

CORAL REEFS AND MANGROVE HABITATS

There is a perceptible increase in the concern for environment among geoscientists. Till recently, more often, studies were made on the degeneration and damage to environment only after it was done by human (mining, for instance) or natural (erosion) agencies. Earlier data base was not available in most areas to compare the quantum and rate of degeneration of any environment. But now, thanks to the availability of the aerial photographs of different areas taken at different times together with remote sensing data through satellites acquired during the recent decades, it is now possible to study these variations in certain areas.

The Marine and Water Resources Group of the Space Applications Centre (ISRO) at Ahmedabad has recently released (December 2003) two Scientific Notes, one on Eco-morphological Zonation of Selected Coral Reefs of India using Remote Sensing data (40 figures, 17 tables, 26 photographs, 109p) and another on Community Zonation of Selected Mangrove Habitats of India using Satellite data (25 figures, 18 tables, 31 photographs, 92p). These studies have been funded by the Department of Ocean Development, Government of India and quite a number of organisations in other parts of the country were also involved in gathering data and passing on to the Group at Ahmedabad. As only to be expected, the mapped ones with all the subdivisions/characteristics/features of any specific area belong to a particular period ranging from 1998 to 2001 in both the cases. All are IRS data only. The reproductions are excellent in pleasing colours. One commendable feature on the fairly

detailed descriptions is the mention in each case the accuracy estimates, which usually range between 80 to 90%. Not all the areas studied could be visited for ground truth.

In the case of coral reefs, the zonation was based on their morphological and ecological characteristics. The areas studied were of those in Gulf of Kachchh (Gujarat), Malvan reef (off Maharashtra), Lakshadweep, Gulf of Mannar and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Histograms and Pi diagrams have been used to explain the areal distribution of different units.

In the case of mangroves, they have been mapped up to genus level. The classification system evolved has taken into consideration the influence of substrate, tides and geomorphology in the distribution of different mangrove communities. There have been many publications in this field on mangroves in our country and one of them which shows the areal variation over time in different parts of the coastal regions of the east coast is the one published in Memoir 22, Geological Society of India, 1991, pp 243-263, along sections of Ganges, Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery deltas.

Though these are specialized publications in a narrow field, they deserve attention from those interested in coastal geomorphology and natural vegetation and are bound to serve as data base for future studies in these fields.

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USER INTERACTION MEETING ON ACCELERATOR MASS SPECTROMETRY OF RADIOCARBON

A user interaction meeting on "Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) of Radiocarbon" was organised by the Institute of Physics (IOP), Bhubaneswar on 26-27 August 2004. Dr R. K. Choudhury, Director of the Institute welcomed the participants and initiated the meeting. In his welcome speech, he gave a brief background about this equipment and recounted the formidable scientific, technical and administrative hurdles that were surmounted in translating the idea into a reality at IOP. The Meeting began with an introductory talk by Dr K. Gopalan (NGRI, Hyderabad) on 'Why AMS for Radiocarbon Dating?'. This was followed by details on the AMS facility at IOP by Dr G. V. Ravi Prasad.

About 30 participants from Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad, Birbal Sahani Institute of Paleobotany (BSIP), Lucknow, Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), Dehradun, National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI), Hyderabad, National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa, Archeological Survey of India, Nuclear Science Centre, New Delhi, Rock Art Society of India, Agra, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Ocean Science & Technology Cell, Mangalore University, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur took part in the meeting. Totally 20 papers were presented in 5 technical sessions.