

COASTAL ENVIRONMENTS: PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES. K.S. Jayappa and A.C. Narayana (Eds.), 2009, I.K. International Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 280p.

Human civilization has been concentrated in coastal regions since pre-history; and it is natural that study and documentation of coastal systems occupy a nodal position in the study of natural systems. No other environment on the surface of earth is as dynamic as the coastal systems. Besides rich ecosystems, marine resources and mineral wealth, coastal systems are a gate-way to international trade; but at the same time are perhaps the most fragile and sensitive to natural processes. On this background, at first sight, the title and subject of the volume pulls the interested student to it.

As described by the editors in their opening chapter, this is a compendium of contributions to a National seminar organized in 2003, coupled with a few invited articles. It is a bit disturbing that it has taken almost 6 years for this volume to be published and the consequent antiquity of the compilation was surely undesirable. Some of these contributions have –*in some form or the other*– already appeared elsewhere and consequently, one does get a feeling of déjà-vu when reading through some of the articles.

The 20 contributions have been clubbed into 5 sections, namely Coastal Resources; Coastal Landforms; Sediment Transport and maintenance dredging; Coastal Erosion and management; and lastly Applications of RS & GIS and Flora in Environmental Geosciences studies. Without exception, the authors are all renowned for their expertise and knowledge in the subjects of their individual contributions and this adds to the depth of the contents in each of the articles.

At the cost of appearing critical, it was difficult to understand the logic of including the last contribution on the Coastal ‘Gondwana’ in this volume. This article focuses entirely on the review of the palaeontological contents of the Gondwana sediments occurring in the eastern coastal regions. Notwithstanding its possible value on a stand-alone basis; this article is a misfit in this volume.

Some of the articles are particularly worthy of mention. The study by Jayappa, Vijaya Kumar and Avinash Kumar

on the evolution of the coastal landforms of southern Karnataka is a meticulous study of multifarious inputs in demonstrating both micro and macro changes that have occurred along this region. Besides demonstrating very effectively how multi-temporal data can be used to study such subtle but significant changes that evolve over decades; they have effectively touched upon the actual changes and the cause-effect relationship. This well illustrated article will be referred to by all involved in such studies. Similar is the contribution of M. Kamath on the along-shore sediment transport and its impact on major ports of India. It not only identifies the problems related to sedimentation in ports and the remedial dredging methods, but also leads further into discussions on the ‘disposal issues’ of the dredged sediments. Along with the article on Breakwaters (by Kiran Shirlala, Subba Rao and Radheshyam), the inclusion of the engineering aspects of coastal zone management in this volume is invaluable. It was interesting to read the contribution on the Miramar Beach by Mascarenhas and Ingole in context of the anthropogenic stresses encountered by beach systems, and the impact of the same on the beach ecology. The concerns expressed by Sridhar on the bio-resources of coastal sand dunes are extremely valid and deserve serious attention of the policy makers.

All in all, the editors deserve to be congratulated for putting together a compact but comprehensive volume of the coastal environments. Their efforts in the scientific editing and those by the publishers to ensure a (practically) error-free publication are creditable. The neat and compact layout, clarity of the graphics throughout the volume; and lastly the detailed ‘index’ at the end help in making the volume an eminently ‘readable’ one.

The volume is recommended for all interested in coastal environments and will surely be a useful addition to all libraries.

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