

# MPAs

## The view from below

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# Introduction

- ◆ MPAs are becoming an important instrument to protect marine habitat, biodiversity and fish resources
- ◆ MPAs are being set up with differing objectives in differing eco-systems and different socio-economic contexts—making generalisation difficult
- ◆ This presentation is about a specific context but issues raised and learning might apply to other contexts as well

# The Context

- ◆ Asian tropical fisheries
- ◆ Large number of small scale fishermen dependent of fishing; huge population employed in post harvest
- ◆ Decentralised and dispersed production/landing
- ◆ Fishing part of “informal” sector; no social security system and limited occupational mobility
- ◆ State regulation of fisheries very weak
- ◆ Conflicts between “big” and “small” fishermen—trawlers often being the “big”

# The Indian Fisheries Scenario

- ◆ 6000 km coastline with 750,000 full time sea going fishermen; 10-12 million dependent on marine fishing
- ◆ Fishing a caste based occupation with 3-4 castes exclusively in marine fishing in each of the 9 maritime states
- ◆ Traditional fishermen are among the poorer sections, socially marginal and have low political clout
- ◆ Post independence—promotion of enhanced production, introduction of trawl fishing
- ◆ Marine fishing regulation acts in all states but poor implementation—no effective control over fleet size or capacity, no-trawl zone ineffective
- ◆ Six week monsoon fishing ban on “mechanised boats” the only regulation that is enforced

# India



- Bathymetry: 0 - 200m
- Bathymetry: 200 - 2000m
- Bathymetry: over 2000m
- Coastline
- Coral reefs
- Mangrove
- Mangrove



# Orissa

- ◆ 489 km coastline on the Bay of Bengal
- ◆ Northern coast—Bengali fishermen, mostly those settled from East Pakistan at time of partition
- ◆ Southern Coast—Telugu fishermen linked to fishermen in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh
- ◆ Fishing is largely done by communities that are poor and are linguistic minorities

# Three sub-sectors, but two interest groups

- ◆ Mechanised boats—trawlers and gill netters, operating from harbours or safe anchorages, owned by richer fishermen
- ◆ Motorised boats—small traditional beach landing boats with small motors
- ◆ Non motorised sailing vessels
- ◆ However both motorised and non motorised form one interest group considering themselves “artisanal” or “traditional”
- ◆ Artisanal sector in perpetual conflict with trawlers that stray close to coast and deplete coastal fish resources













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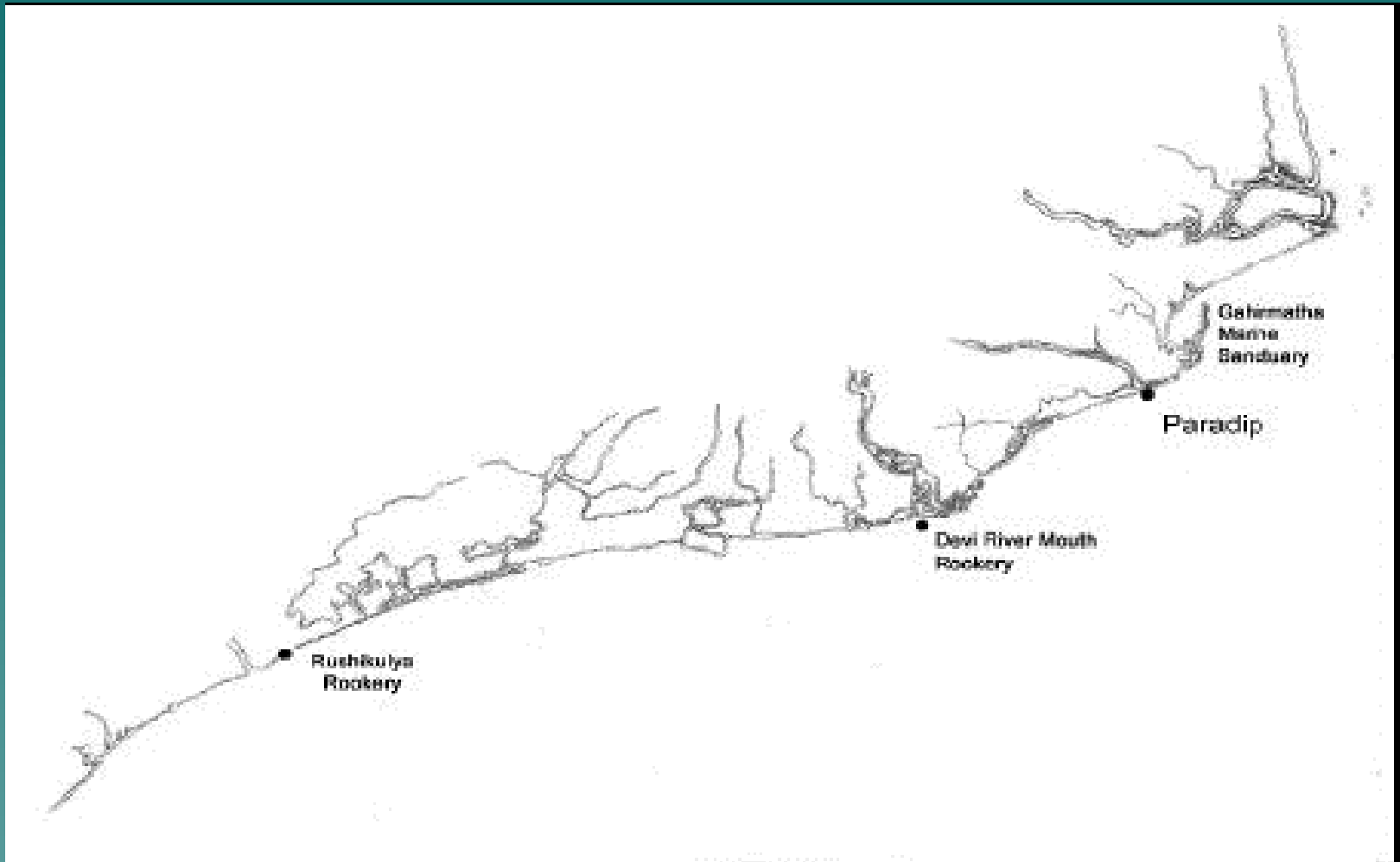
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# Turtle conservation

