

# Repercussion of Covid-19 Pandemic on the Blue Economy of

Rajani Kanta Mishra<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>NCAOR

March 30, 2022

## Abstract

Blue economy comprises about 4.1% of India's economy of GDP. At present the GDP has declined to 24%, a matter of concern during a Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, the study would appeal to the readership of the Policy holders, Stakeholders, Local Government, Government of India for considering necessary action plan towards the maintainable utilization of ocean resources and sustainable management of Ocean resources and tourism beneath this blue economy through various awareness programs and measures to develop up to pre pandemic level with vigilance of Covid-19 pandemic. A comprehensive plan by the Indian government to setting up regulatory reform to provide an empowering climate for a sustainable ocean economy (e.g., comprehensive, integrated ocean management) and marine spatial planning (MSP) processes and shift harmful subsidies to more sustainable and equitable uses

*Article type: View point*

## Repercussion of Covid-19 Pandemic on the Blue Economy of

Subrat Naik<sup>1</sup>, Rajani Kanta Mishra<sup>\*2</sup>, Pravakar Mishra<sup>1</sup> and Federico Baltar<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>National Centre for Coastal Research, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Chennai, India

<sup>2</sup>National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Goa, India

<sup>3</sup>Department of Functional & Evolutionary Ecology, University of Vienna, Austria

**Corresponding author: [rajanimishra@yahoo.com](mailto:rajanimishra@yahoo.com)**

## Abstract

Blue economy comprises about 4.1% of India's economy of GDP. At present the GDP has declined to 24%, a matter of concern during a Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, the study would appeal to the readership of the Policy holders, Stakeholders, Local Government, Government of India for considering necessary action plan towards the maintainable utilization of ocean resources and sustainable management of Ocean resources and tourism beneath this blue economy through various awareness programs and measures to develop up to pre pandemic level with vigilance of Covid-19 pandemic. A comprehensive plan by the Indian government to setting up regulatory reform to provide an empowering climate for a sustainable ocean economy (e.g., comprehensive, integrated ocean management) and marine spatial planning (MSP) processes and shift harmful subsidies to more sustainable and equitable uses.

## Main body

On March 11, 2020, the WHO announced COVID-19 a pandemic<sup>1</sup>. To limit the spread of COVID-19, on 24 March 2020, the Government of India implemented a cross-country lockdown for 21 days of the entire 1.3 billion population<sup>2</sup>. The unprecedented pandemic lockdown threw a challenge to all types of industries, transport, fishing boats and trawlers operations as day to day life came to a standstill (**Figure 1**), and

