

Philanthropy for the Ocean

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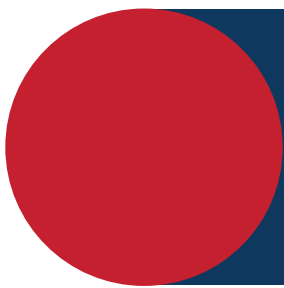
Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between philanthropy and the ocean to map private support for marine conservation and allied sectors in India; identify priorities and challenges of the conservation sector; and discuss key strategies to help bridge the gap between the philanthropic and conservation sectors. We used a flexible mixed-methods approach, combining ethnographic data, data from published reports, and a social network analysis to arrive at an initial characterisation of the sector in India. While there have been studies to understand the funding requirements and priorities with regard to the oceans and coasts globally, this is the first attempt to do so in India.

Keywords: philanthropy, marine conservation, coastal communities

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1. Introduction

Although spaces of immense biocultural significance, India's marine and coastal habitats remain vulnerable to a range of crises such as poverty and natural disasters as well as emerging challenges such as climate change and distress migrations, to name a few. Despite the recent and rapid growth of Indian philanthropy, environmental causes receive a mere 7 per cent of domestic giving in the country.¹ Within this, marine conservation receives inadequate attention in comparison to terrestrial systems, congruent with the global scenario, in which the former has received less than 1 per cent of global philanthropic funding since 2009.² To put this in perspective, the world's coasts house roughly 40 per cent of the global population in addition to providing critical ecosystem services to a far larger community, with an estimated 3.1 billion people relying on oceans for almost 20 per cent of their animal protein intake in the form of seafood and over 500 million people engaged in livelihoods relating to the ocean and ocean resources. Marine fisheries alone represent a billion-dollar industry with global supply chains engaging over 40 million people.³

The critical role played by the ocean has been lately reflected in large private donor commitments⁴ as well as greater scrutiny towards private foundations.⁵ This intersection has only recently drawn academic attention, referred to as a 'black-box',⁶ otherwise focused on Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the form of multilateral and bilateral aid. Emerging research has demonstrated that meeting the targets of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14—Life Below Water⁷—can make significant contributions to the other SDGs,⁸ spurring international agreements and commitments in the area of marine conservation and sustainability. However, there is evidence of misalignment between the intent of international donors and the allocation of resources to operationalise these commitments.⁹ Based on data collected in 2017, it was estimated that to meet the targets of SDG 14, an annual global increase of \$174.52 billion will be needed in philanthropic support until 2030.¹⁰ In India, there is some literature on expenditure towards meeting ecological goals,¹¹ which includes a review of biodiversity expenditure, (estimated at to be around INR 4,000 crores per year for the entire

1 OECD, *India's Private Giving: Unpacking Domestic Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility* Paris, OECD Development Centre, 2019, 1–30.

2 Michael F. Berger, Vincent Caruso, and Emily Peterson, 'An Updated Orientation to Marine Conservation Funding Flows', *Marine Policy* 107 (September 2019): 1–6, 103497, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2019.04.001>; C.C. Wabnitz Colette and Robert Blasiak, 'The Rapidly Changing World of Ocean Finance', *Marine Policy* 107 (September 2019): 1–4, 103526, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2019.103526>.

3 FAO, *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020: Sustainability in Action, The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA)* (Rome, Italy: FAO, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9229en>.

4 Examples include *Vibrant Oceans* by Bloomberg Philanthropies, *OceanX* by Ray Dalio, Leonardo DiCaprio, and *SeaLegacy* to name a few.

5 Examples include Michael F. Berger, Vincent Caruso, and Emily Peterson, 'An Updated Orientation to Marine Conservation Funding Flows', *Marine Policy* 107 (September 2019): 1–6, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2019.04.001>; *FundingTheOcean*, 'Funding Map', Accessed 10 June 2021, <https://fundingtheocean.org/funding-map/>; CEA Consulting, *A Decade of Ocean Funding: Trends during 2010–2020, Our Shared Seas*, 2021. <https://oursharedseas.com/funding/funding-report/>.

6 Rebecca L. Gruby et al., 'Opening the Black Box of Conservation Philanthropy: A Co-Produced Research Agenda on Private Foundations in Marine Conservation', *Marine Policy* 132 (1 October 2021): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2021.104645>.

7 Refers to Sustainable Development Goal 14, which was established by the United Nations in 2015. It focuses on Life Below Water and aims to 'conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development'.

8 Singh, Gerald G., Andrés M. Cisneros-Montemayor, Wilf Swartz, William Cheung, J. Adam Guy, Tiff-Annie Kenny, Chris J. McOwen et al., 'A Rapid Assessment of Co-Benefits and Trade-Offs among Sustainable Development Goals', *Marine Policy* 93 (2018): 223–31.

9 Samantha Custer, Matthew DiLorenzo, Takaaki Masaki, Tanya Sethi, and Ani Harutyunyan, 'Listening to Leaders 2018: Is Development Cooperation Tuned-In or Tone-Deaf', Williamsburg, VA: AidData at the College of William & Mary (2018).

10 Despina F. Johansen and Rolf A. Vestvik, 'The Cost of Saving Our Ocean - Estimating the Funding Gap of Sustainable Development Goal 14', *Marine Policy* 112 (1 February 2020): 1–8 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2019.103783>.

11 Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, *Implementation of India's National Biodiversity Action Plan: An Overview 2019* (Government of India, 2019). <http://nbaindia.org/uploaded/pdf/IndiaNationalBiodiversityActionPlan2019.pdf>.

country)¹² published by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII)¹³; and state and district level biodiversity expenses for Punjab (estimated to be around INR 124 crore for 2015–16)¹⁴ and Maharashtra (ranging from between INR 21,731.86 crore in 2011–12 to 50,388.86 crores in 2015–16).¹⁵ However, there is no literature regarding private giving and marine conservation more distinctly. Even at larger scales, the funding landscape remains heavily understudied, and efforts are ongoing apart from those mentioned.¹⁶ While there have been global and regional studies exploring marine conservation priorities in the last decade,¹⁷ no such attempt has been made in the Indian context.

In an attempt to fill this gap in literature, this study aims to:

1. Characterise 'philanthropy for the ocean' by attempting to discern how much support the ocean receives, from whom, and for what causes, and compare it with global trends
2. Identify thematic and funding priorities within the conservation sector and challenges that complicate conservation work, including the impacts of COVID-19
3. Identify potential opportunities and summarise recommendations made by practitioners and donors towards mobilising interest and support for marine conservation and allied sectors.

¹² Rita Pandey, Manish Gupta, Paavani Sachdeva, Abhishek Singh, and Shivali Sugand, 'Biodiversity Conservation in India: Mapping Key Sources and Quantum of Funds', NIPFP Working Paper Series. (New Delhi: National Institute of Public Finance and Policy,, (July 2020), Accessed on 12 September 2021, https://www.nipfp.org.in/media/medialibrary/2020/07/WP_311_2020.pdf.

¹³ V. B. Mathur, Biodiversity Expenditure Review at the Central Government Level, India (Wildlife Institute of India (2018), https://www.bioin.org/sites/default/files/content/knowledge_products/Final%20BER%20Report%20India_Oct%202018.pdf.

¹⁴ Tania Bhattacharya, and Anindya Bhattacharya, 'Financing Biodiversity Action Plan Using State Appropriation Account Analysis: A Case Study of an Indian State', *Ecosystem Services* 39 (2019), 10.1016/j.ecoser.2019.100971.

¹⁵ Pandey, Gupta, Sachdeva, Singh, and Sugand, 'Biodiversity Conservation in India'.

¹⁶ most critical gaps in literature. This is because the sector '...continues to be hampered by poor data availability, quality, and transferability which stymies more accurate estimates of marine funding'. Also see Berger, Caruso, and Peterson, 'An Updated Orientation to Marine Conservation Funding Flows'.

¹⁷ J. Mason, M. Rudd, and L. Crowder, 'Ocean Research Priorities: Similarities and Differences among Scientists, Policymakers, and Fishermen in the United States', *BioScience* 67 (2017): 418–28; M.A. Rudd and R.N. Lawton, 'Scientists' Prioritization of Global Coastal Research Questions', *Marine Policy* (2013): 101–11; W.J. Sutherland, E. Fleishman, M.B. Mascia, J. Pretty, and M.A. Rudd, 'Methods for Collaboratively Identifying Research Priorities and Emerging Issues in Science and Policy', *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* 2 (2011): 238–47.

2. Methodology

In this study, the phrase ‘philanthropy for the ocean’ refers more generally to private support towards the ocean and related causes: coastal habitats and ecosystems, species, and communities in addition to ‘marine conservation and sustainable fisheries’, defined more narrowly as ‘...the protection and preservation of ecosystems in the global oceans and seas, including sustainable fisheries management’.¹⁸ In other words, inclusive of initiatives not necessarily circumscribed by mainstream conservationist ideology.¹⁹

Preliminary surveys on the availability and quality of data necessitated a flexible mixed-methods approach that looks towards the qualitative margins of a social network analysis (SNA) in concert with ethnographic research methods forwarded as essential and complementary to the quantitative analysis²⁰ to characterise the sector. The ethnographic approach adopted is constructivist²¹ and digital²² in nature. Such methods are increasingly finding traction, well suited to inter-organisational settings that this study is situated within²³ as well as the aims of this research.

Instead of using surveys—traditionally used to generate nodes, relationships, and financial data (not feasible in this case)—²⁴ the collection of data relating to both formal and informal properties was structured around the reconstruction of existing fundraising infrastructure. That is, a database comprising approximately 300 grant-making organisations and 200 individual philanthropists. Sources used included annexures in director’s reports, Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) receipts, annuals reports of NGOs, private foundations, and corporations, and secondary data sets such as those available on the CSIP website, FundingtheOcean.Org, the National CSR portal, and UK Charity Watch, to name a few. Only flows explicitly mentioning marine conservation, coastal habitats—mangroves, beaches, etc.—and communities—fishers, salt-pan workers, etc.—were recorded for the period 2010–20. Where reporting was ambiguous,²⁵ further research was employed to ascertain relevance. Data relating to content, narratives, and perception of the network, i.e., informal properties, was collected during this process as well as digital ethnography on Web 2.0 platforms—Twitter

18 Berger, Caruso, and Peterson, ‘An Updated Orientation to Marine Conservation Funding Flows’.

19 Ezra Rashkow, ‘Resistance to Hunting in Pre-Independence India: Religious Environmentalism, Ecological Nationalism or Cultural Conservation?’ *Modern Asian Studies* 49, no. 2 (March 2015): 270–301, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X14000110>.

20 David J. Marshall and Lynn Staeheli, ‘Mapping Civil Society with Social Network Analysis: Methodological Possibilities and Limitations’, *Geoforum* 61 (May 2015): 56–66, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.02.015>; G. Edwards, ‘Mixed-Method Approaches to Social Network Analysis’, *Review Paper, ESRC National Centre for Research Methods, National Centre for Research Methods* (2010), http://prints.ncrm.ac.uk/842/1/Social_Network_analysis_Edwards.pdf.

21 This is not to suggest that there are no material realities or larger political and economic forces at work, but rather an acknowledgment of the complex ways that they converge and blend with imaginings, assumptions, expectations, perceptions, and senses to produce ‘philanthropy for the ocean’. Edward M. Bruner et al., *The Ethnography of Tourism: Edward Bruner and Beyond*, ed. Naomi M. Leite, Quetzil E. Castañeda, and Kathleen M. Adams (Lexington Books, 2019).

22 Dhiraj Murthy, ‘Digital Ethnography: An Examination of the Use of New Technologies for Social Research’, *Sociology* 42, no. 5 (1 October 2008): 837–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038508094565>.

23 Jennifer A. Johnson, Julie A. Honnold, and F. Paul Stevens, ‘Using Social Network Analysis to Enhance Nonprofit Organisational Research Capacity: A Case Study’, *Journal of Community Practice* 18, no. 4 (December 2010): 493–512, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2010.519683>.

24 Surveys to corporates and private foundations, especially in relation to financial data, typically elicit a low number of responses. See, for example, the response in Pandey, Gupta, Sachdeva, Singh, and Sugand, ‘Biodiversity Conservation in India’.

25 For example, simply ‘Biodiversity Conservation’ in ‘Maharashtra’.

and Instagram—focused on known organisations in the sector. This data includes annual reports, sustainability reports, press releases, social-media posts, films, and observations of stakeholder engagement with relevant issues during virtual events, as well as semi-structured interviews.²⁶ Methods were deployed simultaneously, complementing each other and serving as a guide to sampling.²⁷

Data collection took place over a period of five months, during which a total of 1,000 donor entities were sampled. Funding flows—commitments, FCRA receipts, and actual expenditure where possible—were categorised according to a primary and secondary themes and other matrices, i.e., geography, type of donor (corporate, individual, research institute, and private foundation), purpose of grant (research, intervention, policy, and institutional), source of funds (FCRA and non-FCRA), scope of donor (Indian and international), and implementing agency, which were analysed by simple aggregation. Categorisation was borrowed from Candid's typologies,²⁸ modified to be contextually relevant and to ensure a degree of commensurability. Funding relationships were used to construct a network using Gephi, which served as a guide to construct a larger ethnographic account, also incorporating elements of discourse analysis²⁹ and coded field observations to interrogate the aggregations and the network itself. This, not only an attempt to map and measure private funding flows and relationships towards the ocean and related causes, but also process, change and context by exploring the content and perception of the network.

