

Concerns with CRZ- notification 2018

What is the issue?

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The Coastal Regulation Zone notification of 2018 increases the vulnerability of coastal people to climate disasters.

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What are the recent changes in the CRZ notification?

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- The government has relaxed development controls along the coastline through the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification 2018.

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- **Relaxing FSI** - As per CRZ - 2011 Notification, for **CRZ-II areas**, Floor Space Index (FSI) or the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) had been frozen at 1991 Development Control Regulation (DCR) levels.

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- In the Draft CRZ, 2018 Notification, it has been proposed to de-freeze the same and permit FSI for construction projects, as prevailing on the date of the new Notification.

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- **No development zones** - For **CRZ-III areas**, two separate categories have been proposed.

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- CRZ-III A contains densely populated rural areas with a population density of 2161 per square kilometre as per 2011 Census.

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- Such areas shall have a No Development Zone of 50 meters from the HTL as against 200 meters from the HTL stipulated in the CRZ Notification, 2011.

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- CRZ-III B contains rural areas with population density of below 2161 per square kilometre as per 2011 Census.

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- Such areas shall continue to have an NDZ of 200 meters from the HTL.
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- A No Development Zone (NDZ) of 20 meters has been proposed to be stipulated for all Islands close to the main land coast and for all Backwater Islands in the main land.
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- **Clearance** - Only such projects/activities, which are located in the CRZ-I & IV areas, shall be dealt with for CRZ clearance by the MoEF&CC.
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- For all other project activities located in CRZ-II/III areas, CRZ clearance shall be considered at the level of the Coastal Zone Management Authority.
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- **Promoting Tourism** - Temporary tourism facilities such as shacks, toilet blocks, change rooms, drinking water facilities etc. have been proposed in Beaches.
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- Such temporary tourism facilities are also proposed to be permissible in the No Development Zone (NDZ) of the CRZ-III areas.
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- Regulated limestone mining is also proposed to be permitted in areas adequately above the height of HTL, based on recommendations of reputed National Institutes in the Mining field.
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What are the concerns?

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- The government's announcement of amendments to the Coastal Regulation Zone law spell the death of the coasts.
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- **Norm relaxation** - Relaxation in NDZ negate the coastal space entirely of its special socio-ecological uniqueness and open up this niche space to mindless real estate development, mass scale tourism, and industry.
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- It can also affect the livelihoods of people in the fisheries sector, which employs 4-9 million people and generate Rs. 48,000-Rs. 75,000 crores for the economy.
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- **Waste generation** - With rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, coasts have become convenient dumping grounds.
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- Sewage, garbage and sludge from industrial processes land up on the coastline and makes life for coastal dwellers a living hell.
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- The new amendments legalise the setting up of common effluent treatment plants (CETPs).
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- Yet, establishing CETPs is an impractical technology for cleaning up waste, especially on the most fragile parts of the coast.
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- These projects have also made the coastal people of Saurashtra and south Gujarat more vulnerable to toxicity in their food, water and air.
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- **Disaster vulnerability** - India's coasts are already facing climate change events such as intensive, frequent and unpredictable cyclones and erosion.
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- The combined effects of harmful coastal development and climate change are apparent in the form of mass migrations from coastal areas like Odisha and the Sundarbans in West Bengal.
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- Hence, relaxing the floor space index could make the people living in coastal areas even more vulnerable to natural disasters.

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- **Consultation** - Also, this notification has been introduced after minimal consultations with other stakeholders.
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- The National Fishworkers Forum (NFF), for instance, has vociferously opposed these amendments since the review was announced in June 2014 by the Shailesh Nayak Committee.
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- Instead of using the NFF's knowledge to craft an effective policy, the government has peddled the same development model that has generated conflict and impoverishment.
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- Thus, the notification now exposes more people to the unassessed impacts of climate change-related coastal damages.

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Source: The Hindu

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