model of the Holocene coastline of Kerala, between the Pandalayani promontory, north of Kozhikode and Edava promontory near Varkala, and suggests that this segment of the coastline has been developed in five stages of transgressions and regressions The paper by K T Damodaran which deals with the extremely sensitive topic of mineral sand mining along the Kerala coast and in shallow seas, stresses the need for exploiting this rare and valuable resources but recommends to avoid extremely vulnerable zones and take necessary precautions before starting any such activity

Fisheries is the mainstay of the economy of the Kerala coast B Madhusoodana Kurup discusses the status, sustainability issues and policies of the marine and coastal fisheries of the state Wanton destruction of mangroves in the coastal wetlands of the state has adversely affected the biodiversity of this ecosystem K A Khaleel discusses this problem with reference to the Valapatanam wetlands of north Kerala P O Nameer in his paper on the conservation of wetland water fowls of Kerala, with special reference to the Ramsar sites of Kol and Vembanad wetlands analyses their ecological and socio-economical significance Various aspects of marine pollution and their impact on the Kerala coast are discussed by N Chandramohan Kumar while Biju Soman deals with the health problems along the coastal belt

There are three papers in the volume discussing the socio-economic aspects of the coastal wetlands C Bhaskaran et al present the results of stake-holder participatory analysis carried out for Veli wetlands, while George Chakachery discusses the role of rural women in Kuttanad and N C Narayanan on the interrelation between political economy and political ecology of Kuttanad

In the second part of the volume, there are 13 papers by young scientists and researchers on a wide variety of topics related to coastal and marine ecology, bio-diversity, oceanography and meteorology, most of which are with special reference to Kerala coast One paper which deserves special mention is by Anu Gopinath et al on the presence of trace elements in the coral ecosystem of Lakshadweep Archipelago which shows increasing contents of toxic metals like cadmium, lead and zinc in the waters around the islands The source of this pollution has been traced to the diesel and oil used for power generation in the islands This is a warning signal since the coral reefs which are highly sensitive to such metals need to be protected

There are two papers at the end, on the theme of disaster management that was discussed at the open forum M K Prasad in his brief note emphasizes the need for preparing a rapid assessment of the impact of tsunami and similar disasters on the coastal ecosystems and for strictly implementing the Coastal Zone Regulations Another important aspect discussed was the role of media in disaster management, especially in the context of last year's tsunami G Sajan's paper discusses this aspect and also stresses on the need for an alliance between the media and research/ scientific institutions and proposes a media strategy for future

So far there are few books which deal with such a wide variety of problems and issues on coastal and marine environment of Kerala This book can bridge that gap to a great extent With high quality papers laden with valuable information, this volume in a compact and handy paperback edition can serve as a good reference book for students and researchers in these fields It will definitely be a valuable addition to any library

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ANNOUNCEMENT

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GAS HYDRATES – A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF ENERGY

The National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) is organising the above conference during 27-28 June, 2006 at Hyderabad For further details, please contact Dr Kalachand Sain, Gas Hydrates Group, Cyber Building, NGRI, Hyderabad - 500 007 **Phone:** 23434700 Ext 2519, **Email:** gashyd_06@yahoo co in, **Website:** www gashydngri06 org