Additionally, 25 semi-structured interviews and 2 surveys (in cases where availability or scheduling was an issue) with donors and implementing agencies were conducted. Participants were identified through convenience and snowball sampling using existing institutional networks and are also represented in the database. Donor interviewees comprised organisations with formal or informal relationships with Dakshin Foundation. Other interviewees included conservation NGOs, scholars associated with educational or research institutions, and independent researchers working in marine or coastal spaces of the country. 20 participants were subject experts and practitioners engaged in conservation work, and 7 participants represented donors supporting them. Interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants. This data was transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis, organised by concepts, themes, and key recommendations. Interview data highlighted the roles of key actors, partnerships, priorities, current challenges of the conservation sector, grant-making/fundraising strategies, and views on the most effective means to address challenges. Transcribed data was triangulated with the findings from the funding dataset, which allowed for identification of significant patterns of meaning and helped to generate a broad profile of the sector.

Limitations

Major limitations of this study include the reliance on online desk research, which has led to an over-representation of 'big philanthropy' and conservation organisations with a greater online presence. This is compounded by the quality and availability of data. Financial information pertaining to FCRA and CSR is only available after 2014, and individual giving in India still remains a 'black-box' and cannot be used to illustrate growth over the selected time period. Further, estimations were made to capture aggregated flows by simply dividing the total amount reported, by relevant causes, organisa

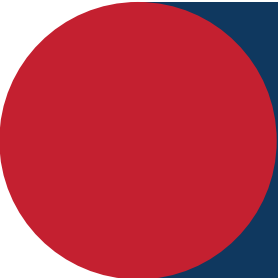
²⁶ These were part of the larger project, detailed later.

²⁷ For example, interviews helped identify funders and relationships; trends in the database could be explored in more detail in interviews.

²⁸ Candid, 'Philanthropy Classification System', Taxonomy Candid, accessed 29 September 2021, <https://taxonomy.candid.org>.

²⁹ See Roderick Neumann, 'Moral and Discursive Geographies in the War for Biodiversity in Africa', *Political Geography* 23 (1 September 2004): 813–37, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2004.05.011>; Elizabeth Lunstrum, 'Feed Them to the Lions: Conservation Violence Goes Online', *Geoforum* 79 (1 February 2017): 134–43, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2016.04.009>.

tions, and/or places listed.³⁰ In this sense, it is important to emphasise that this is an exercise in estimation aimed towards updating existing flows, attempting to track various kinds of flows, and kinks in the chain of accountability to encourage better transparency.³¹ Hence, we have used a range of data to account for various deficiencies and provide a 'good enough' characterisation of the sector.



3. In the Sea of Influence: Who are the Actors?

3.1. Emergence

Globally, the nexus between philanthropy and conservation dates to the mid-late 1800s;³² however, philanthropy for the ocean, related to the global movement for Marine Protected Areas (MPA), started around the 1950s and 1960s.³³ Funding for the MPAs and fisheries came from government sources as well as multilateral and bilateral agencies, which was the case in India too³⁴ where the first MPA was established in 1967.³⁵ Shortly after, organisations with prominent marine conservation goals began to be instituted. This included work with sea turtles and estuarine crocodiles in the 1970s; the formation of the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust in 1976; the World Wide Fund for Nature's work with turtles in the 1980s; Thanal, which focused on wetland conservation in Kerala, was formed in 1986; the Student Sea Turtle Conservation Network was established in 1988; the Andaman and Nicobar Environmental Team (ANET) was instituted in 1989; WII's Olive Ridley project was initiated in the 1990s; and Kalpavriksh's work in the Andaman and Nicobar islands to protect resource-dependent communities began in 2002, among others.

Although philanthropy for the ocean is likely much older, a crucial moment around which key networks coalesced was the aftermath of the tsunami in 2004 as funding was channelled towards relief efforts on India's east coast. This was seen in the emergence of NGOs, Building and Enabling Disaster Resilience of Coastal Communities (BEDROC), related initiatives (for example, DHAN Foundation's coastal conservation), and work by corporations (for example, Infosys) along the east coast and in the Andaman and Nicobar islands. New technologies coupled with increasing interest generated from educational courses resulted in a movement away from taxonomy, collections, and beach-based conservation measures and a shift towards 'in-water' conservation and broader ecological questions. A second 'marine conservation NGO boom' ensued, diversifying the field in terms of both new actors and operations across varying scales. In 2008, the Dakshin Foundation (DF) was formed, followed shortly after by Coastal Impact in 2009. Among larger NGOs, the first Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) eco-labelling initiative by the WWF, for example, also began to take shape in

³⁰ These amounts are marked as blue cells in the dataset. Although such methods are crude, they are consistent: see, for example, Berger, Caruso, and Peterson, 'An Updated Orientation to Marine Conservation Funding Flows'. See also Pandey, Gupta, Sachdeva, Singh, and Sugand, 'Biodiversity Conservation in India'.

³¹ See Berger, Caruso, and Peterson, 'An Updated Orientation to Marine Conservation Funding Flows'.

³² See Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004). Also George Holmes, 'Biodiversity for Billionaires: Capitalism, Conservation and the Role of Philanthropy in Saving/Selling Nature', *Development and Change* 43, no. 1 (2012): 185–203, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2011.01749.x>.

³³ See John Humphreys and Robert W.E. Clark, 'A Critical History of Marine Protected Areas', in *Marine Protected Areas: Science, Policy and Management* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2020), 1–12.

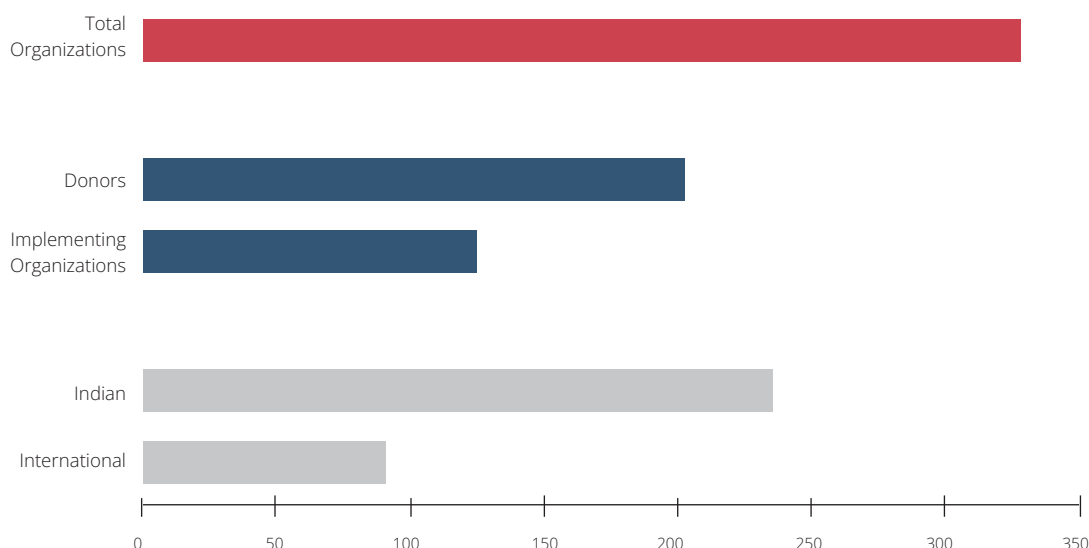
³⁴ Highlighted by participants.

³⁵ Rahul Muralidharan and Madhuri Ramesh, 'Marine Protected Areas in India: Protection for Whom?', in *Occupation of the Coast: Blue Economy in India* (New Delhi: Programme for Social Action, India, 2017), 102–05.

2010.³⁶

3.2 Overview of Actors

Figure 1: Sectoral Overview of Donor and Implementing Agencies.



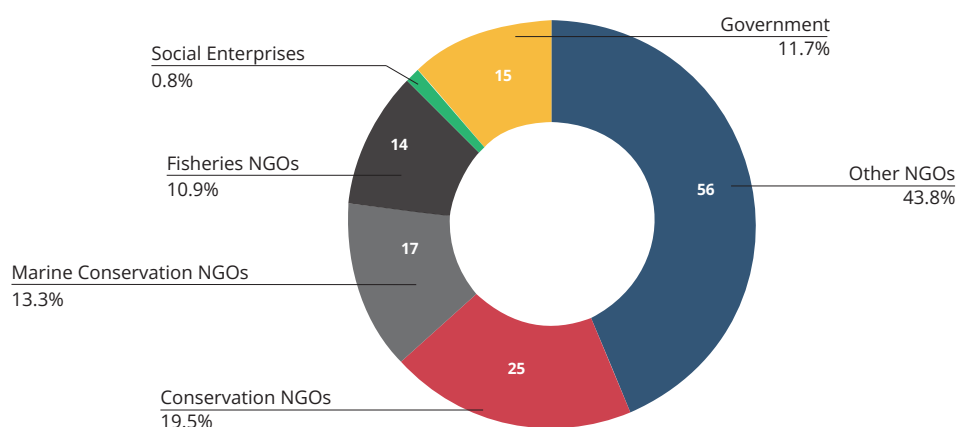
Source: Authors' calculations

In total, we were able to map 327 organisations working within the sector, the majority of which are Indian (236). Donors dominate this segment, comprising the majority share of 62 per cent.

3.2.1 Implementing Agencies

Figure 2: Overview of Implementing Agencies.

Source: Authors' calculations

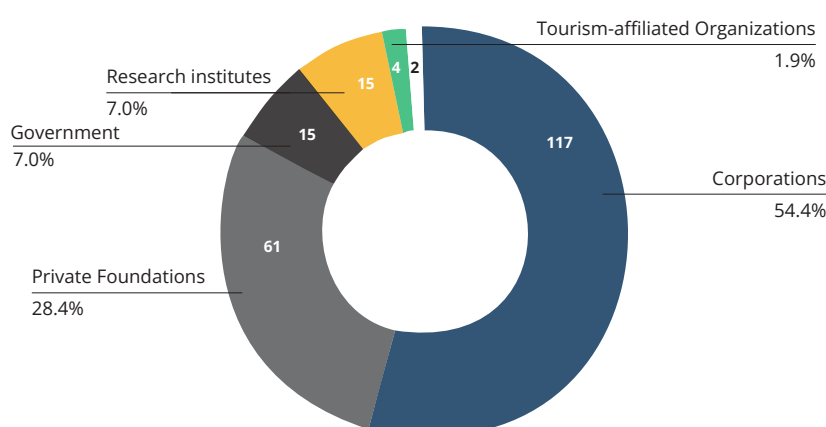


³⁶ Marine Stewardship Council eco-labels are applied to wild fish or seafood from fisheries that have been certified to the MSC Fisheries Standard—a set of requirements for sustainable fishing—so they can be traced to a certified sustainable source. Marine Stewardship Council, 'What Does the MSC Label Mean', Accessed 2 July 2021, <https://www.msc.org/what-we-are-doing/our-approach/what-does-the-blue-msc-label-mean>; see also Marine Stewardship Council, 'The MSC Fisheries Standard', Accessed 2 July 2021, <https://www.msc.org/standards-and-certification/fisheries-standard>; World Wide Fund for Nature, 'India Gets Its First MSC Certified Fishery', Accessed 29 September 2021, https://www.panda.org/wwf_news/?232416/India-gets-its-first-MSC-certified-fishery.

Out of 118 implementing organisations mapped, 42 are conservation NGOs, of which only 17 have a primary focus on the ocean and coastal issues.³⁷ The rest comprise older organisations, such as the Nature Conservation Foundation, and international NGOs, such as WWF and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), as well as NGOs which work in and around mangroves and coastal wetlands, such as Nature Environment and Wildlife Society (NEWS) and Jeevan Rekha Parishad (JRP). Much older are fisheries NGOs (14), including local fisher societies, organisations that work at the national scale such as the National Fishworkers Forum (NFF), a network of fisher unions, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) at a global scale, as well as industrial collectives such as the Crab Meat Processors Association (CMPA). Other NGOs (comprising around 56 per cent) represent the largest share. The government is a significant actor as well, fielding a diverse set of institutions including panchayats, research institutes, and even the Indian Navy and Coast Guard. Apart from these, there are a few tourism-related organisations and Terra Conscious, a single social enterprise, with a focus on coastal livelihoods and tourism.

3.2.2 Donor Agencies

Figure 3: Overview of Donor Agencies.



