

# Impact of Sea on Indian Life and its reflections in Contemporary Literatures

Sethulekshmi J.R., T. G. Manoharan



**Abstract:** *This paper is intended to present the impact of sea on the socio-economic life of the nation by assessing the contribution of three most important sectors associated with sea. They are marine fishing and fish production, foreign trading marine products and marine transport and sea port and marine tourism. The study is based on the secondary information available from the contemporary literature related to marine studies. The review of these literatures revealed that even though many studies have been conducted various aspects of sea and its impact on Indian life but there is no serious studies about the impact on three most important sectors such as marine fishing, foreign trade and beach tourism on the socio-economic life of the people. This context is necessitated to undertake the study. The importance of sea on the human life has been narrated in the first part of the paper bringing out its contribution on the socio-economic edifies of the Indian life. The paper has examined the contribution of marine fishing and fish production to the life of India in terms of its employment provision, income generation and socio-economic development of the fisher folk. The secondary data is the source for analysing these problems and which has been extended to study the sectors of the foreign trade and the beach tourism. In foreign trade we have understood the relevance of marine exports and maritime transport on the socio-economic development of the country and their contribution on the life of the people. The development of more seaport and sea transports are essential to make the country in a competitive position in the international scenario. The much needed foreign exchange reserve can be enhanced through this process along with millions of new employment opportunities to the people of the country. In beach tourism we have clearly stated the importance of beach tourism, one of the most developing tourism destinations globally. India as a nation has immense potential to attract foreign tourists towards this enchanting tourism product. But much more care should be needed for the development of infrastructure in the Indian beaches to provide an international standard. This sector has been providing foreign exchange earnings to the nation as well as direct and indirect employment to millions of Indians. Even though the central and state governments have been providing budgetary and other statutory assistance to the development of beach as potential tourism destinations. These steps seems to be inadequate.*

**Key Words:** *Marine Fishing, Fishing Communities, Foreign trade, Beach tourism, Socio-economic life.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates the impact of the sea on Indian life which reflected in the contemporary literature. The sea has always been an attractive location and signs in literature.

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Everybody who has been to the sea breathed its salty air, walked along the beach and looked out towards the endlessness of the sea might agree that the sea can have a strong impact on us. Rabindranath. Tagore said that “You can’t cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water”. It shows how much the sea is closely tied to human life

Since antiquity, the fishing has played a significant role in Hindu religion and its greatness has been profusely illustrated in Holy Scriptures. Out of 10 different incarnations (Dasavatar) of Shrihari Vishnu, three avatars such as Matsya Avatar, Kurma Avatar and Varaha Avatar are directly associated with the oceans.<sup>i</sup> In the stories of the sage Vyasa was the son of Satyvathi (Matsyagandha) and Nishada kingdom from this we can clearly understand that our ancient histories having a close association with the sea and fishing. In order to study the Impact of the sea on Indian Life important factors which are considered as marine fishing, foreign trade, and beach tourism sectors. Fishing has been practised in India since the earliest times. The fisheries sector had a pride of place in the national economy of India. India has registered significant growth in fish production since independence.<sup>ii</sup> The sector along with seafood and ancillary industries are providing gainful employment to over four million people.<sup>iii</sup> These households can generate income from the sector by exporting many varieties of marine fishes from the country including chilled and dried items, fish oil, shrimp and prawns. Thus from the point of view of employment and income generation, international trade has much significance as well. Indian Beach tourism is the largest and the fastest growing economic sector in the world and it largely contributes to the country’s GDP growth. India is one nation with vast and beautiful beaches and is all set to promote beach tourism in large-scale.

## II. IMPORTANCE OF SEA ON THE INDIAN LIFE

Sea occupies an important role in the Indian mythology, history, and tradition. Since antiquity, the fishing has played a significant role in Hindu religion and its greatness has been profusely illustrated in Holy Scriptures. Fishing has been practised in India since the earliest times. Out of 10 different incarnations (Dasavatar) of Shrihari Vishnu, three avatars such as Matsya Avatar, Kurma Avatar and Varaha Avatar are directly associated with the oceans. In Sanskrit fish is known as ‘Matsya’. It is the fish avatar in the ten primary avatars of Hindu god Vishnu. Matsya is described to have rescued Manu and earthly existence from a great deluge. Kurma, or Turtle, is the second avatar of Hindu God Vishnu. Kurma appears at the time of crisis to restore the cosmic equilibrium.

