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Study On The Implication Of Crz Notification In Planned Development Of Islands In Kochi

The coastal regions of Kerala are more populated with 2.5 times the overall population density. CRZ notification was introduced in order to regulate human activities and protect coastal zones. Apart from the large island groups, Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep, there are several smaller islands located in the coastline of mainland of India. Islands provide important ecosystem services and it is necessary to protect them. Coastal islands in India are facing serious threats to their natural habitats such as mining, pollution, sea level rise, urbanization, natural hazards, climate change etc. Many islands are undergoing rapid urban expansion with increasing coastal developments. Therefore, it is necessary to implement effective management plans for the islands to ensure their sustainable development. All the backwater islands and islands along the mainland coast are brought under the CRZ notification 2019 and are ordered to prepare Integrated Island Management Plans.

Islands in Kerala are commonly known as backwater islands or river islands and they have been brought under the CRZ notification 2011. Ernakulam district has the highest number of backwater islands in Kerala. Kochi in Ernakulam district is the most populous metropolitan area in Kerala and very much prone to natural disasters. The study involved identification of islands in Kochi and a total number of 30 islands were identified within the Kochi City Region. The Panchayats that are formed entirely by islands were taken as the study area. That included 5 Panchayat in KCR region i.e. Kadamakkudy, Mulavukad, Kumbalam, Kumbalangy and Maradu. Detailed study of the islands in the selected Panchayats were carried out to understand their characteristics and challenges faced by the islands. The study also involved understanding the implication of CRZ notification in the planned development of islands in Kochi. From the study it is identified that encroachment can happen as the islands in Kochi are located at close proximity to the city core, which can further result in land reclamation, urbanization, land conversion and unplanned growth. Planned and sustainable development of island is necessary in order to avoid encroachment.

The study concludes with a set of guidelines formulated after identifying the issues and analysing the situation in the island followed by the regulations of CRZ and the type of development that is to promoted in islands for sustainable development of island and community.

Keywords: *Islands, CRZ, Kochi islands, encroachment, land reclamation, natural hazards, sustainable development, Integrated Island Management Plans*