Source: Authors' calculations

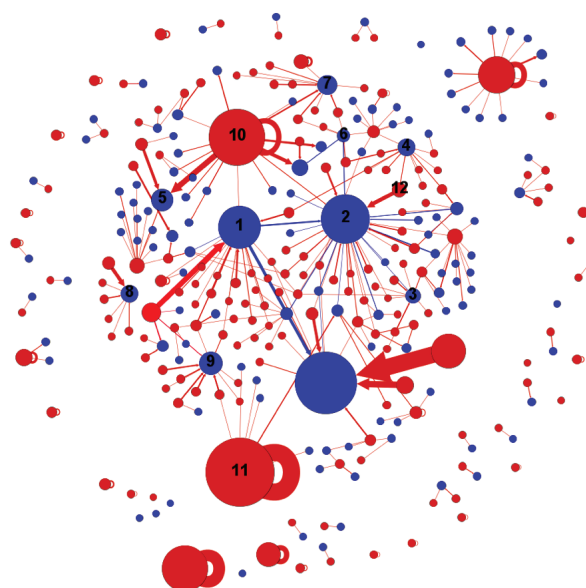
The two largest categories of donors are corporations (53 per cent) and private foundations (29 per cent). Others include two individual philanthropists and a small share of mid-tier givers, tourism-related organisations such as dive shops, seaside resorts, research institutes, as well as marine and conservation NGOs. Significantly, support from international foundations (42) is twice of their domestic (21) counterparts.

3.2.3 Network and Funding Relationships

The network has 294 nodes after grouping conglomerates which reflects the difficulty in distinguishing between various types of giving domestically owing to reporting standards. These are connected by 297 directed edges (lines) representing private funding relationships (see Figure 4).

³⁷ Although many conservation NGOs have programmatic focus on marine and coastal issues and spaces, their interest is usually marginal when compared to the focus on terrestrial biomes. Take the case of larger organisations as highlighted by representatives: the WWF marine programme has a core team size of only 15 members and has apparently only spent about '10 percent' of their attention on the ocean.

Figure 4: Funding Relationships Visualised via Donor (Red)/Implementing Split (Blue)



Source: Authors

The size of the nodes corresponds to weighted degree,³⁸ highlighting important actors in the network (Table 2). Self-loops represent direct implementation (see No. 2 in Table 1) and blue edges represent sub-granting and small grants (see No. 3 in Table 1). Furthermore, it is notable that there are very few points of major domestic donor overlap (see No. 10, 11, 12 in Figure 4). The low density (see No. 1 in Table 1) in conjunction with the diversity of actors' groups (Figure 3) and the lack of NGOs dedicated to the ocean suggests both immense sectoral *as well as* inter-sectoral potential.

Table 1: Network Properties and Values.

No.	Network Property	Definition	Value	Point of reference in the network	Explanation
1.	Network Density	The ratio of the actual edges to the number of possible relationships	0.003	Network as a whole	A lower density suggests high potential for unique relationships between nodes in the network.
2.	Self-loops	Funding flows from a node directed towards itself	117	10, 11, periphery	Highlights overlap between donors and implementing agencies—this represents self-implementation of projects by corporate donors
3.	Blue-edges	Funding flow from an implementing agency	34	Prominent around 1 and 2	Highlights overlap between donors and implementing agencies—this represents a 'trickle-down' economy comprising sub-granting and small-grants

Source: Authors' calculations

³⁸ This refers to the number of edges a node has in the network; a simple double weight of +1 was added for each unique year of funding recorded. Edges with higher weights are thicker and nodes with higher degrees are larger.

Table 2: Major Domestic Actors according to Measures of Centrality.

Point of Reference on Network	Name	Funds Received (No.)	Funds Given (No.)	Total Funding Relationships
1.	World Wide Fund for Nature - India	49	13	62
2.	Dakshin Foundation	73	0	73
3.	International Collective in Support of Fishworkers	13	1	14
4.	Nature Conservation Foundation	18	0	18
5.	Wildlife Trust of India	26	0	26
6.	Madras Crocodile Bank Trust	6	4	10
7.	M S Swaminathan Research Foundation	22	0	22
8.	OMCAR Foundation	18	0	18
9.	NEWS	28	0	28
10.	Tata Group	15	71	86
11.	Jindal Steel Works Group	50	58	108
12.	Rohini Nilekani	0	13	13

Source: Authors' calculations

Past simple edges, relationships between actors are highly heterogeneous, ambivalent, and opportunistic, fissured along the lines of ideology, class, and caste.³⁹ Self-implementation is an emerging trend in the sector, corroborated by donors, and a result of increasing autonomy, a trust deficit in civil society, and donor positioning with regard to increasing conflict between state and civil society. Not particularly visible in the network are specialised corporate centres dedicated to marine and coastal habitats. As a participant put it, 'At this point of time ... the [corporate] is trying to bring it [philanthropy for the ocean] into a process ... through a special vehicle they have created.'⁴⁰ This signals the arrival of more rationalised and institutionalised processes of giving. The sector is small and still emerging as an entity distinct from its terrestrial counterpart, given historical derivation and conflation with the latter.

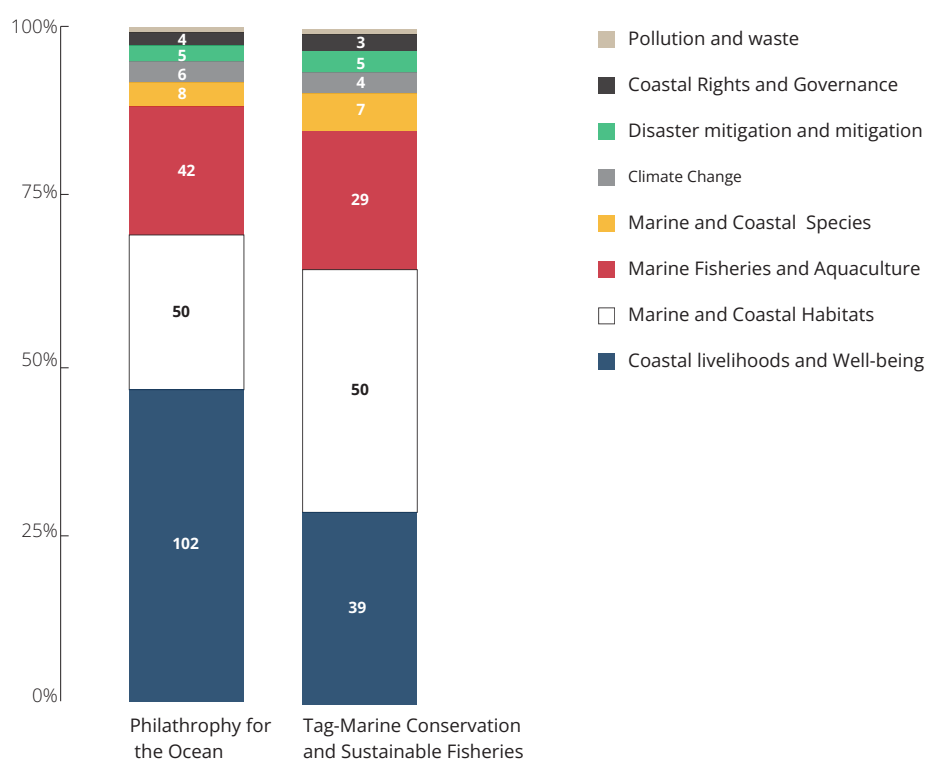
³⁹ Madhuri Ramesh, 'Frenemies: Marine Turtle Conservation and Economic Development in the Rushikulya Coast, Eastern India', *Journal of South Asian Development* 16, no. 1 (1 April 2021): 33–53, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973174121993947>.

⁴⁰ Interview with wildlife conservation expert, 22 July 2021.

4. In Turbulent Waters: What Is Being Funded?

4.1 Thematic Overview of Causes and Sectoral Approaches

Figure 5: Overview of Funding Allocations towards Primary Themes: Philanthropy for the Ocean and Marine Conservation and Sustainable Development (Cr.s.)



Source: Authors' calculations

For the period 2010–20, we captured 538 relevant funding flows, amounting to INR 220 crores. Coastal livelihoods and well-being projects outsize other thematic categories (46 per cent). This includes projects relating to social infrastructure and services—building education, health and sanitation, and community related facilities as well as providing corresponding service delivery and social welfare schemes relating to insurance and microfinance (see also, Figure 7). Furthermore, large projects undertaken by corporations integrating socio-ecological goals were also observed under the ambit of 'rural development', 'disability inclusive development', 'community development', 'village upgradation', and 'village adoption'. These typically have enormous budgets, for example, of around 12,000 crores for the period 2014–20; however, they were not counted owing to the rule of explicitness. This is followed by marine and coastal habitats (23.7 per cent), marine fisheries and aquaculture (20 per cent), and species protection (5.5 per cent). The over-representation of coastal livelihoods and well-being is accounted for by large CSR programmes, despite which it is likely an underestimate. On the other hand, a narrower sectoral definition—marine conservation and sustainable fisheries—pertains to 352 relevant flows, and a total funding of INR 139 crores. Although livelihoods and well-being consti

tute a significant share (27 per cent), it is surpassed by marine and coastal habitats (37 per cent). Similar to the broader category, these are followed by fisheries and aquaculture (20 per cent) and species protection (5 per cent).

Figure 6: Matrix of Secondary Thematic Categories Denoting Overlap

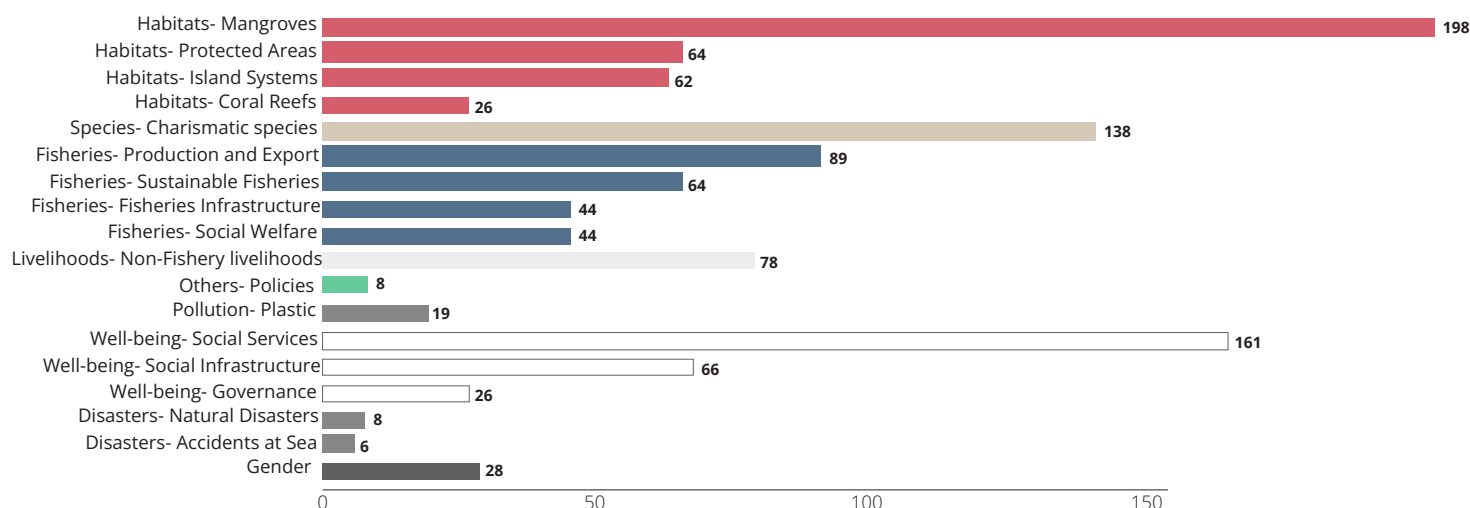
	Marine and Coastal Species	Marine and Coastal Habitats	Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture	Climate Change	Coastal livelihoods and Well-being	Disaster mitigation	Pollution and waste	Coastal Rights and Governance
Marine and Coastal Species	0	108	65	1	34	1	0	1
Marine and Coastal Habitats	102	0	63	71	106	4	8	13
Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture	36	58	0	0	133	4	2	7
Climate Change	1	19	1	0	14	0	0	0
Coastal livelihoods and Well-being	26	75	136	32	0	16	27	24
Disaster mitigation	1	4	9	4	11	0	1	0
Pollution and waste	0	17	0	0	11	0	0	0
Coastal Rights and Governance	5	13	0	0	33	3	1	1

Source: Authors' calculations

Although analytically useful, thematic categories are not mutually exclusive. Secondary thematic categorisations illustrate the diversity of tangential beneficiaries, impacts, and interests. Coastal livelihoods and well-being and marine and coastal habitats display the most diverse sets of spill over, closely related to the categories of species protection as well as marine fisheries and aquaculture. As different approaches, the broader sector leans towards trickle-down from livelihood and well-being; conversely, marine conservation and sustainable fisheries, from habitats.

4.2 Thematic breakdown: Narratives of Crises and Threat

Figure 7: Thematic Tags Denoting Subcategories within Primary Themes.