## Impact of Sea on Indian Life and its reflections in Contemporary Literatures

Varaha is listed as third in the avatar of Hindu God Vishnu, who takes the form of a boar to rescue goddess earth.<sup>iv</sup> Historical texts like Kautaliyas Arthashastra and King Someswaras Manasollasa refer to fish culture. Nishada is the name of the kingdom mentioned in the Indian epic Mahabarata. The Mahabharata speaks of Nishaada (or Shabara) as forest hunters and fishermen. In the Ramayana Nishadas main profession were fishing and hunting. Nishadas were stated as tribes that have the hills and the forests for their dwelling and fishing as their main occupation.<sup>v</sup> According to the Mahabharata, the sage Vyasa was the son of Satyavathi and Parashara. She was the daughter of fishermen. Her name was also known as Matsyagandha due to the fishy smell that came out of her body. In these stories, we can clearly understand that our ancient histories having a close association with the sea and fishing.<sup>vi</sup>

Fishing is one of the main sources of livelihood for the rural people, particularly the fishermen community. Although fishing has been a traditional occupation in the coastal villages of India. Most of the people gets employment through sea directly or indirectly. One of the major sector of employment is through shipment and Beach tourism.

### III.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the objectives of the study.

1. To study the impact of Sea on Indian life in respect of marine fishing, foreign trade and beach tourism sectors.
2. To assess the contemporary contributions related to the impact of sea in the areas of marine fishing, foreign trade and beach tourism sectors.

### IV.STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This paper investigates the impact of the sea on Indian life which reflected in the Contemporary Literature. In our ancient histories we can clearly understand that there is a close association with the sea and fishing. Fishermen communities are wholly or partially exempt from the main stream of the society and they have relatively limited access to valued social and economic resources such as education, health services, income and the like. This leads to social isolation and limits their contribution into the development process. The literature review unveils that there are lot of studies conducted regarding the impact of sea level rises, climate change and socio-economic impact of sea level rises but there is no specific study in the Impact of sea on Indian life mainly related to three sectors, they are marine fishing, foreign trade and beach tourism and the study is confined to assess the socio-economic development taken place in these specific sectors. Thus it seem that there exist a research gap. Thus it is imperative to conduct a scientific study on this area on the topic entitled " Impact of Sea on Indian Life and its reflections in Contemporary Literatures".

### V.METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study is descriptive cum analytical in nature and the secondary data were used for the study. Secondary data

are collected and augmented from various text books, journals, official reports and websites.

### VI. IMPACT OF MARINE FISHING SECTOR ON INDIAN LIFE

From the Marine sector, the Fish production stands at 2.91 million tonnes. During 2014-15 the country exported the marine products of 10.51 lakh tonnes, which bring about in export earnings of 33441.61 crores and the US \$ 5511.12 million. The marine products are largely exported to South East Asia in the year of 2015-16, whereas exports to China are the lowest. At present India is the world's second largest producer of fish after china.

According to CMFRI census 2010, there are 3288 marine fishing villages and 1511 marine fish landing centres in 9 maritime states and 2 union territories in our country. The total marine fisherfolk population was about 4 million comprising 864550 families. The active fishermen population in marine sector is 0.99 million and 0.61 million people are involved in other allied activities. The fishing units consist of 72559 mechanised vessels, 71313 are motorised vessels and 50618 are non-motorised vessels in this sector. Nearly 61 per cent of the fishermen families were under the BPL category. About 2.02 million sq. kms. Of water spread area in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of India with a coastline 5600 Kms. and with the vast Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal, it is easy to see that the fishery resources of the country are vast indeed. The fisheries sector has a pride of place in the national economy of India. The fisheries sector along with seafood and ancillary industries are providing a valuable contribution both to our domestic food supply and to our exports. Fishing has been a traditional occupation in the coastal villages of India. In this sector about fourteen million people are engaging in different activities. In India fishing annual GDP rate is over 1% in 2008.<sup>vii</sup>

The social status fisherman has had no change basically from the seventeenth century to the beginning decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They are educationally the most backward class. As an occupational group, they are deeply conventional. The people who are engaged in fishing are treated as a lower class person by other mainstream people. They are looked down upon as people with low social status and other social relations with them are unthinkable for most people. The main reason for low social status is because of their occupation and they are unwilling to accept advice, take an initiative or accept any responsibilities. The attitude of civilized towards the fishermen is always negative so that fisherfolk are always very shy to mingle with the outer world. This is the main reason for their collective inhabitation on the seashore and riverbanks. Due to economic backwardness and attraction to the hereditary occupation of fishing the young generation compel to go to sea than to school. This results in the low percentage of literacy rate. On the economic side, they are permanently exploited by the intermediaries.

