- Sanctuary advisory committees yet, to be constituted
- Minimal implementation of regulations
- Boundaries, yet to be demarcated
- Rights of communities owning land inside the current sanctuary limits, yet to be settled

Need to factor in other threats to the sanctuary:
- Tourism
- Industrial zone
Malvan: Fishworker organization

- Protested even during the planning and designation of the sanctuary
- Lack access to information on plans for re-settlement of fishing villages or the fish landing centre
- Agree that conservation of marine resources is important, but through community participation
- Highlight need to address pollution related threats

Demands:

- Detailed information on future proposals for marine sanctuary
- Future plans for sanctuary should be discussed and formulated with local fishing communities
- No relocation or resettlement of fishing communities,
- No restriction on fishing, livelihood should be secure
- MFRA should be implemented, including the strict ban on purse-seine fishing off the coast and restriction on number of trawlers
- Tourism and industrial activities along the coast, should be restricted.
Way forward: Malvan (marine) wildlife sanctuary

- Need for reliable gender-segregated socio-economic data on the number of affected, to develop long-term proposals
- Fishing communities should be seen as allies, and be involved in designing, planning and implementing of future plans for the sanctuary
- Need to implement MFRA regulations