Source: Authors' calculations

The use of thematic tags explained in this section and the next highlights subcategories within primary thematic groups allowing for more granular analysis. Commitments exclusively to species protection (3.5 per cent, INR 7.69 crores) have a significantly lower average grant size (see Figure 9) and are funded predominantly by international donors (see Figure 8). Expectedly, most focus is placed primarily on charismatic species⁴¹ such as turtles, cetaceans, elasmobranchs, and even tigers! The theme is not underfunded and dominates both regional and global economies of appearances, that is, widely circulating imagery and narratives. Along with marine and coastal habitats (20.85 per cent, INR 50.34 crores) within the broader ethos of the 30x30 movement;⁴² these themes overlap to a large degree and play a significant in producing conservation⁴³ and alleviating the oceans' 'PR' problem,⁴⁴ as highlighted by participants as well. As one explained, 'It's why we have a flagship species programme'.⁴⁵

Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture (19.22 per cent, INR 42.34 crores) are dominated by projects relating to fish production and export—increasing production capacity, improving market linkages, skilling for resource dependent communities, eco-labelling initiatives and the distribution of nets and gear—and fisheries infrastructure that includes construction of jetties, access roads, sheds, ice-factories and processing units. These are explained by the historical association with 'development'⁴⁶ and,

⁴¹ Charismatic species is a widely used term in conservation circles to describe animals with which humans most easily sympathise with. Large mammals, especially cats, elephants, bears, dolphins, whales and primates, exemplify such species. Smaller animals can also be charismatic, for example Olive Ridley Turtles and Monarch Butterflies.

⁴² A movement 'to get governments worldwide to agree to protect at least 30% of the planet's land and ocean by 2030, and preserve intact ecosystems and wilderness at the Convention on Biodiversity COP15 Summit in 2021'. 'Sign the 30x30 Petition Today!', Campaign for Nature, accessed 2 July 2021, <https://www.campaignfornature.org/petition>.

⁴³ Refers to 'the conservationist mode of production' whereby natural capital, for example, charismatic species and land/sea-scapes, are turned into symbolic capital and eventually money. Elizabeth Garland, 'The Elephant in the Room: Confronting the Colonial Character of Wildlife Conservation in Africa', *African Studies Review* 51, no. 3 (2008): 51–74.

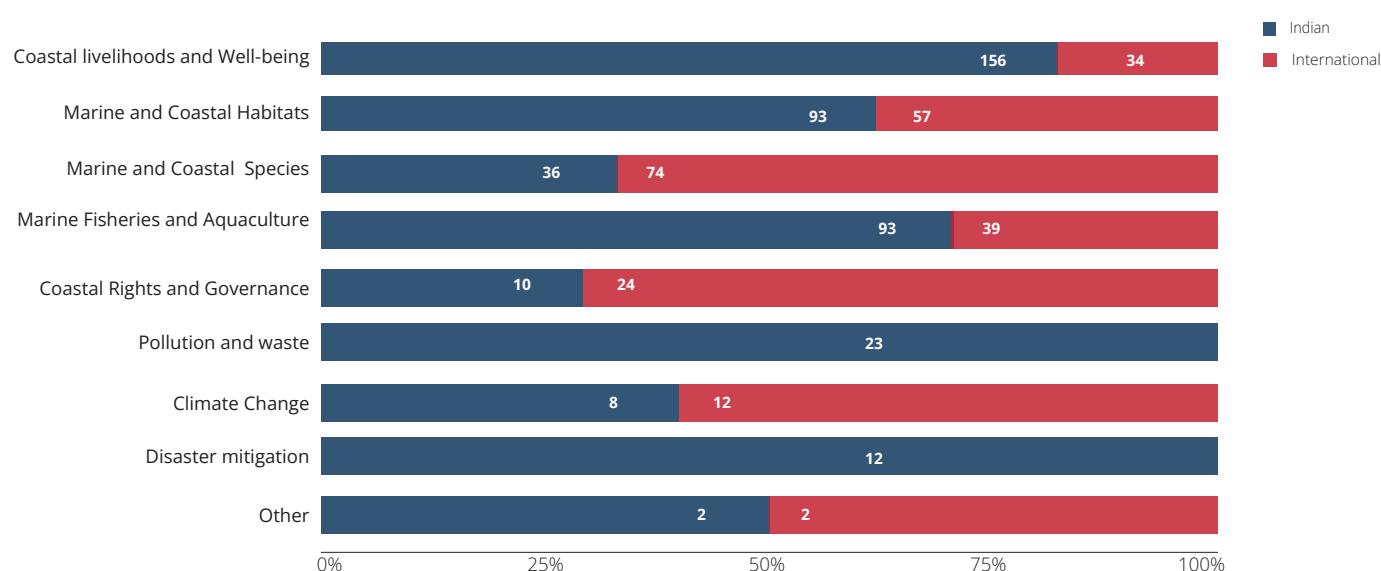
⁴⁴ Refers to the under-valuing and relative neglect of the ocean and coastal systems owing to a lack of public attention and interest in them. Ben Hohenstatt, 'The Ocean Has a PR Problem', *Juneau Empire*, accessed 5 September 2021, <https://www.juneauempire.com/news/the-ocean-has-a-pr-problem/>; see also, 'the conservationist mode of production' - which highlights the converse in relation to terrestrial conservation by Elizabeth Garland, 'The Elephant in the Room: Confronting the Colonial Character of Wildlife Conservation in Africa'.

⁴⁵ Interview with conservation practitioner, Bangalore, 15 April 2020.

⁴⁶ Aarthi Sridhar and Kartik Shanker, 'Lessons from Marine Paradigms', *Seminar*, No. 577 (2007), 63–8, accessed 12 January 2021, http://w.india-seminar.com/2007/577/577_aarthi_sridhar_shanker.htm.

furthermore, the present ethos of the ‘Blue Revolution’ towards a ‘Blue Economy’. There is limited work relating to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, which is an organising theme globally and has grown from USD 2 million in 2010 to USD 32 million in 2020.⁴⁷ In conjunction to this, the theme is also significantly present in narratives and imagery of threat and crises. *The Sea of Shadows*,⁴⁸ by Leonardo DiCaprio, also one of the most active funders supporting IUU-related initiatives at a global level,⁴⁹ and Netflix’s *Seaspiracy*⁵⁰ are highly visible examples. Locally, there is *Tangled Seas*,⁵¹ however, more prolific is imagery pertaining to ‘ghost nets’ and by-catch. ‘Industrial fishing’ constitutes a significant threat and ‘small-scale fishers’ are ‘the answer to everything’. Hence, and conversely, the theme is assurance of sustainability *as well*, discursively expressed in phrases such as ‘killer turned saviours’ and ‘fishermen turned conservationist’ in the context of by-catch, for example. To a degree, this explains the significant focus on non-fishery-based livelihoods, sometimes referred to as ‘transitioning work’, from resource-dependent livelihoods to alternative sources (usually market based). These include tourism, alternate livelihoods such as poultry farming and agriculture, centres for entrepreneurship and skilling—examples of the latter include plumbing and tailoring, among others.

Figure 8: Overview of Thematic Categories by Source of Funding (Number of Grants).



Source: Authors’ calculations

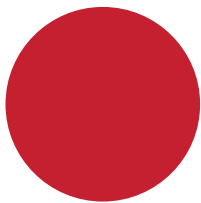
47 CEA Consulting, *A Decade of Ocean Funding: Trends during 2010–2020, Our Shared Seas*, 2021. <https://oursharedseas.com/funding/funding-report/>.

48 Richard Ladkani et al., *Sea of Shadows*, Documentary (Terra Mater Factual Studios, Appian Way, Malaika Pictures, 2019).

49 CEA Consulting, *A Decade of Ocean Funding: Trends during 2010–2020*.

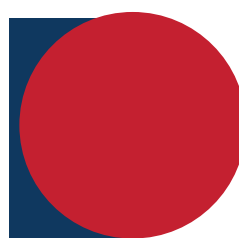
50 Ali Tabrizi et al., *Seaspiracy*, Documentary (Aum Films, Disruptive Studios, 2021).

51 Akansha Tiwari, *Tangled Seas*, Documentary (2021).



Disaster mitigation (2.27 per cent, INR 5.01 crore) includes sea safety and natural-disaster-related mitigation and relief; and pollution and waste (0.87 per cent, INR 1.82 crore) includes reducing plastic waste and beach clean-ups. Despite having low shares, they are not underfunded, corresponding to significant overlaps with established funding categories such as Swachh Bharath Abhiyan,⁵² a CSR category for example. That said, the sub-theme accidents at sea relating to sea safety are likely to be neglected, an issue brought up and highlighted by only a single participant. Like species, these themes are placed high on both global and regional economies of appearances; like 'industrial fishing', these comprise significant over-arching discourses of threat and crises, from the ocean set ablaze, reels of cyclone Amphan, and other natural disasters, to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, plastic-strewn beaches, and beer cans and plastic being pulled out of a fish's stomach.

As a theme, climate change (2.95 per cent, INR 6.49 crore) subsumes threat and crisis as a whole and is hyper-visible: 'One of the most pressing issues of our time, climate change threatens the lives and livelihoods of billions of people. Natural disasters, environmental degradation, and extreme weather patterns disrupt harvests, deplete fisheries, erode livelihoods, and spur infectious diseases.'⁵³ Globally, there's Thunberg's iconic climate strikes, Attenborough's 'witness statement',⁵⁴ collapsing glaciers, starving juvenile polar bears, and mothers eating their cubs to describe a *few*. These disaster narratives and responses also correspond to increasing regional interest. The India Climate Collaborative is a platform that has been mobilising support for climate action in the country since 2020; however, presently, they do not have a strong focus on marine and coastal issues. The area is underfunded, *especially* in regard to ocean-related work regionally. As highlighted by a donor, it is 'not even on people's radar ... funders have not even clocked it.'⁵⁵ However, the theme is often addressed tangentially, accounting for the popularity of mangroves, as carbon sequestration *and* disaster mitigation, as a participant explained. As observed, most projects pertain to 'plantations', 'green belts', in-house greening by corporations, solar energy, and biogas which were not counted. Globally, the theme has grown immensely, from less than USD 4 million in 2010 to nearly USD 50 million in 2020.⁵⁶



⁵² Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is a national-level campaign by the Indian government to reduce waste and improve sanitation.

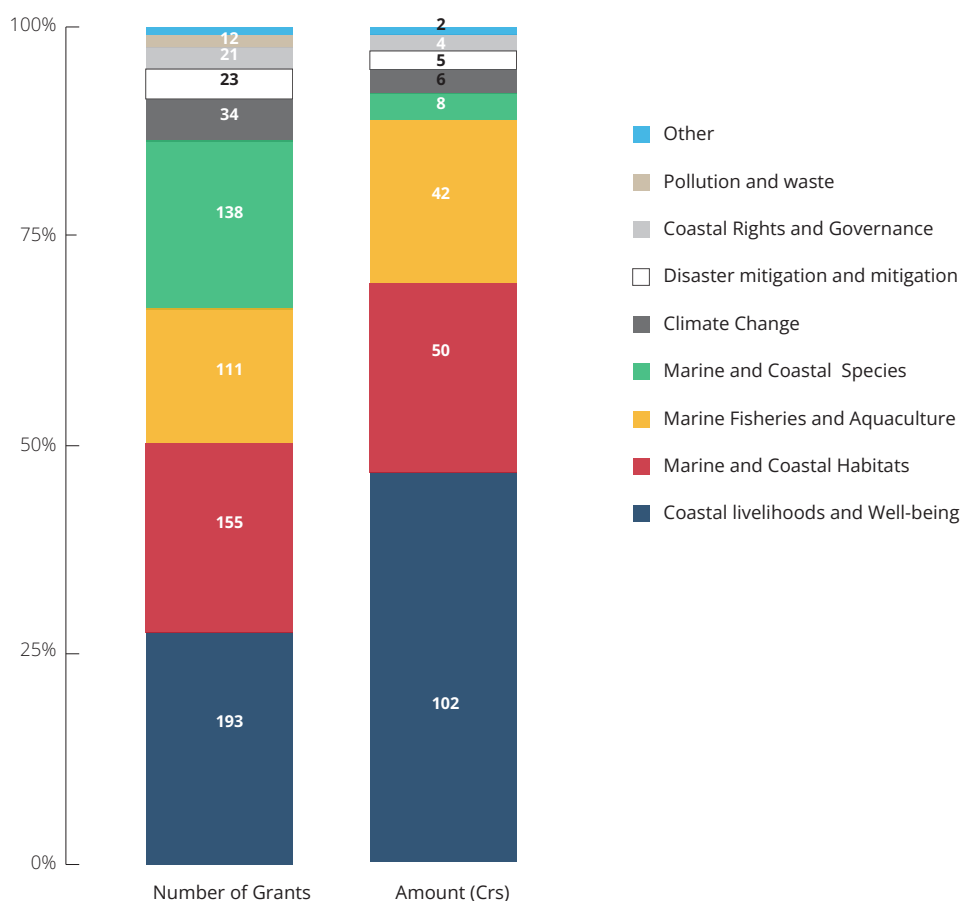
⁵³ United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, *Human Security: Building Resilience to Climate Threats*, 2017, *Human-Security-and-Climate-Change-Policy-Brief-1.pdf* (un.org).

⁵⁴ Alastair Fothergill et al., *David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet*, Documentary, Biography (Altitude Film Entertainment, Silverback Films, World Wildlife Fund, 2020).

⁵⁵ Interview with donor, September 18, 2020.

⁵⁶ CEA Consulting. *A Decade of Ocean Funding: Trends during 2010–2020, Our Shared Seas*, 2021. <https://oursharedseas.com/funding/funding-report/>.

Figure 9: Overview of the Number of Grants and Sum by Thematic Categories.

