

How we can manage our marine resources better

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Eighth is the inadequate public participation and stakeholder inclusion. Ninth is the lack of coordination and integration among laws, agencies, and stakeholders.

In the past ocean uses were limited to navigation and fishing, as mentioned earlier. Hence conflict between different uses of the ocean and coast were few and far between. As a result single-sector management approaches gained wide acceptance as an effective management tool for marine and ocean

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resource management. But with the increase of multiple uses of these resources, conflicts among different uses of the ocean tend to arise and the single-sector management approach proves no longer effective. These days, integrated coastal and ocean management (ICOM) is being adopted to manage not only coastal areas but EEZ and large marine ecosystems as well. Sustainable development is the ultimate goal of coastal and ocean management. China decided to initiate an integrated coastal management system in the



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1990s. The experience of last two decades' coastal and ocean management of China has proved its worth, benefiting all stakeholders. Similarly, experience of the Netherlands' integrated coast and delta management has shown its value. A country which was constantly fighting against floods is now said to be living with water and water is bringing the wealth for the Netherlands. Hence, Bangladesh may also think about going towards an integrated approach. We have inherent strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. For example our

strength lies in terms of diverse coastal habitat, productive estuaries, existing and potential fishing grounds etc. But weaknesses lie in interagency coordination, monitoring mechanism, lack of knowledge, technology and human resources etc. Our opportunity lies in developing bio-technology, bio-resources, pharmaceuticals, mineral extraction, aquaculture and deep sea fishing. Nevertheless we must not lose sight of emerging threats of sea-level rise, coastal inundation, salinity intrusion, depletion of fish resources, pollution, frequent

natural disasters etc.

Bangladesh is amongst the pioneering countries to talk about the sea, marine resources and the concept of Blue Economy. We are fortunate that our honourable Prime Minister has already given her vision on these; and very appropriately termed the BoB as our "third neighbour." What is the rallying cry of the moment is the need for harmonising the activities of all under a common umbrella, may be under the Prime Minister's Office; and sensitising all the stakeholders, especially

in the private sector and community levels. Thereafter we need to go towards proper planning, acquiring appropriate knowledge and methods for coordinated exploitation, exploration and utilisation of marine resources. Definitely a better tomorrow awaits Bangladesh if we remain focused on our direction of this journey. It will definitely help us to materialise our long cherished dream of becoming a developed country by 2041.

The writer is a freelance contributor.

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