

Report: IOI Ocean Academy Programme in INDIA

In the year March 2022, TERRE Policy Centre partnered with International Ocean Institute (IOI) and IOI Ocean Academy- India with the aim to conduct Online Ocean Academy Courses in India. IOI Ocean Academy Courses conceptualizes to upgrade the ocean knowledge of the target amateur-enthusiastic audience by providing an understanding of regionally and locally relevant ocean information at an appropriate level. IOI Ocean Academy Programme under the title **Ocean Literacy: *Know Your Planet Beyond the Land***, is a ten-day course, commenced on Monday 18th March 2024 and concluded on Monday 01st April 2024 (weekdays).

Name of the course: Ocean Literacy: *Know Your Planet Beyond the Land*

Dates: 18th March 2024 – 01st April 2024 (weekdays)

Time: 03:00 pm – 05:00 pm IST

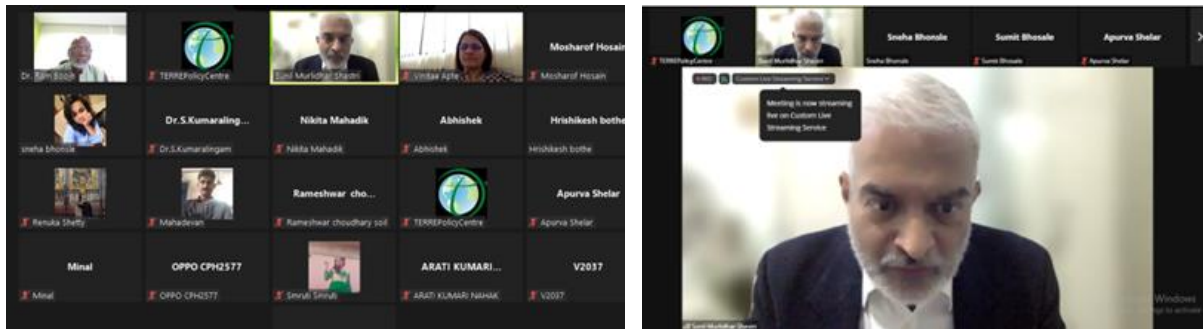
Language of course: English

Course participants: College students-/ diverse professionals

Platform: Zoom Meeting

Preparation:

The course was designed and advertised to be taught to amateur enthusiasts from a wide spectrum. Targeting audiences with genuine interest, regardless of any formal education or academic degree, but keen on gaining knowledge on ocean and its related topics. For a good spread of applicants, the course details were advertised largely on the social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and the same were circulated through a range of mailing lists. To increase the outreach, TERRE published news in print media as well as on online news portal. The language of advertisement was English and Marathi. For registration an online application form was created on Google Drive where prospective participants were able to fill the form. A total of 41 applications were received. For ease of communication and conveying the course relevant information, a WhatsApp group of the participants was created. Among the applicants, there was a varied composition with respect to educational levels, profession, and age. While most were between 20s-40s; some were above that, while a few were in school around 12 years old. The composition included males and females representing, teaching faculty, environmentalists, research scholars and even students.



Course Outline: Ocean Literacy: *Know Your Planet Beyond the Land* (20 Hours, 10 Days)

The course was divided into four parts.

Part 1: One Ocean- a place of wonder, beauty & danger and of critical importance to life on Earth.

- Session 1: The Ocean in Simple Terms
- Session 2: Concepts of Sustainability
- Session 3: Goods and Services provided by the Ocean.

Part 2: Governing Our Ocean- a delicate balancing act: meeting our needs sustainably and for the benefit of all, today & in the future.

- Session 4: Governing Global Commons
- Session 5: Threats to the National Security arising from the Sea
- Session 6: Ocean Governance & Law of the Sea
- Session 7: Strategic Importance of the Ocean