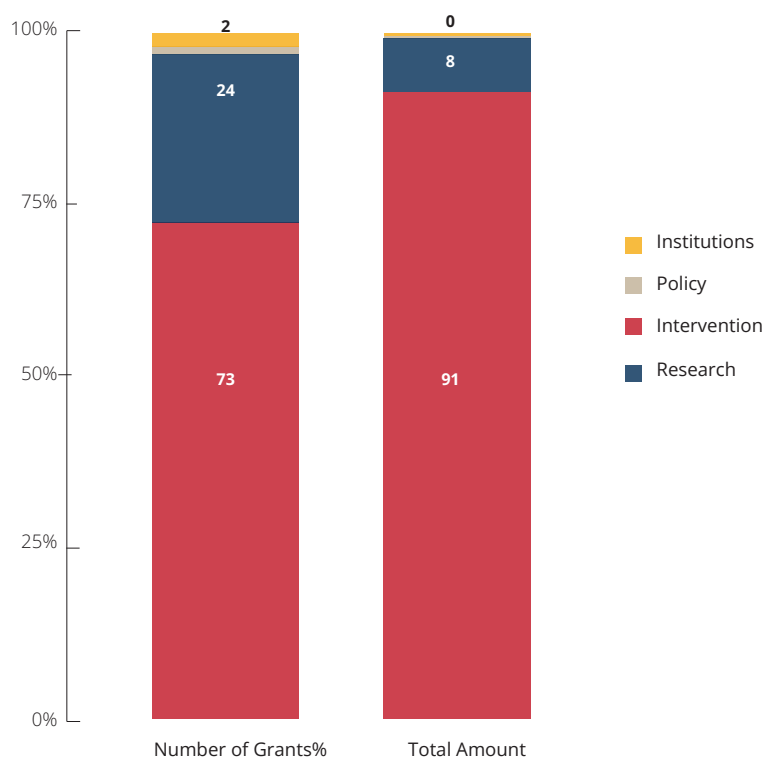


Source: Authors' calculations

Coastal rights and governance is underfunded as well, with a share of 1.82 per cent (INR 4 Crore), receiving support primarily from international donors (see Figure 9). This can be attributed to the antipathy of donors to fund political projects compounded by 'impacts' being harder to define or measure, and even be *pitched*, under prevailing frameworks. As a participant explained, in comparison to species protection, projects related to coastal rights are 'hard to package', 'not exciting', and lack compelling imagery and, hence, not easy to sell. The theme is confined to extremely small niches in the economy of appearances. For example, there are a few posts on the People's Rural Archive of India and by organisations such as DF and Foundation for Ecological Security, as well as by smaller movements such as Vanchit Macchi Maar Haji Ali and Save Our Coast Mumbai. This is also compounded by coastal communities, especially fishermen being significant elements in narratives of threat, as afore-said.

4.3. Purpose of Funding

Figure 10: Percentage of Grants by Purpose of Funding.

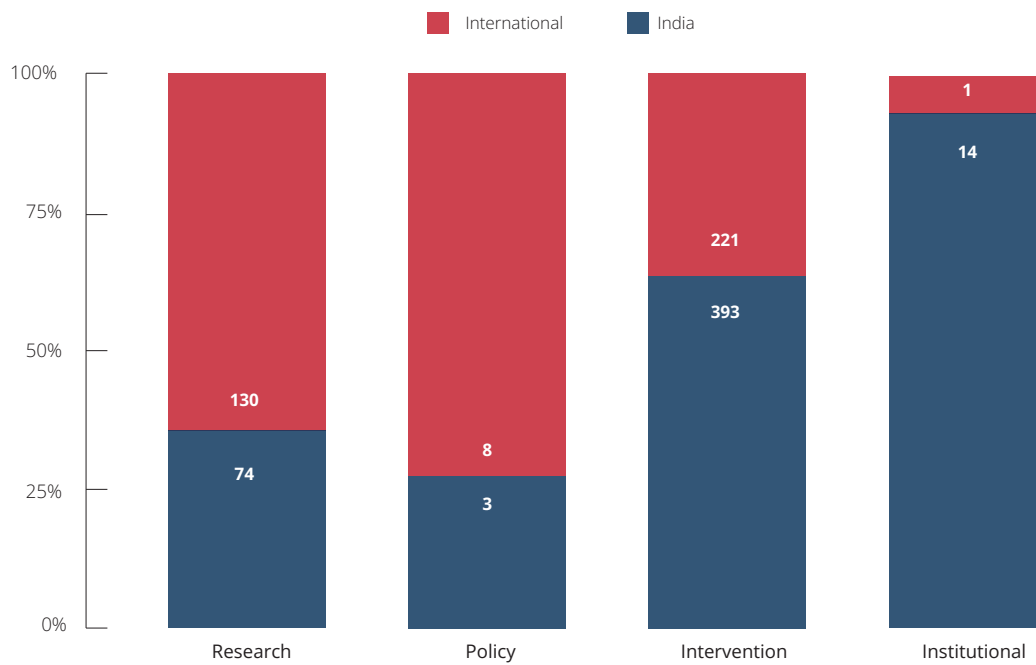


Source: Authors' calculations

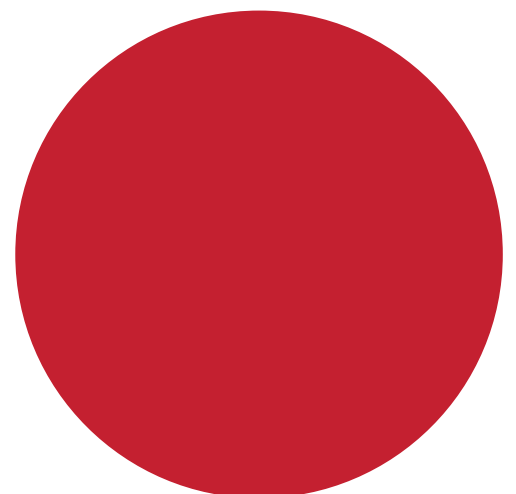
A large share of funds (91.5 per cent, INR 215.89 crore) were committed towards interventions, despite research-oriented projects comprising 24 per cent of the total number of grants. 'Pure' research without conservation 'impact' is scarce and most projects have intervention components. This also explains a notable absence of more social-science oriented research also reflecting the interest of domestic corporate giving towards welfare interventions. International funding only accounts for 18.33 per cent (INR 40 crore) of funding in comparison to 81.6 per cent (INR 178.22 crore) from Indian sources, corresponding to donor perception that capacity in this sector is far below 'par'. This is a significant diversion from global giving trends relating to the ocean, where 'science' receives the maximum funds,⁵⁷ usually intertwined with high-profile media coverage and storytelling related to 'exploration', 'expedition', and 'discovery' (OceanX and SeaLegacy are examples). Juxtaposed with regional appearances, this also highlights the lack of 'in-water' work, also corroborated by multiple participants. Overall, the sum of flows relating to research remained largely insignificant compared to interventions, as underscored by Figure 11. (see also Figure 12) Research (7.6 per cent, INR 17.92 crore) along with policy work (0.6 per cent, INR 1.43 crore) and institutional support (0.3 per cent, INR 0.78 crore) are underfunded regionally. The latter, especially, is likely an underestimate owing to the lack of availability of data, also indicative of individual giving. Despite this, however, these purpose categories were perceived as particularly underfunded, corroborated across interviews.

57 CEA Consulting. A Decade of Ocean Funding: Trends during 2010–2020.

Figure 11: Number of Grants by Source of Funds towards Research, Policy, and Interventions (categories are non-exclusive).



Source: Authors' calculations

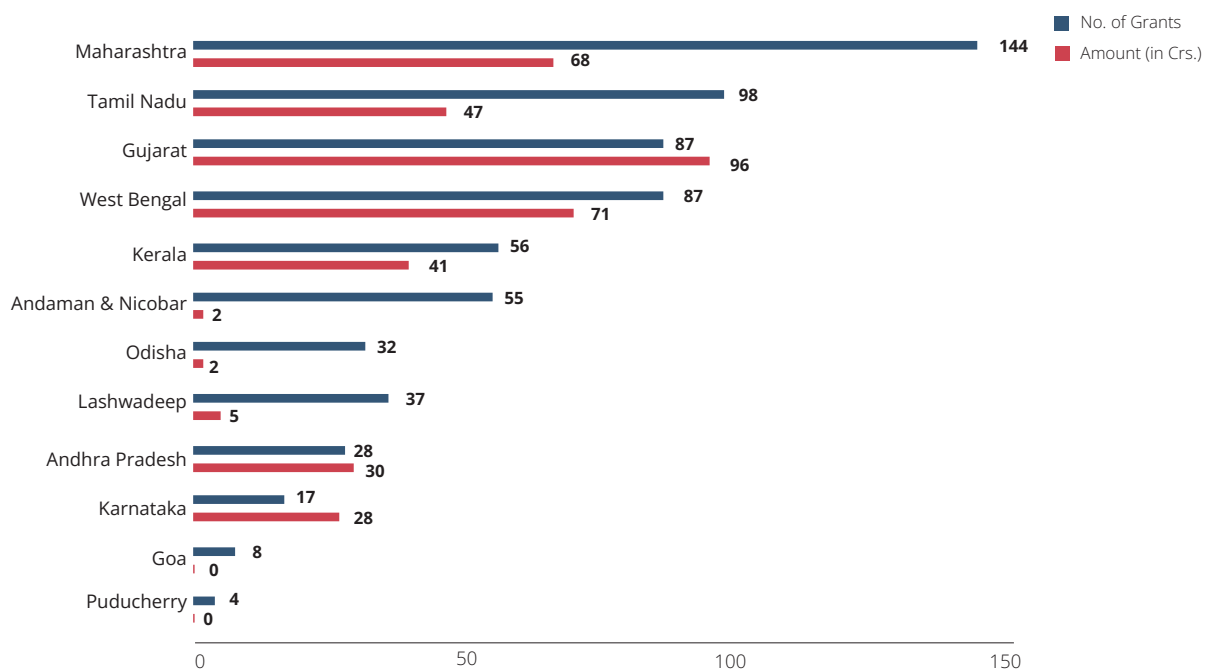


5. Tropical Islands, Stock-Market Traders, and Tigers: Where Is the Funding Going?

5.1. Of Industrial Investment Zones and Island Systems

Geographical focus plays a significant role in Indian giving, an outcome of a dominant corporate practice, as funding is typically confined to 'direct investment zones' (DIZ)—areas in and around their operations. This is especially true in the case of ports—'special economic zones' (SEZ) or 'coastal economic zones' (CEZ). This explains the concentration of flows towards Maharashtra, an intersection between several large corporate donor DIZs and port SEZs as well as Mumbai's position as India's financial capital.

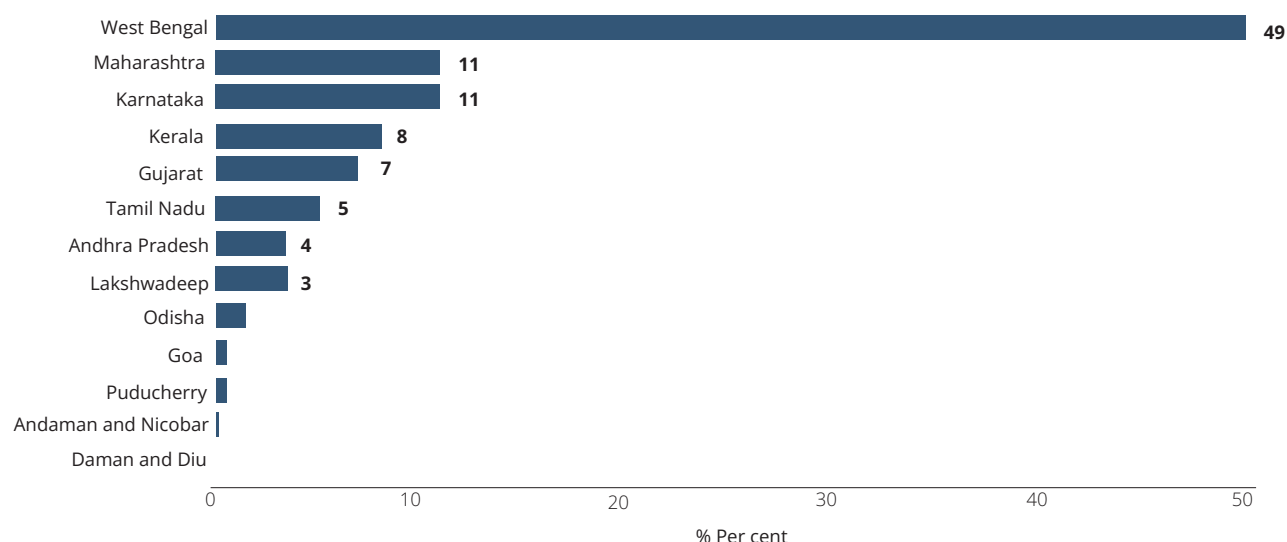
Figure 12: Number of Grants by State



Source: Authors' calculations

Another way to visualise the distribution of flows across states is to compare them in relation to the length of the respective coastlines, used as a proxy for the investments required for each state. Among the large maritime states, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh receive the lowest quantum of funding, and Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have a larger share of coastal and marine projects. This also explains the relative neglect of island systems, which do receive some CSR, but are predominantly funded by international private foundations and philanthropists, as is the case of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Figure 13: Total Amount of Marine and Coastal Funding Proportional to State and U.T. Coastlines:



Source: Authors' calculations

5.2 About those Tigers

Apart from the utility of mangroves, the large concentration of flows, in share and sum, towards the Sundarbans can be explained with regard to its 'cosmopolitan tigers'.⁵⁸ These are *not* the ecologically distinct population of tigers within the delta, but rather symbols which serve as instruments for banal consumption both globally and regionally—from prints on pajamas to high-profile documentaries, and the 'authorised heritage discourse'⁵⁹ of the UNESCO. This raises the significance of charisma and the affective propensities of lively encounters with wildlife and 'wild' places, both 'real' and 'reel', which lend *significant* weight to discursive demands⁶⁰ for protection within larger narratives of crises and threats. This is not to be taken lightly in a context where giving is still impulse-driven as one such encounter with a whale shark has culminated in one of the most well-known privately funded—and long term at that—marine conservation programmes in the country.⁶¹

India has a 'mass wildlife tourism' industry that revolves around the flagship national parks and tigers.⁶² 'Marine' and/or simply 'coastal tourism',⁶³ featuring prominently in the Sagarmala project, 'Blue economy' discourses, and recent financial investments by the state,⁶⁴ is a much broader concept and corresponds to spaces that are imagined much more diversely. The carnivalesque parties on the beaches of north Goa are a highly visible and well-known example. Despite the significant number of

⁵⁸ Annu Jalais, 'Unmasking the Cosmopolitan Tiger', *Nature and Culture* 3, no. 1 (1 March 2008): 25–40, <https://doi.org/10.3167/nc.2008.030103>.