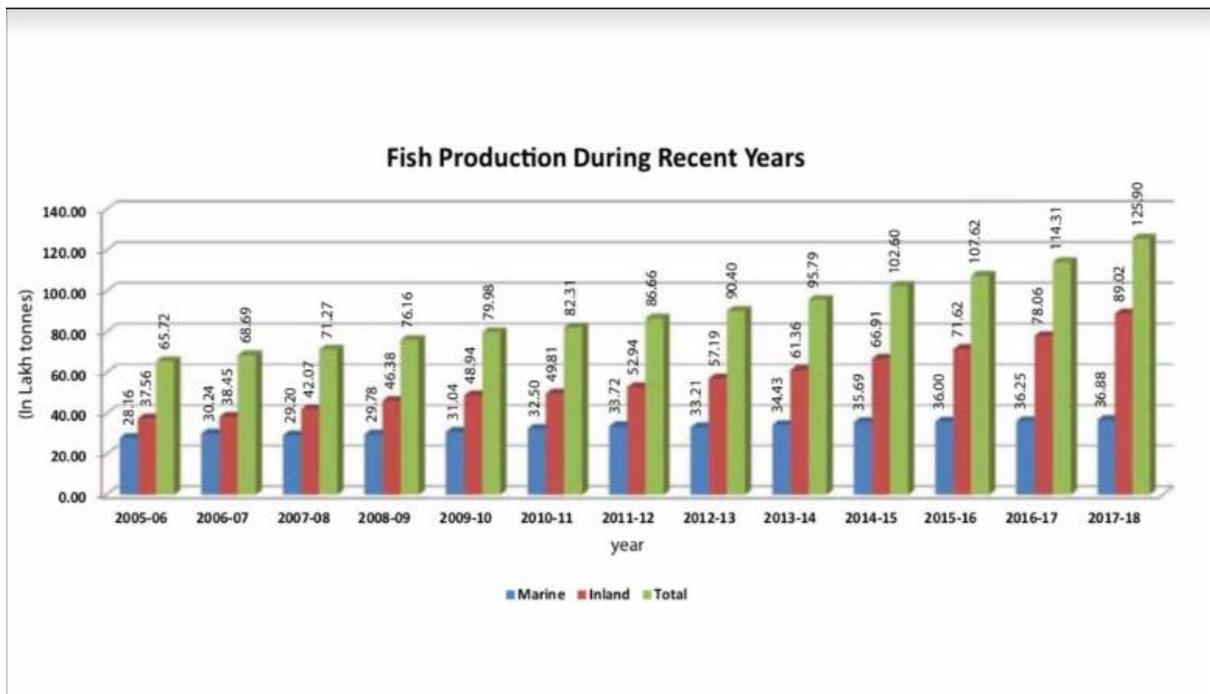
From the price of their catch, a major portion goes into the middlemen's pockets in form of interest and commissions. So the poor fishermen are always compelled to borrow from the money lenders for meeting their daily family requirements.

While analysing the economic backwardness of fishermen, there are two fundamental causes which can be identified, one is the inequality in the assets holding among the fishermen and other is the exploitation of the fishermen by those who are engaged in the process of buying the product. Indebtedness is one of the serious handicaps for the fishermen's economic development. The main reason given for the increase in indebtedness is the lack of regular income from fishing, which also implies that no efforts are made to save some of the income in the good seasons. The traditional credit pattern seemed to be emerging in all areas with no significant differences among the wealth ranks and the money lenders were the main source of finance a monopoly source. Most of the fishermen are indebted because they are addicted to alcohol, drugs and gambling along with illiteracy and lack of skills for another employment. Generally, the fishermen are ignorant of the art of spending wisely and are

not even capable of making a simple estimate of their monthly income and expenditure. The earnings are spent on immediate needs and there is no attempt to keep any money in reserve for the future. Borrowing from the middlemen or money lenders are utilised for the consumption purposes. Mortgaging house and huts, pledging nets and jewels and taking personal loans have all become so common that it is accepted.<sup>viii</sup>

Fisheries sector is the main source of livelihood for more than 1.60 Crore people. Fisheries development can ensure nutritional security, food security in India and also provide employment in those regions where rural populations predominantly live. We have already seen the importance of fisheries sector to the life of fishermen community and how they have been the source for their livelihood and development. This sector provides nutrient food for millions of people in our country, but there is a deliberate lack of measures to improve the life of the people who are instrumental to make available the supply of these food. The need of the time is intervention from the part of the government agencies and the society at large to support them to come in with the mainstream life of the people.