- ◆ Orissa coast most important for Olive Ridley turtle nesting grounds
- ◆ Mass incursion of turtles between November to April every year, January the peak for nesting
- ◆ Turtle conservation, part of India's Wildlife Protection Act of 1972
- ◆ Practice of targeted turtle fishing stopped as well as sale of turtle eggs
- ◆ However, significant incidental catches of turtles from large mesh gillnets and trawls

# Three nesting grounds



# Turtle Conservation—contd.

- ◆ New measures adopted from 1994 onwards due to increasing international debate on turtle conservation
- ◆ Total year round fishing ban near Gahirmatha beach—1994
- ◆ 1997—"Core area" of 725 sq. km declared in Garhimatha area and 710 sq. km "buffer zone" declared beyond that
- ◆ Turtle excluding devises made mandatory for trawlers; 20 km no-trawling from Jan 1 to May 31 off two major nesting areas (half the coast)
- ◆ 1998– No fishing allowed within core area but motorised and non motorised categories can fish in buffer zone (10 km away)



- ◆ 2003—Committee appointed by Supreme Court intervenes after series of court cases related to Forests and conservation
- ◆ Further restrictions on fishing; five month (Jan-May) restrictions over two stretches of coast
- ◆ Currently 75% of the coast under major restrictions for at least 5 months—the peak season
- ◆ Confusion on scope and application of restrictions—category of boats, type of nets, “innocent passage” through core area, etc.
- ◆ Forest guards responsible for implementation, often arbitrary in interpretation of rules

# Social Consequences

- ◆ Enforcement weak in early years, but increasingly tough under pressure from environmentalists and courts
- ◆ Serious disruptions to livelihood in peak seas and loss of incomes
- ◆ Fishermen increasingly treated as “poachers” and punished with fines
- ◆ 2006 saw 10 fishermen commit suicide due to indebtedness and economic pressure

# Main Issues

- ◆ Imposition of MPA without any consultation
- ◆ Possible impacts on those involved in fishing not considered and analysed before imposition
- ◆ Ad-hoc imposition of rules from time to time
- ◆ Livelihood vs Environment; absence of alternatives
- ◆ “Punishment of the victims”

# Community based MPAs in S.E.Asia

- ◆ South East Asia, especially Philippines, many examples of community declared MPAs
- ◆ Fisheries Code of Philippines gives local bodies (“municipalities”) the power to manage fisheries within their area
- ◆ Local bodies, fishing communities and NGOs are working together in many islands for managing the resources
- ◆ Decline of fish in coral areas due to unregulated fishing and use of harmful methods has led to many communities establishing “reserves” where no fishing is allowed

# Learning from Community managed MPAs

- ◆ Awareness building followed by participatory management methods are more effective than state imposed MPAs
- ◆ Benefits actually accrue to local communities that make the necessary sacrifices or changes in their fishing operations
- ◆ However, overall resource management remains weak as communities managing small reserves without this being stretched across contiguous stretches of sea has severe limitations
- ◆ Micro-Macro level links vital for success of MPAs or fisheries management in general

# MPAs—Larger Issues

- ◆ MPAs as single instrument of management will harm livelihoods and create social strife
- ◆ Unlikely to deliver conservation goals as MPAs not integrated into overall fisheries management framework
- ◆ Capacity controls, effort controls, gear restrictions, time and area zonation, etc. have to all come together for results
- ◆ Involvement of key stakeholders and adequate policies for rehabilitation and alternative employment essential