⁵⁹ Smith Laurajane, 'Uses of Heritage', in Claire Smith, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Global Archaeology* (New York, NY: Springer, 2014), 7578–82, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-0465-2_1937.

⁶⁰ Jamie Lorimer, *Wildlife in the Anthropocene: Conservation after Nature* (University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

⁶¹ The project, which has been running since 2004, aims at reducing accidental by-catch to conserve whale sharks by raising awareness of the issue and compensating fishermen for cut nets as a result of 'rescue and release' operations in Gujarat.

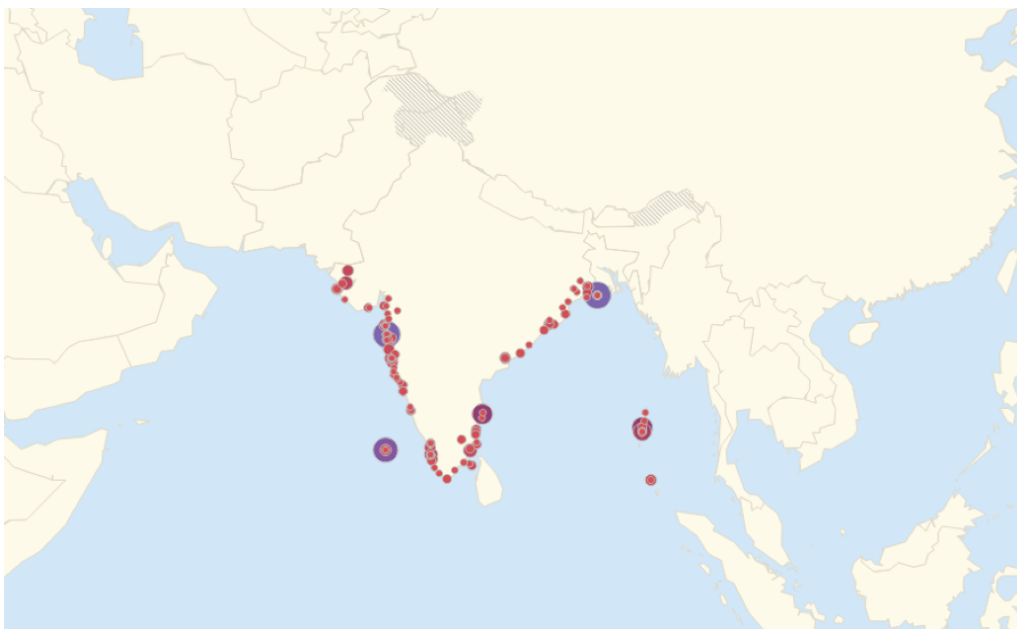
⁶² Krithi Karanth et al., 'Wildlife Tourists in India's Emerging Economy: Potential for a Conservation Constituency?' *Oryx* 46 (1 July 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S003060531100086X>.

⁶³ This includes cruise tourism, motorised water sports, and coastal tourism circuits which are not focused on wildlife and conservation per se. Equitable Tourism Options, 'The Growth of Tourism and the Blue Economy in India', 15 November 2019, <https://equitabletourism.org/initiative/growth-tourism-and-blue-economy-india>.

⁶⁴ For example, 99.2 crores were sanctioned in 2016–17 to develop a coastal tourism circuit in Tamil Nadu under Swadesh Darshan scheme. Ibid; See also Staff Reporter, 'Karnataka Budget Gives Push for Coastal Tourism', *The Hindu*, 6 March 2020, sec. Karnataka, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/karnataka-budget-gives-push-for-coastal-tourism/article30994443.ece>.

MPAs,⁶⁵ 'marine wildlife tourism' (as analogous to terrestrial wildlife tourism) is a relatively small niche.⁶⁶ Repercussions of this, and more broadly the problem of recognition, highlights the oceans' prevailing PR problem which is much more apparent at a regional scale, also corroborated across most interviews. This has far-reaching impacts that affect the who, the what, and the where and is intricately and inextricably knit to terrestrial conservation's economy of appearances, which doesn't seem to suffer from a similar lack of spectacle.⁶⁷ 'Wild Karnataka' funded by CSR and public goodwill⁶⁸ is but a single example.

Figure 14: Location of Marine and Coastal Projects Included in the Database (size represents intensity of investments in a particular coastal district).



Source: Authors

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- ⁶⁵ There are 25 in peninsular India and 100 in the island systems; see K Sivakumar, V.B. Mathur & Anant Pande, 'Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in India: Challenges and Way Forward', in K Sivakumar ed., *Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in India: Challenges and Way Forward*, ENVIS Bulletin: Wildlife & Protected Areas, Vol. 15 (Dehradun: Wildlife Institute of India, 2013), 50-62.
- ⁶⁶ For example, there are only 70 dive companies in India, the industry is still in its infancy. See Sooraj Rajmohan, 'On India's Growing Diving Industry', *The Hindu*, 2 October 2018, sec. Society, <https://www.thehindu.com/society/on-indias-growing-diving-industry/article25103020.ece>.
- ⁶⁷ This has been taken from Nixon's idea of 'slow violence', particularly in regard to the lack of spectacle. Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Harvard University Press, 2011), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2jbsgw>.
- ⁶⁸ See M.D. Madhusudan, "Wild Karnataka" Brings Wildlife into the Spotlight, Leaves Conservation Behind', *The Wire*, accessed 5 September 2021, <https://thewire.in/environment/wild-karnataka-forest-department-development-bellary-mining-scam-amoghavarsha-krupakar-senani>; Nitin Rai, "Wild Karnataka" Is Beautiful to Behold but Embraces an Idea That Deserved to Die', *The Wire*, accessed 5 September 2021, <https://thewire.in/environment/wild-karnataka-david-attenborough-karnataka-forest-department-native-people>.

6. Tides of Change

This section throws light on the current priorities of practitioners, independent researchers, scholars, and subject experts engaged in marine conservation and allied sectors. It also considers the issues or thematic areas that they believe receive little attention or support from private donors.

As part of the interviews, 20 participants representing the conservation sector were asked to rank 3 to 5 critical issues from the list of 8 thematic areas that have been discussed in the previous section. While some participants acknowledged the difficulty in clearly separating closely interlinked thematic areas and one called it a ‘fruitless exercise’,⁶⁹ 15 participants provided us with a ranked list based on their expertise and experiences. Of the eight themes, the following thematic areas were cited as a priority in the following order.

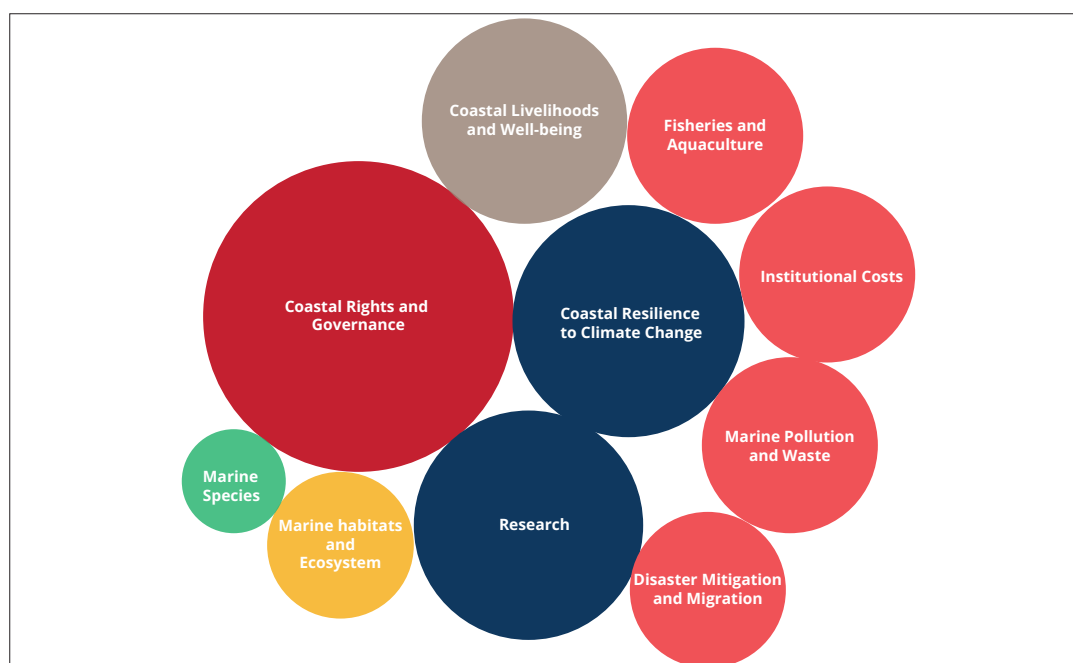
Figure 15: Ranking of Thematic Areas Based on Priority

Rank	Thematic Issue	Priority for	Ranked #1 By
1	Coastal Rights and Governance	12	3
2	Coastal Livelihoods and Well-being	11	1
2	Climate Change	11	3
3	Marine and Coastal Habitats	10	1
3	Marine Pollution and Waste	10	2
4	Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture	8	4
5	Disaster Mitigation	5	1

Source: Authors

⁶⁹ Interview with fisheries expert, 12 July 2021.

Figure 16: Perceptions of the conservation sector about areas requiring funding. The relative size of the circle represents how often the corresponding theme was cited as being inadequately funded in India and in need of urgent financial stimulus.



Contrary to the priorities of the philanthropic sector as detailed in the previous sections, participants' rankings revealed Coastal Rights and Governance as the highest priority of the conservation sector (Figure 15), with 80 per cent of them rating the issue among their top five, and three participants citing it as their most significant concern. It serves as an umbrella issue and has linkages to fisher rights, coastal development, and natural resource management, all critical matters within the current development agenda. It is also important to add that this theme is perceived by the sector as receiving the least amount of private funding (Figure 16) while being most in need, with a majority of participant organisations unable to pursue governance work. Among reasons cited for the area's importance, participants felt that without securing the basic rights of coastal communities, it is difficult to 'initiate a conversation about saving a species'.⁷⁰

Another priority, Climate Change, was cited by roughly three quarters of the participants as being the largest issue in terms of scale, requiring immediate attention, long-term planning, and significantly more funding than it is thought to be receiving currently. Participants reported the increase in the frequency of extreme weather-related phenomena along the east and west coasts, leading to communities being 'vulnerably placed, caught in the crossfire between large-scale development on one hand and impacts of climate change on the other'.⁷¹ While the Indian government has begun making national commitments towards international climate goals, their activities, based on narrower socio-economic and political considerations, have undermined more sustained, long-term progress in this regard, requiring targeted efforts from civil society.

To several respondents, marine conservation is inherently tied to the advancement of Coastal Livelihoods and Well-being goals, with 73 per cent of them suggesting that the conservation and philanthropic sectors' focus on wellbeing, both in terms of programmes and funding, is appropriate and necessary. The close linkages between coastal rights and governance and coastal livelihoods were

⁷⁰ Interview with conservation practitioner, 27 May 2021.

⁷¹ Interview with conservation practitioner, 27 May 2021.

also highlighted here. Additionally, pursuing social well-being outcomes such as addressing health and sanitation issues and educational needs were reported to have downstream benefits for coastal ecosystems as well.