### Fish Production in India



Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/india-aims-to-increase-export-of-fish-and-fishery-products-by-over-50-in-next-five-years-rs-25k-crore-investment-in-the-pipeline/articleshow/71207944.cms>

Data showed that inland fishery's percentage share had risen from 29 percent of total fish production in 1950-51 to 71 percent in 2017-18. Interestingly, in the case of marine fisheries whose share declined from 71 per cent in 1950-51 to 29 per cent in 2017-18, the position is

completely reversed. It can be due to the increased emphasis on inland fisheries and also the reluctance of fishermen to participate in deep-sea fishing in the absence of deep-sea vessels and other coastal infrastructure.

# Impact of Sea on Indian Life and its reflections in Contemporary Literatures

## Production of Fish and Export of Fish from India (In Lakh MT.)

| Year    | Production of Fish | Export of Fish | Percent Export to Production |
|---------|--------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| 2010-11 | 82.31              | 8.13           | 9.88                         |
| 2011-12 | 86.66              | 8.62           | 9.95                         |
| 2012-13 | 90.40              | 9.28           | 10.27                        |
| 2013-14 | 95.79              | 9.84           | 10.27                        |

Source: Handbook on Fisheries Statistics 2014, p.75&113.

Economic survey 2005-06, p-160&2013-14.

The above table portrays that the fish production in the year 2010 -11 is 82.31 and export of fish is 8.13, therefore, the percent of export to production is increased to 9.88. In the above table we can see that there is a continuous increase from 2011 to 2014 in the production of fish, export of fish and percent export to production.

### VII.IMPACT OF FOREIGN TRADE IN MARINE PRODUCTS ON INDIAN LIFE

Maritime transport, which plays a vital role in the development of the country, comprises ports, shipping, shipbuilding and ship repair, and inland water transport systems. India has a coastline spanning 7516.6 kilometres, forming one of the biggest peninsulas in the world. According to the Ministry of Shipping, around 95 per cent of India's trading by volume and 70 per cent by value is done through maritime transport. Maritime transport is a critical infrastructure for the social and economic development of a country. India currently ranks 16th among the maritime countries with a coastline of 7,517 km with 13 major ports (12 government and one corporate) and about 200 non-major ports currently operating in the western and eastern regions of the country. India's government aims to build a port capacity of 32,000 MT by 2020. The National Maritime Development Program is also being implemented with an outlay of US\$ 11.8 billion. The Indian ports sector received FDI worth US\$1,635.40 million between April 2000 and May 2014, according to the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The following are the major ports in India are Adani port, Paradip port, L&T shipbuilding Ltd, etc...<sup>ix</sup> The total 200 non-major ports are in the following States:- Maharashtra (48); Gujarat (42); Tamil Nadu (15); Karnataka (10); Kerala (17); Andhra Pradesh (12); Odisha (13); Goa (5); West Bengal (1); Daman and Diu (2); Lakshadweep (10); Pondicherry (2); and Andaman & Nicobar (23). Sagar Mala Project is the current initiatives of the Government of India. The services which are offered by port are Cruise liner and Passenger services, Bulk carrier and tanker services, offshore services.<sup>x</sup> Under the Sagarmala Program, the government has planned a total of 189 ports modernization projects involving Rs 1.42 trillion (US\$ 22 billion) investment by 2035. In the Indian economy, Ports are a significant form of infrastructure. They play a key role in enabling international trade and

commerce by providing an interface between the ocean transport and land-based transport. One of the safest and popular modes of transportation is Sea transportation. Currently sea transportation involves 80 per cent of international trade and remarkably longer transportation time than road transport. By sea, Cargo transportation has more economic advantages compared to continental transportation. It is one of the low-cost types of transportation for cargo shipping from distant countries. In order to improve efficiency, productivity and quality of services as well as to bring in competitiveness in port services, the port sector has been thrown open to private sector participation.

