

# CRZ Rules - 2018

## Favour to Capitalists at the Cost of Fishing Communities

In the din of preparations by the two ruling class parties slandering each other and making grand announcements of populist schemes to catch votes for the coming general elections, the union government headed by the BJP has surreptitiously notified the Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) 2018 rules reviewing the rules notified in 2011.

The new rules have been notified with the approval of the central cabinet, though the present amendment was quashed by a High Court. Though a cabinet decision cannot supersede a High Court order, unless either by an ordinance or by passing it in the Parliament, the BJP government disregarding these procedures made the amendment.

Through these new rules, the No Development Zone (NDZ) along the tidal-influenced water bodies has been reduced from 100 meters to 50 meters and 20 meters has been set for islands.

The legal mechanism that came up in the aftermath of 2004 tsunami and coastal vulnerabilities to climate change has been deleted. The existing deadlines to identify violations and phase out sewage and waste disposal in to sea are made to lapse.

Since 1991, when the CRZ Act was enacted with much fanfare, 25 amendments were made to it. But this is not aimed at improving the provisions of the Act to protect environment and peoples lives, but rather to dilute the law to suit the vested interests at the peril of people.

These new relaxed rules are mooted to encourage migration to and intensify construction activities in the already endangered shore-line zone. This will enable the real estate industry and government's Sagarmala project to step into the coastal zone.

On one hand, the government made this desperate move to push its Sagarmala plans into the coastline and river lines under the National Water Ways Act-2016 and on the other hand, had made it a boon to the big real estate industry and private tourist property business.

The CRZ-2019 will cause the increase of unbounded illegalities being committed by the big and large scale real estate business. The new amendments not only adversely affect the coastal areas in many parts of the country ecologically. But also devastates the livelihoods of the coastal communities like fishermen, toddy tappers, farmers as well as petty businessmen. The new rules will endanger ecology by destruction of mangroves, corals and coral-reefs associated with bio-diversity, sand dunes, mudflats, salt marshes, turtle nestling grounds etc.

Many objections haven been raised against the draft rules when made public in April 2018 from various coastal states. UTs besides other stake-holders particularly related to the management and conservation of marine and coastal eco-systems, development in coastal areas, eco-tourism, livelihood option and sustainable development of coastal communities etc.

The proposed amendments were strongly opposed by the National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) since their announcement in June 2014 by the Sailesh Nayak Committee. The NFF interacted with the parliamentarian – several MPs from coastal states of Maharashtra, Kerala, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Goa – and high-lighted their objections to the draft amendments to CRZ Act at the Constitution Club, New Delhi. Even the central minister Suresh Prabhu has given them assurance that he would take of the objections. Despite these representations and a High Court order, the BJP government had willfully ignored them and notified the new rules, to benefit the large industrialists and real estate business. This is a deliberate slaughter of the coastal areas.

The new CRZ rules are totally against the interests of environment as well common man.

The present CRZ rules changing the environment protection laws are regressive and against the public interest. These shall be scrapped. With such a demand to save the land, livelihoods of coastal communities organize and start an united struggle of the people is the immediate need of the hour.

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