A little over half the participants cited Marine and Coastal Habitats as a crucial theme, reporting that projects focused on ecosystems rather than species provided greater protections for a wider set of species and ecological processes. While some believed that the area is relatively underfunded, there was also disagreement over what would constitute the right course of action, especially as it relates to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Participants pointed out that a large amount of MPAs remain 'on paper' and that managing them effectively required a different set of models as compared to terrestrial protected areas. Additionally, while some respondents argued that MPAs were typically exclusionary spaces that antagonised local communities and created disparate access to coastal commons, others insisted that better management of protected area networks would be necessary to protect marine life from excessive use and exploitation, a notion that is being promoted by some of the most prominent international donors and NGOs.

Another area of concern was Marine Pollution and Waste, listed by 10 participants as being critical. Responses to the subject, however, were polarising. While a fifth of the participants argued that marine pollution warrants immediate attention and an influx of funding, another participant called it 'money wasted'.⁷² Some felt that within marine pollution, the issue of plastics usually governed conversations and that plastic-related conservation projects, often the most visible among marine issues, tended to address 'symptoms rather than causes'.⁷³ Additionally, participants reported the need to focus on industrial pollution and take preventive measures such as strategic environmental impact assessments at early stages of governmental decision-making.

While discussing Fisheries and Aquaculture, participants pointed to its thematic overlap with Coastal Livelihoods, Rights and Governance. Crucial for roughly half the participants, fishery experts identified the open access nature of fisheries in India and the increase in fishing capacity as key issues. This has changed the nature of fisheries in India from 'a seasonal, selective passive fishery to a perennial non-selective active fishery',⁷⁴ while undermining the rights of small-scale fishers to practice their occupation. While some suggested that the capital being invested in the sector is disproportionate to the fishery resources currently available, others suggested that the area is still not sufficiently funded.

Disaster Mitigation, with close linkages to the issue of climate resilience, was mentioned by 5 participants as a pressing issue warranting immediate action, and 2 participants said that funding for it does not match the urgency it demands. Surprisingly, Marine and Coastal Species was cited as a priority by the least number of participants, with only 1 participant ranking it as the topmost concern and another stating that it does not receive adequate funding. For the respondents who did discuss the issue, key concerns related to the lack of baseline data and a decline in numbers of endemic and poorly studied marine and coastal species.

Among issues that were not included in the provided list, 5 participants cited development and infrastructure as a critical area for intervention, and 3 participants cited ocean resource exploitation as

⁷² Interview with conservation practitioner, 5 July 2021.

⁷³ Interview with conservation practitioner, 15 July 2021.

⁷⁴ Interview with fisheries expert, 12 July 2021.

another priority focus. Research is considered by 5 participants to receive inadequate support from the private sector and institutional funding was also raised as an area that is insufficiently funded by 3 participants, both claims substantiated by the earlier findings.

This priority ranking finds that there is a significant chasm between marine conservation goals and donor interests, with the priorities, geographic foci, and business considerations of philanthropists largely setting the agenda for conservation work, while failing to engage the targets of their philanthropic efforts—a characteristic termed as hyperagency.⁷⁵ Regarding the philanthropic sector's support for marine conservation, one participant said: 'Certain projects are championed by "well-intentioned" people with a lot of money. They seem to believe that they know what should be funded and what shouldn't be; their whims can decide what kind of work gets done'.⁷⁶ As a result, while the sector receives some funding, the ways in which this pool of resources is accessible to conservation practitioners is limited despite the diversity of their own goals and agendas, widening the gap between the work that is done and the work that is needed.

6.2 Challenges of the Conservation Sector

This section discusses overarching challenges identified by participants under two broad categories: sectoral and structural challenges. The former outlines challenges specific to marine conservation and affiliated sectors, and the latter explores larger policies, practices, and systems that complicate the work of civil society.

6.2.1 Sectoral Challenges

Knowledge Systems for Marine and Coastal Geographies

The most commonly shared concern among participants was the limited understanding of the distinct requirements of marine and coastal spaces, especially among policymakers and officials at the Forest Department, the administrative body in charge of overseeing India's marine spaces. There is agreement that this gap in knowledge and skillsets has stemmed, in part, from limited research on these geographies, their biodiversity and needs. Several participants explained that this lack of understanding has resulted in the adoption of conservation models that have been designed primarily for terrestrial systems and not inconstant, fluid spaces such as seas and oceans.

When coupled with limited research about their implications for seascapes and small-scale fisher livelihoods, the transplantation of these models has resulted in poorly suited conservation practices that have created exclusionary spaces, restricted community access to coastal commons or been entirely ineffective, except on paper. Participants also expressed a need to 'get beyond the Wildlife Protection Act as the sole instrument for marine conservation'⁷⁷ and explore alternatives such as participatory monitoring, by utilising traditional knowledge to increase engagement and ownership.

Diversity and Representation of Interests

Several participants characterised the conservation sector as being fairly insular. Hierarchical workplaces, social barriers, and financial constraints continue to limit workforce diversity, which results in disparities in practice, ensuring that some voices, typically urban and upper class, are inherently louder than others, making it harder for newer actors, especially from within rural coastal communities, to enter the sector.

⁷⁵ David, Callahan, *The Givers: Wealth, Power, and Philanthropy in a New Gilded Age* (Vintage, 2017).

⁷⁶ Interview with conservation practitioner, 5 July 2021.

⁷⁷ Interview with conservation practitioner, 5 July 2021.

Additionally, while there have been changes in practitioner approaches towards local communities (with models of community-involved decision making such as Madras Crocodile Bank's work with the Irula Cooperative or Dakshin Foundation's work with the Lakshadweep fishing community, proving successful), there is a tendency to view the role of civil society as a 'primacy'.⁷⁸ However, participants expressed the need to move away from the typical characterisations of communities as beneficiaries and incorporate local actors as 'partners'⁷⁹ in conservation work.

Alignment with Donor Requirements, Timescales, and Guidelines

Participants have highlighted that donor requirements and guidelines for reporting and impact assessment are seldom aligned with the frameworks of conservation organisations. Particularly in the case of corporate donors, frequent reporting and limited timescales for project implementation were considered to be an encumbrance, as meaningful conservation is said to take much longer than the typical short-term project and reporting cycles to which donors adhere. Further, mismatched metrics of success and reporting templates that do not reflect the project goals or the socio-ecological complexities of field sites are a significant hindrance. Interventions and their associated social and ecological changes are difficult to assess in the short-term and within the limited time for which funding is available. As one participant noted, 'The people who are at organisations like this are mostly people who have done MBA [sic] and are used to looking at these kinds of [quantitative] metrics to evaluate success. So, that becomes a bit challenging, it becomes very tedious. Ultimately, you are able to come up with something [...] I was able to force-fit, but a lot of time gets spent in all of this.'⁸⁰ Additionally, a lack of dialogue between donors and implementing organisations, with donors often not becoming involved with the work beyond requiring regular progress reports, was cited as a reason for the mismatch in project-level monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks.

Stability in Funding for Research and Practice

Similarly, participants noted that a small group of organisations is forced to compete for the same pool of resources, impeding collaboration and sharing of knowledge and resources. While implementing organisations often share a similar set of values and collaborate on projects, participants reported a tendency within the sector to competitively 'territorialise species groups, regions and habitats'.⁸¹ Additionally, while different forms of access are usually granted to established BINGOs as a result of their reputations and institutional capacities, bureaucratic red tape and challenges associated with obtaining government permits impede smaller organisations with limited resources or manpower and independent researchers from securing funding or work.

Another concern, particularly for early career researchers and newer organisations, is closed grant-making, a process through which proposals are invited from within partner networks. It has been known to exclude organisations 'that don't have a legacy'⁸² spanning decades. Additionally, selective grant-making, which narrows the field of applicants through limiting criteria that are not always need-based or evidence-driven, further scales down the number of organisations able to do quality and sustained work. One practitioner had this example to offer: 'There was a climate innovation [...] competition in Goa.... So, they are asking for tech-based solutions and they want your project to have XYZ [...] if you're going to come into a place and say, "[...] all the people here should now

⁷⁸ Interview with fisheries expert, 12 July 2021.

⁷⁹ Interview with conservation practitioner, 21 April 2021.

⁸⁰ Interview with conservation practitioner, 27 May 2021.

⁸¹ Interview with conservation practitioner, 21 April 2021.

⁸² Interview with independent researcher, 30 April 2021.

submit proposals for climate innovation”, then you can’t make the parameters such that it already shuts doors for so many people [...], their ideas may not be oriented towards tech-based because that may not be what they’ve been exposed to and it may not be what the location needs immediately.’⁸³

Participants have also noted that a large share of the funds available to the sector are project-specific and that funding to cover institutional costs such as salaries was limited. This makes it harder for organisations to retain staff, pay them fairly, build institutional capacity, buy infrastructure, and tide over emergencies. Moreover, representatives of larger organisations indicated that their work is minimally challenged by financial insecurity or donor exits, while fundraising is understood to be a much larger issue for smaller organisations.

Permits for Research and Work in Restricted Areas

With regard to conducting research or work in restricted and protected areas, applying for and accessing permits has been raised as a key concern, with the process already made difficult due to strict project deadlines. Along with the conservative awarding of research permits, participants spoke about complicated and non-standardised application procedures for obtaining them: “I did approach the Biodiversity Authority [sic], and unfortunately, they took a very long time to get back to me. But when they did, they finally said that we don’t need the permit because we are not actually collecting any samples or touching anything. So, you know, we could very well have lost that project because of the timeframe involved in even getting an answer like this back.”⁸⁴ In fact, one participant admitted that he had had to return funding that had already been secured on account of delay in the approval for a permit. Without a timeline provided for expected responses, grievance redressal mechanisms, or procedures to challenge the denial of permits, the several months-long processes could hamper the quality and overall output of the research.

6.2.2 Structural Challenges

The ‘Blue Economy’ Model

Beyond sectoral issues, several participants referred to the challenges of undertaking conservation work in a political and economic environment antithetical to the broader goals of their programmes. The current development paradigm, which has been reinforcing the need for restrictive or no-take zones while simultaneously advancing large-scale coastal infrastructure projects, intensive aquaculture, and other developmental initiatives, has been cited as a major systemic barrier to change. They compound vulnerabilities associated with long-term ecosystem health and social well-being, without adequately safeguarding the traditional rights of coastal communities. In addition to the limited resources dedicated to ocean management and governance, the ad-hoc introduction of legislation indicates decision-making that prioritises the market over scientific evidence.

Examples cited while discussing the existing paradigm included the repeated amendments to the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification (CRZ 2018) issued under the Environmental Protection Act, which demarcates zones from the high tide line—densely populated by coastal communities—and allocates them to non-fisher corporate actors towards developmental activities, tourism, and industrial projects.⁸⁵ A key beneficiary of these de-notifications has been the flagship

⁸³ Interview with conservation practitioner, 15 July 2021.

⁸⁴ Interview with conservation practitioner, 3 August 2021.

⁸⁵ Ishan Kukreti, ‘Coastal Regulation Zone Notification: What Development Are We Clearing Our Coasts For’, *Down to Earth*, 4 February 2019, accessed May 20, 2021. <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverage/governance/coastal-regulation-zone-notification-what-development-are-we-clearing-our-coasts-for-63061>

Sagarmala Project under the Ministry of Shipping, which aims to promote 'port-led development' by establishing 14 coastal economic zones (CEZs) and constructing approximately 550 ports along the country's roughly 7,500 km coastline. And owing to the 'strategic' nature of the project, restrictions on CRZ-I, comprising the most ecologically sensitive coastal areas, will not apply to these developments.⁸⁶ As one participant noted, 'No one is out there just to fill their bellies, everyone has a commercial interest.'⁸⁷

Public Participation in Marine Governance

Participants also expressed that the lack of public consultation in marine and coastal governance and policy-making is problematic for its exclusion of the voices and rights of local resource-dependent communities. Given its recency, the case of the draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation 2021 was discussed by several participants, 'because the way this legislation is being pushed is that it is surpassing elected members, [...] representatives, and putting all the power in the hands of somebody who is centrally elected, who does not relate with the local context, and is trying to push a developmental agenda, which is not at all locally appropriate. And it is not locally appropriate because it is not [...] articulated in consultation with the local people'.⁸⁸ Another policy document discussed in this context is the draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2020, for which the period inviting public consultations had initially been reduced from 30 to 20 days in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic,⁸⁹ despite the consultation process being the only viable forum to disclose details about the projects, understand its impacts, and allow meaningful community-led environmental and social scrutiny.

FCRA and Activism

Civil society, once on the frontlines of activism and social change, is now largely relegated to the background in terms of its role, mandates, and activities. NGOs are coming under increasing scrutiny from the government for their advocacy, and foreign funding has become more restricted due to recent amendments to FCRA,⁹⁰ suspension of FCRA licences,⁹¹ and the addition of international organisations to the 'Prior Reference Category' list, which has created administrative and legal barriers.⁹² As a result, many implementing agencies are choosing to limit their work to specific service delivery activities in areas where the state has failed to do so, with limited overlap with policy and governance work. However, as one participant mentioned, 'Grant-making is political, on-ground action is political, working with people is political.... Any project you do, governance and politics has to be part of it.... That should be part of your understanding of the space that you want to work in.'⁹³

86. K. Rejimon. 'Draft Coastal Regulations Facilitate NDA's Sagarmala Project but Fishermen, Environmentalists Feel Threatened', *Firstpost*, 5 May 2018. Accessed 29 September 2021. <https://www.firstpost.com/india/draft-coastal-regulations-facilitate-ndas-sagarmala-project-but-fishermen-environmentalists-feel-threatened-4457331.html>.