has severely interrupted not only the fisheries supply and demand chain but also the tourism sectors in India plays a major role in Blue Economy of India. The Blue Economy (BE) is the maintainable utilization of ocean resources for financial development, improved employments, and occupations while preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem<sup>3</sup>. The BE represents about 3.5 to 7% of the global GDP<sup>4</sup>. The commercial value of activities associated with the world's oceans are estimated to be between US\$ 3 to 6 trillion. This is accrued from services and resources, e.g. marine transport (90% of overall trade), source of food (fisheries and aquaculture), marine tourism (5% of the global GDP) and global employment (6-7%). The General Assembly of UN adopted the 2030 agenda, in September 2015, for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDG-14, about "Life Below water", commits countries to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources, by implementing international law as reflected in United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources for BE. The Indian government stands focused on advancing the BE through undertakings like the "SagarMala" project which plans to promote port-led improvement and sustainable development of coastal communities through ability improvement and livelihood generation activities, fisheries development, coastal tourism, etc.<sup>6</sup> India is a trade-surplus country in the fisheries sector and exports were more than 31.5 times higher than its imports in fiscal year (FY) 2013. India exports US\$ 2.4 billion, its imports were US\$ 76 million, registering a trade surplus of US\$2.32 billion in the corresponding year<sup>5</sup>. As the 6<sup>th</sup> largest exporting country of the world, India exported shellfish worth a total of US\$3.89 billion and finfish of US\$1.16 billion in FY 2015. In the global fisheries production, India was 2<sup>nd</sup> in freshwater fish, 3<sup>rd</sup> in finfish, and 6<sup>th</sup> in shellfish in FY 2013. In fish trade, India was the 8<sup>th</sup> largest exporter and 88<sup>th</sup> largest importer of the world in FY 2013<sup>5</sup>. Prior to the pandemic, export of fisheries products had grown by 11% from \$136 billion in 2013 to \$152 billion in 2017, but it is expected to drop by 33% this year due to the current COVID-19 situation<sup>7</sup> (**Figure.2**). Like the fisheries, travel and tourism are major economic sectors for small island developing states, generating around \$30 billion/yr. The situation has resulted in the near total collapse of livelihoods centred around fisheries, tourism and related economic activities. The overall decline in worldwide arrivals estimated to cause a loss of \$7.4 billion equivalent to 7.3% fall in GDP<sup>8</sup>. Loss of export revenue from tourism is estimated at about US\$ 910 billion to US\$ 1.2 trillion in 2020<sup>9</sup>. The tourism industry in India contributed US\$ 2.65 billion to India's GDP in 2019, but due to the COVID-19 outbreak, about US\$ 17 billion in revenue loss is expected in the next one year<sup>10</sup>. BE comprises 4.1% of India's economy<sup>11</sup> and India GDP collapsed 23.9 % i.e., (~ 0.05 % BE) of first quarter of 2020-21<sup>12</sup> during pandemic. Hence, the closure of trade routes, fishers and tourist is impacting the BE of India. There is a clear unprecedented need for recovery, resilience and management measures for the BE, which include tourism and maritime transport, is essential to accomplishing the objectives of the SDG-14 goal. Improve detectability and compliance with sanitary measures, enhance safety and social assurance of crew and support sustainable and alternative livelihood through economic activities of small-scale fishers and coastal population. In BE industries to trim down transmission of COVID-19, has recommended some precautionary measures such as avoiding close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory illness, regular hand washing with soap & water or hand sanitizer particularly after direct contact with sick people or their environment, using proper face mask over a time during fishing, processing, cold storage and transportation to ports, vessels and to destination of countries. The people, community who directly contact at various work place of BE industries should be supported by government over period of regular health checking, monitoring followed by treatment for further preparatory of the work in fishing, aquaculture, tourism and other marine industries for supplementary recovery of BE contributed GDP.

A comprehensive plan by the Indian government setting up regulatory reform to provide an empowering climate for a sustainable ocean economy (e.g., comprehensive integrated ocean management and marine spatial planning (MSP) processes and shift harmful subsidies to more sustainable and equitable uses. In this context, MSP is considered as significant instrument for the sustainable development of the blue economy of marine areas and coastal regions of India, which can provide long-term resilience and sustainable progress to make a sustainable blue recovery.

## Data availability statement

The authors declare that all the consolidated and validated data supporting the findings of this study are available within the paper as Supporting Information based the information collected from various sources and are cited in the text as well as in the reference list.

## Declaration of Interest Statement

Authros donot have any conflict of interest for manuscript preparation and submission.

## References

1. WHO. Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 (2020a).
2. A. S. Kochhar *et al.* , *Asian J Psychiatr* , 54, 102213 (2020).
3. THE WORLD BANK. "What is the Blue Economy?". (2017)
4. UNCTAD (2020). Own calculations based on World Bank and UNCTAD.
5. FICCI. Blue Economy vision 2025: Harnessing business potential. for India Inc and international partners (2017).
6. Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India (2015).
7. UNCTAD. COVID-19 offers opportunities to make fishing industries more sustainable (2020).
8. UNCTAD. COVID-19 offers opportunity to save our ocean (2020).
9. UNWTO. Impact assessment of the COVID-19 outbreak on international tourism (2020).
10. FICCI . Travel and Tourism, Survive, revive and thrive in times of COVID-19 (2020).
11. World Sustainable Development Summit. Towards 2030 Goals Making the Decade Count, New Delhi, India (2020).
12. Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, Govt. of India. Estimates of Gross Domestic Product for the first quarter (April-June) (2020).



**Figure 1.** Fishing trawlers and boats operations were closed down for fishing due to pandemic lockdown at Royapuram the largest fishing harbour, Chennai, India



**Figure 2.** Various marine resources and fishing industries were shut-down during pandemic implementation and stand up a huge loss underneath the Blue-economy (BE) of the India.