



## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** Discuss the provisions related to Island Protection Zone, 2019 recently notified by the government. Critically examine their impact on the Islands of India. (250 words)

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### Approach

- Briefly introduce Island Protection Zone, 2019 notification.
- Describe the provisions of new notification.
- Give the impact of new notification.

### Answer

#### Introduction

- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notified Island Protection Zone (IPZ) 2019 for Andaman and Nicobar.
- It brings the norms for Andaman and Nicobar at par with Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) 2018 norms for other islands.

#### Body

- Island Protection Zone (IPZ) 2019 for Andaman and Nicobar **allows for eco-tourism projects 20 meters from the high tide line (HTL)** in smaller islands like Baratang, Havelock and Car Nicobar, and at 50 meters in larger islands.
- Notification brings the norms for Andaman and Nicobar **at par with coastal regulation zone (CRZ) norms** for other islands close to the mainland and backwater islands where an NDZ only 20 meters from HTL has been stipulated.
- Notification **allows for eco-tourism activities** like mangrove walks, tree huts and nature trails in **Island Coastal Regulation Zone IA** (classified as the most eco-sensitive region of the islands which includes turtle nesting grounds, marshes, coral reefs etc).
- The notification **relaxes development norms** in the islands compared to the IPZ notification of 2011, which stipulated a no-development zone (NDZ) of 200 meters from the HTL for all islands.
- The notification **allows for construction** of roads, roads on stilts by reclaiming land in exceptional cases for defense installations, public utilities or strategic purposes in eco-sensitive zones. It states that in case construction of such roads pass through mangroves, a minimum three times the mangrove area destroyed during the construction process shall be taken up for compensatory plantation of mangroves elsewhere.
- The notification **allows a number of new activities in the inter-tidal zone** between low tide line and HTL including land reclamation and bunding for foreshore facilities like ports, harbors, jetties, wharves, quays, sea links, manual mining of atomic minerals, and mining of sand for construction purposes with permission from local authorities in non-eco-sensitive sites.

#### Impact of new Notification

- **Tourist - indigenous population Conflict:** The islands are also home to protected indigenous

populations. There is likelihood of conflicts when Andamans Islands are further exposed to tourism activities.

- **Ecological Impact:** There will be an impact on the fragile ecology of this region like marine biodiversity including corals and turtle nesting sites as footfalls and construction activities increase. Solid waste management and disposal is critical area of concern, in such a fragile area, once the tourism projects are running.
- **Public consensus:** Locals and green activist protest as there was no public hearing before this notification was drafted.
- **Geostrategic location:** Andaman Islands are strategically located in Indian Ocean, with opening of islands to greater tourist activity there will be higher pressure on security agencies in the area considering its strategic importance.

## Conclusion

- These changes in Island Protection Zone rules are aligned with the Niti Aayog's proposal for holistic development in the Islands. However, Government should ensure that development should be sustainable and through involvement of people in deciding the pace of development.
- Government should introduce avenues for addressing the concern of environmental activists as well as the local communities.

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