

## India to play major role in ocean, climate research

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India is set to emerge as the hub of activity for ocean and climate related research and services in the Indian Ocean region, which has 50 countries and nearly 25 percent of the world population or over 1.5 billion people living around it.

It has been given the leadership role in the Indian Ocean Global Ocean Observation System (IOGOOS), which was formally launched in Mauritius during November 4-9. About 30 countries took part in the meet, which broadly discussed issues related to climate and ocean.

Specific projects that would generate marine data and information in the form of advisories, maps, atlases, etc which would be useful to the shipping, aquaculture, fishing, tourism industries, waste discharge, hazard warning and monsoons, will be worked out among the participating countries, according to Dr K. Radhakrishnan, Director of the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), here.

The Indian Ocean region is 'under-observed' in comparison to the Pacific and Atlantic. However it plays a very important role in the global monsoon system. The IOGOOS is the latest among the 12 global alliances or GOOS, in which the United National Environment Project (UNEP), the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) are major drivers.

The potential undersea resources in the Indian Ocean region need to be mapped for exploitation by the member countries, said Dr Radhakrishnan, who was elected Chairman of IOGOOS at Mauritius. With the Secretariat of IOGOOS to be located at INCOIS, India can leverage its established technological capability both in the form of satellite observation and oceanographic studies to play an important role, he told *Business Line*.

Other than Australia, India is already a leader among developing countries in developing value added oceanographic services. The potential fishing zones (PFZ) service now covers the entire Indian coast with regular forecasts. Similarly, the monsoon forecast and ocean information bank are other services in the making, he said.

Submersibles, manned and unmanned are the most technologically advanced gadgets for scooping up useful data from the deep seas. India is one of the few countries, which has this technology. Its national data buoy programme, deploying of sophisticated floats, Doppler radars and the remote sensing satellite network, which can skim the seas, hold potential of making a dent in the understanding of the ocean.

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