Traditionally, port work has been considered as a low - skilled manual profession. A rising number of ports and terminals organise knowledgeable training programmes but the workers are still poorly trained. Stevedores is done by the actual handling of the cargo in loading and discharging who are skilled and experienced men hired for this purpose when a vessel reaches at a port. In ports the employees do some dangerous manual work in difficultly accessible workplaces, intense interaction with heavy machinery, hazardous cargoes and dense traffic and movement it creates high accident rates. Therefore, during loading the first consideration the industries must be given to the safety of the workers. Duty hours in Ship or in ports are long, one of the largest benefits for employees is the earning potential inform of a ship salary. Port workers or 'Dockers', i.e. mainly manual workers involved in the loading and unloading of ships in ports, ancillary services such as the checking, storage and intra-port transportation of cargo, and operations at passenger terminals. On board and in port using cargo handling equipment's are Dockside crane, Quay crane, Container crane, Elevator, Pumping equipment, Derrick, Fork lift truck, Mobile crane, Straddle carrier, Cargo-handling equipment, Cargo gear handling facilities, Lifting gear, Conveyor belt etc. Thus we have understood the relevance of marine exports and maritime transport on the socio economic development of the country and their contribution on the life of the people. The development of more seaport and sea transports are essential to make the country in a competitive position in the international scenario. The much needed foreign exchange reserve can be enhanced through this process along with millions of new employment opportunities to the people of the country.

Exports and Imports of Major Commodities by Volume (Million Tonnes)

| Year | Iron & Steel Export | Import | Plastic Products Export | Import | Sugar & Confectionary Export | Import | Aluminium Export | Import | Textiles & Garments Export | Import |
|------|---------------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|------------------------------|--------|------------------|--------|----------------------------|--------|
| 2012 | 12.2                | 19.5   | 2.6                     | 5.0    | 4.1                          | 0.8    | 0.6              | 1.3    | 6.5                        | 1.7    |
| 2013 | 16.1                | 14.5   | 3.7                     | 5.2    | 2.4                          | 0.9    | 0.7              | 1.4    | 9.1                        | 1.7    |
| 2014 | 14.9                | 16.1   | 2.7                     | 6.1    | 2.8                          | 1.5    | 1.0              | 1.5    | 6.9                        | 1.9    |
| 2015 | 11.6                | 21.2   | 2.9                     | 6.7    | 3.6                          | 1.7    | 1.1              | 1.7    | 6.6                        | 2.1    |

Source: <http://www.containersindia.in/pdf/INDIAN%20CONTAINER%20MARKET%20REPORT-2016.pdf>

The table above shows that the amount of Iron and Steel exports and imports in 2012 was 12.2 and 19.5 million tonnes. We can see an increase in export in the year 2013 and the volume of imports is marginally decreasing. But the situation has changed in 2015 and iron and steel exports are falling and import volumes are hiking. In the case of plastic product and aluminium, the export volume is 2.6 and 0.6 in 2012 and the import volume is 5.0 and 1.3. We can see in the preceding years that the amount of import and export in both commodities is growing. In the case of sugar and sugar confectionary and textiles and garments, the export volume is 4.1 and 6.5 and in the case of import the commodities volume is 0.8 and 1.7. In the next consecutive years we can see a slight variation over the value of the commodity.

**VIII. IMPACT OF TOURISM SECTOR ON INDIAN LIFE**

Tourism is the largest and the fastest growing economic sector in the world. There are many beaches on the Indian coast which stretches for 7517 km both on the eastern and western coast. The World Travel and Tourism Council intended that tourism generated ₹15.24 lakh crore or 9.4% of India's GDP in 2017 and supported 41.622 million jobs, 8% of its total employment. The sector is expected to grow at an annual rate of 6.9% to ₹32.05 lakh crore by 2028 (9.9% of GDP). The Ministry of Tourism upholds the Incredible India campaign focused on encouraging tourism in India. <sup>xi</sup> India is one of the most popular tourist destination in the world and Beaches constitute the most leading tourist destinations. Beach tourism holds the wide range of tourism leisure and recreational activities taking place in the coastal zone and offshore coastal waters. Clean water, healthy coastal habitats and a safe, secure and enjoyable environment are clearly fundamental to successful beach tourism. Hotels are a significant component of the tourism product. They contribute to the overall tourism experience through the standards of facilities and services offered by them. So many hotels or heritage homes offers all the essential service to make their stay pleasant. Tourism is very labour intensive and an important source of employment. Tourism can only embellishment if the industry can employ qualified staff or sustainable workforce. Beach tourism is mainly reliant on