87. Interview with independent researcher, 9 July 2021.

88. Interview with conservation practitioner, 27 May 2021.

89. Ishan Kukreti, 'EIA Notification 2020 Delayed till September 7', *Down to Earth*, 5 August 2020. accessed May 20, 2021. <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/environment/eia-notification-2020-delayed-till-september-7-72673>.

90. Vijaita Singh, 'Home Ministry Amends FCRA Rules', *The Hindu*, 10 November 2020. accessed 29 September 2021. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/home-ministry-amends-fcra-rules/article33078618.ece>.

91. Deeptiman Tiwary, 'FCRA Licences of 6,600 NGOs Cancelled in Past Three Years: Govt to Lok Sabha', *The Indian Express*, 18 March 2020. accessed September 28, 2021. <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/fcra-licences-of-6600-ngos-cancelled-in-past-three-years-govt-to-lok-sabha-6319507/>.

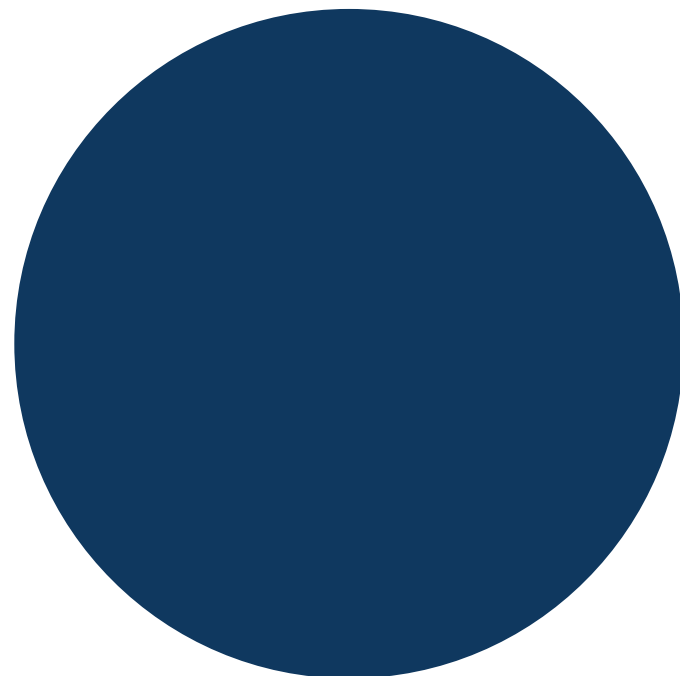
92. Suhasini Haidar, 'Govt. Curbs Funding for 10 Climate Change, Child Labour NGOs', *The Hindu*, 13 September 2021. accessed 20 September 2021. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/govt-curbs-funding-for-10-climate-change-child-labour-ngos/article36437596.ece>

93. Interview with conservation practitioner, 15 July 2021.

COVID-19

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the marine conservation and allied sectors not only in terms of the access to field sites and communities, but also in the overall focus of their existing projects and prioritisation of core issues. With external funding reduced or halted, several of the more well-established organisations reported relying on their core institutional funds and scaling down several of their existing projects. Projects involving marine fisheries and small-scale fishers in particular had to reorient their programmatic goals to incorporate the new ground realities of working with communities pushed into greater vulnerabilities. Participants mentioned that the pandemic has highlighted the need to strengthen social support systems, de-centralise markets, and focus on strengthening smaller-scale sectors.

Within this context, participants also discussed the measures they have taken to adapt to remote working and the digital medium while ensuring that their staff remained safe. As this was happening, all fieldwork came to a standstill, community work largely stopped, and priorities were re-examined and altered to incorporate the new ground realities. Donor responses to the pandemic have been mixed, with participants reporting that several existing donors recognised the difficulty of fundraising at this time and offered support with regards to pushing back on and modifying deliverables. Most participants noted that their organisations were focused on sustaining long-term projects while adjusting timelines and deliverables accordingly.





7. *Recommendations for the Future*

This section documents priorities and strategies identified by practitioners and stakeholders towards making the marine conservation sector in India more robust. The recommendations outlined below will focus on three key stakeholders: grant making agencies, non-governmental agencies, and the government.

7.1 What Can Donors Do Differently?

1. Co-create metrics for monitoring and evaluation with implementing organisations: Conservation can be effective and meaningful only in the long-term, and the nature and durability of the outcomes is often uncertain. This calls for close coordination between donors and potential grantees to co-create metrics used to measure impacts and the frameworks required to report them. Participants felt that their work would be better served if donors became acquainted with field-work and field sites and developed a better understanding of the project-related socio-ecological systems.

2. Promote collaborative agenda-setting among implementing organisations: All practitioners attested to the growing importance of private and philanthropic funds in marine conservation in India. The larger donor organisations have the capacity to influence priorities across scales, decide the nature of relationships between implementing agencies, and have a systemic influence on the 'internal governance' mechanisms of the sector. Participants felt donors could play a more proactive role in promoting non-state deliberation on the future of marine and coastal spaces.

3. Ensure transparency through disclosure of donor reports: A key step to ensuring that marine conservation priorities are aligned with funding allocations is the standardisation of reporting and public disclosure of donor reports. Specifically with regards to private and philanthropic funding in India, the disclosure of the total amount of funding, objectives, and outcomes would help resolve the uncertainties within the sector, set appropriate goals, ensure equity in grant-making, and foster a better appreciation of underfunded areas.

4. Use SDGs as benchmarks in the absence of guiding frameworks: Local CSR donors often approach implementing agencies without a guiding framework, based largely around the donors' sites of operations and interests. In such cases, employing a well-established framework such as the SDGs as a blueprint for action could help orient activities and projects towards national SDG 14 (Life below water) goals and commitments.

5. Shift from the project-based model towards institutional funding for larger grants: As has been discussed, the sustainability of funding is a major challenge for the sector, particularly with

regard to administrative costs, salaries, and projects that involve long-term socio-ecological research. Providing institutional support to organisations in addition to funding specific projects would allow NGOs to retain staff at fair wages, cover overhead costs, and focus their resources where they are most needed.

6. Encourage a diversity of local actors across scales: Lastly, the trend among prominent CSR foundations of funding and operationalising projects internally has the outcome of reducing the number of actors who can effectively have a say in the setting priorities for the sector. To ensure equity of interests in a field with limited actors, donors should encourage open and inclusive grant-making to allow newer organisations to have access to funding that is usually reserved for partner networks.

7.2 What can NGOs and conservation organisations in India do differently?

1. Publish post-project evaluation of social outcomes towards developing standards for community engagements: A majority of the participants identified the centrality of social outcomes to their programmes, suggesting that their work depended on community buy-in and positive social outcomes. However, a framework and systemic post-project review of social outcomes was found missing. Towards this, there was a need to invest resources to develop guidelines⁹⁴ ensuring just and equitable participation of communities in conservation work and a more comprehensive review of post-project social outcomes.

2. Create avenues to report and discuss lessons from 'unsuccessful' projects: Participants reported that the current reporting and publication mechanisms did not allow for enough opportunities to discuss project failures and lessons learnt during project design or implementation. Commitments to a more evidence-based approach to conservation and social interventions allow for project challenges and failures to be documented and shared among practitioners and implementing agencies so that mistakes are not repeated and can serve as learnings for the sector.

3. Jointly fundraise for similar causes and coastal geographies: Compared to government funding, private funding may allow for greater opportunities to bring together diverse actors and collaboratively set marine conservation agendas. Especially while working with the same coastal communities, species, habitats, or donors, there is greater potential for alignment and to 'come together as a community' to advance shared agendas for marine conservation in India.

4. Diversify funding sources and formalise internal fundraising operations: Most practitioners and researchers reported having to be involved in all aspects of the project cycle: fundraising, research, and implementation. This affected the overall quality and output of their work. To ensure long-term financial sustainability, organisations would benefit from instituting dedicated personnel and resources towards managing fundraising activities. Additionally, participants identified the need to develop fundraising strategies specifically for navigating donor exits and managing organisational or national emergencies such as the COVID19 pandemic.

⁹⁴ See Nathan J. Bennett, Lydia Teh, Yoshitaka Ota, Patrick Christie, Adam Ayers, Jon C. Day, Phil Franks, David Gill, Rebecca L. Gruby, and John N. Kittinger, 'An Appeal for a Code of Conduct for Marine Conservation', *Marine Policy* 81 (2017): 411–18, 10.1016/j.marpol.2017.03.035

5. Improve engagements with a wider audience and involve non-expert stakeholders in conservation work: As discussed in the previous section, marine conservation in India suffers from limited representation of interests and a lack of visibility in larger public awareness. There is a need to make research more accessible outside scientific journals through popular media to involve more people in the production and use of scientific information and to increase the visibility of marine and coastal issues that have received limited public attention in India.

6. Collaboratively prioritise issues towards developing a strategy towards strengthening the science-policy interface: Lastly, as compared to NGOs, private donors have an outsized role in influencing public policy and governance. Aligned with the need to collaborate, several practitioners spoke about the use of government-independent funding to prioritise, gather, and share evidence and speak collectively about certain key issues to influence policy and decision-making. With the policy landscape rapidly shifting, and avenues for collaboration with the government to set development priorities diminishing, there is a greater need to develop a strategy to increase the role of science and evidence-informed national and state policy-making for marine and coastal issues.

7.3 What Can Central, State, and Local Governing Bodies in India Do Differently?

1. Create more avenues for consultations with environmental NGOs recognising them as development stakeholders: Alongside filling service gaps created by the government, most NGOs pursue grassroots approaches that prioritise collaborative decision-making and social justice. However, within the current political climate, there is a suspicion of NGOs and closing of avenues for consultations. There is a need for the government and governing bodies to recognise NGOs as key development stakeholders in marine conservation agenda-setting and decision-making on the allocation of resources identified in consultation with local actors.

2. Create balanced permit-seeking procedures and wildlife research regulations: As discussed above, with regards to accessing permits and conducting research, participants have expressed a need for the creation of clear guidelines and a standardised procedure to a) apply for and seek government permits for research work in restricted areas and b) redress grievances regarding the denial of permits. The current process needs to be regularised, with clearer timelines for application, response, and decision-making to ensure researchers are allowed sufficient time to modify project plans, if necessary.

3. Ensure regular release of grants for government sponsored projects: The release of government funding often depends on the approval and sanction of government officials who are frequently transferred. There is a need for government bodies to build a more responsive system of accountability within grant-making mechanisms, with consideration for existing timelines, and logistical constraints of NGOs.

4. Increase funding available for independent research-oriented projects and regularise availability of opportunities: Participants reported that while there was government funding available for production-oriented aspects of marine resources, not enough funding is directed towards independent research on taxonomy, ecology, distribution, population dynamics of marine species as well as marine-related social research in India. In line with the periodic funding made available to government and affiliated research institutions, there is a need to standardise and publicly adver

tise opportunities for independent research work.

5. Regularise classifications of donations to marine conservation in schedule VII of the CSR Act: Within CSR, respondents mentioned that only a small fraction of the overall funds were currently being diverted to environmental causes (the majority of funds are earmarked for education, hunger, poverty, and healthcare) and an even smaller percentage to marine conservation and related initiatives, despite the significant requirement of funding. Additionally, it was suggested that the category of marine and ocean-related conservation be made a priority sector within the act itself to increase the sector's visibility and catalyse the channeling of funds towards it.

8. Conclusion

Philanthropy for the ocean is in its nascent stages with limited resources, actors and, organisations. As visibility improves and new actors emerge, there is an opportunity for early initiatives to collaboratively set the agenda for a more equitable and ecologically sound future. Given the changing social and ecological contexts, there is consensus on the need for more research, storytelling, transparency, coherence of approaches and a deeper assessment of outcomes.

This study is a first attempt at summarising private funding flows to marine and coastal conservation in India, towards defining a clearer framework for private funding for the ocean. The dataset and interviews reflect the gaps identified in literature, including a significant lack of data on marine conservation funding in India, particularly with regard to private support. Additionally, the paper presents information on priorities identified by practitioners, challenges faced, and recommendations for the future. The responses and concerns represent a specific set of interests with varying relations to the current economic and political climate. In planning for longer term outcomes, there is a need to continually map these changes as the field gradually evolves.

As an initial attempt, the data gathered is necessarily incomplete and is only meant to serve as a starting point for greater in-depth research towards a more complete picture identifying approaches, needs and issues specific to a more representative sample of donors and implementing agencies across scales. Ideally, future research should have a larger representation of local actors and interests. This information would help the sector move away from top-down approaches and contribute to better agenda-setting for the sector and more appropriate institutional and policy responses.

A decorative graphic consisting of a dark blue rectangle on the left and a red circle on the right, both partially overlapping.

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10. Conflict of interest

The researchers involved with this study are employed by Dakshin Foundation, which works closely with or could potentially have working relationships with some or most of the organisations that the study involves. To mitigate potential conflict, the researchers have disclosed the nature of the study to the participants and received their consent. Additionally, the paper will undergo an independent review before publication.



11. Link to Database

The dataset used for analysis is available at the following Google Sheet link.