

India's Coastline Expands Significantly Over Five Decades

India's coastline has witnessed substantial growth over the past five decades, increasing from **7,516 km in 1970 to 11,098 km in 2023-24**, according to a report by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). This expansion—an impressive **47.6% rise**—is attributed to the adoption of a new methodology for measuring coastal features, reflecting the dynamic and diverse nature of India's shoreline.

Key Highlights of Coastline Expansion

1. Gujarat's Dominance

Gujarat led the expansion with its coastline almost doubling, growing from **1,214 km in 1970 to 2,340 km** in 2023. It remains the state with the longest coastline in India.

2. Bengal's Record Percentage Growth

Bengal's coastline increased by an exceptional **357%**, rising from **157 km to 721 km**, marking the highest percentage growth among all states and Union Territories (UTs).

3. Tamil Nadu Overtakes Andhra Pradesh

Tamil Nadu's coastline grew from **906 km to 1,068 km**, surpassing Andhra Pradesh's revised length of **1,053 km**.

4. Puducherry's Shrinking Shoreline

Contrary to the trend of expansion, Puducherry's coastline, including areas like Karaikal, Yanam, and Mahe, shrank by **4.9 km (10.4%)**, reflecting the impact of erosion and other geographical changes.

5. Kerala's Modest Increase

Kerala recorded the smallest growth, with an addition of just **30 km**, representing a **5% increase** in its coastline length.

New Methodology: A Game-Changer

The updated methodology, developed under the guidance of the **National Maritime Security Coordinator**, incorporates modern techniques to measure complex coastal formations such as:

- Bays

- Estuaries
- Inlets
- Other geomorphological features

Unlike the straight-line measurements used in 1970 by the **National Hydrographic Office** and **Survey of India**, the new approach provides a more accurate representation of India's diverse maritime boundaries.

Maritime Economy and Biodiversity

India's expansive coastline plays a critical role in its **maritime economy and biodiversity**, spanning the mainland and several islands. It is bordered by:

- **The Bay of Bengal** to the east
- **The Indian Ocean** to the south
- **The Arabian Sea** to the west

The coastal regions include:

- **Nine States:** Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Bengal
- **Four Union Territories:** Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands

These regions support vital activities such as trade, fisheries, and tourism, contributing significantly to India's GDP.

Boost to Infrastructure and Economy

States like Andhra Pradesh have been focusing on port development to enhance economic activities. Projects such as **Ramayapatnam**, **Krishnapatnam**, and **Kakinada Gateway** are expected to:

- Improve logistics
- Drive industrialization
- Create employment opportunities
- Foster urbanization

India's growing coastline not only underscores its geographical and economic evolution but also emphasizes the need for sustainable coastal management to preserve its ecological balance.

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