natural (climate, landscape, ecosystems) and cultural (historic and cultural heritage, arts and crafts, traditions, etc.) resources. India is one nation with vast and beautiful beaches and is all set to promote beach tourism in large-scale. In India, Tourism centres related to seashore or beach tourism generate the large scale of employment opportunities in the future particularly, the hotels are reported to play a critical role in determining the tourist satisfaction. Beach Tourism creates varied employment opportunities in different sectors like accommodation, food and beverage establishments, Adventurous, transportation services, travel agencies etc... Beach tourism in India will offer a wide variety of challenging activities to the tourist like Swim along with the waves of the ocean water, dive deep into the water to discover a wonderful and multi-coloured marine world and catch the small waves and duck dive the larger ones while surfing. Tourism continues to play an important role as a foreign exchange owner for the country. The most popular beaches in India are Kovalam Beach, Kappad Beach, Alappuzha Beach, Anjuna Beach, Varkala Beach, Candolim Beach, Dona Paula Beach, Juhu Beach, Kanyakumari Beach etc.... The people who choose to travel by 'Sea' has been found by 0.9 per cent in tourism reports. In short, a beach tour in India will make available every kind of tourist one or the other way to enjoy, from isolation and opportunity for introspection to action and fun. Over the past four years, the government has undertaken 17 coastal development projects nationwide. The Rs 2,000-crore project is aimed at boosting beach and coastal tourism, mostly under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme of the Ministry of Tourism. <sup>xii</sup> We have clearly stated the importance of beach tourism, one of the most developing tourism destinations globally. India as a nation has immense potential to attract foreign tourists towards this enchanting tourism product. But much more care should be needed for the development of infrastructure in the Indian beaches to provide an international standard. This sector has been providing foreign exchange earnings to the nation as well as direct and indirect employment it to millions of Indians.



Even though the central and state governments have been providing budgetary and other statutory assistance to the development of beach as potential tourism destinations. These steps seems to be inadequate.

## IX.CONCLUSION

The objective of this paper is to depict the impact of various sectors of sea on the Indian life in terms of their Indian life. Both the social and economic contributions related to the areas of marine fishing, foreign trade and beach tourism are dealt to it. The life of the humanity has been shaped in the present form both by the contributions and interaction of land and sea. Fishing has played a significant role in shaping the life of the coastal people from time immemorial. When the civilisation progressed sea has rolled much importance in the life of the people. There is no exception to India also the fisheries sector had a pride of place in the national economy of India. It has contributed significantly to the foreign exchange earnings and GDP growth along with the fishing occupation, foreign trade and beach tourism sector have got much importance for the socio-economic development of the nation. Sea has significantly impacted the life of the people in these sectors. Marine fishing sector provides livelihood to more than 14 million people and number of different employment opportunities for people related to the marketing of marine products. Like that, one of the most important contributor to the foreign exchange earning of the nation is the export of the marine products. Marine product exports have earned foreign exchange in the tune of Rs. 45,106.89 in a year. Another area related to sea is marine transport and sea port. The operation in these two sectors have be given millions of employment opportunities directly and indirectly. Newer investments are needed from the public sector as well as private sector for the development of infrastructure for the sea port and marine transport in order to give them international competitiveness. This will definitely argument the foreign exchange earnings, income of the people and socio-economic development of the nation. Beach tourism is another promising area related to the sea. India has the advantage of so many outstanding marine beaches with potential for excellence. The present contribution of the beach tourism sector is significant in the areas of employment, GDP and foreign exchange earnings but it seems that much untapped potential with the sector. More investment is needed for development of Indian beach destination at international standards. The government, both central and state are needed to take meaningful interventions in these tourism sector in order to achieve its established objectives. Thus, we can comfortably conclude that there is a significant impact of sea on the socio-economic life of India in terms of fishing, foreign trade, marine transport and beach tourism. For enriching the contributions of these sectors meaningful and timely interventions of the government and the stake holders are badly needed. We warrant that such an intervention made by the government and stakeholders to improve the socio-economic life of people associated with these sectors and the nation as a whole.

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