Part 3: Local or Audience Relevant Topics

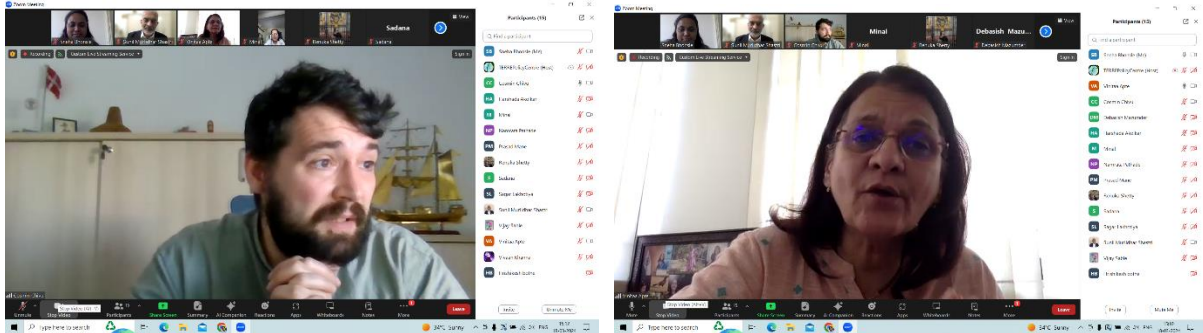
- Session 8: Conservation Issues in Coastal Habitat
- Session 9: Mangrove Ecosystem: Insurance in Climate Change
- Session 10: Living with the Ocean & Improving Coastal Protection

Part 4: What next on this matter? Conclusion and the Way Forward

- Knowledge Assessment Test

Initiation the Course:

The 05th batch of the course conducted by TERRE in partnership with International Ocean Institute (IOI) commenced on 18th March 2024. Dr Vinita Apte, Founder Director, TERRE Policy Centre, welcomed the guest, mentors and all the participants and congratulated them for taking the first step in conservation, i.e. education. The opening session was addressed by Mr. Cosmin Chiu, Programme Manager, IOI, Malta. Addressing the participants, he conveyed the aim of IOI and the purpose of conducting such courses. He appreciated TERRE and the participants for being part of this initiative. One of the course contributors, Mr Sunil Murlidhar Shastri, Consultant, Educator and Speaker in Ocean and Environment Governance, congratulated and encouraged the participants for joining the course. Speaking about his work and experience, he also mentioned about his association with Elisabeth Mann Borgese and her enduring legacy.



Conduct of the course:

Summary:

The course was divided into four parts, the first two-parts comprising of seven sessions was conducted by Mr. Shastri, Dr Ram Boojh and Dr Captain K.K Agnihotri. Considering the composition of the participants, Sunil addressed the complex concepts in simple terms. Making the audience familiar with the ocean-related terms, he conveyed our dependency on the ocean by mentioning the goods and services that are provided by the ocean. Considering our changing lifestyle, he taught us how-to live-in harmony with the ocean as well as highlighted the ocean threats. He mentioned about some of the coastal defences, risk management strategies, hard vs soft defence as well as maritime piracy and Blue Economy. Sunil also focused on governing global commons, elaborating the arising conflicts, the opportunities, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, its history, and tenets for sustainable development. Dr Ram Boojh explained the relationship between economy, environment, and society is complex and often interdependent. He also focused on achieving

sustainable development that requires collaboration across sectors and stakeholders, including governments, businesses, and communities, to ensure that economic development is both inclusive and environmentally responsible. Dr K.K Agnihotri explained about the difficulties to recognize the potential causes of national insecurity, including organized criminal groups and the effects of natural disasters. He emphasized on the need for strengthening law enforcement and disaster response capabilities, improving critical infrastructure resilience, and addressing underlying socioeconomic vulnerabilities.

The second part which was conveyed by Mr Sunil Murlidhar Shastri, and Dr Ram Boojh. Their courses delve into the complex concept of balancing our needs. They focused on the topics based on the concepts of National Maritime zones explaining about the rights and duties within the area of jurisdiction and also the importance of the Ocean.

It highlights the importance of acknowledging and fulfilling our own needs, while also being considerate of others' needs. The course emphasizes that meeting our needs should not come at the cost of others' wellbeing or happiness. The balancing act requires self-awareness, empathy, and communication skills to navigate different situations effectively. By mastering this delicate balance, we can foster healthy relationships, build trust, and create a more harmonious and fulfilling life for ourselves and those around us.

The third part of the course focused on Conservational issues in the coastal habitats, which was addressed by Mr. Sabyasachi Chakraborty from Nature Environment and Wildlife Society (NEWS), Kolkata. In his session he made the participants acquainted with the mangrove ecosystem, explaining about its significance. The knowledge of ocean biodiversity is incomplete without understanding the importance of conservation and the challenges conserving the coastal habitats. With a positive note, he also how the communities are working in harmony to protect our planet and its various ecosystems.

This course is intended to transform the way society perceives the oceans by reorienting education, highlighting the gaps in knowledge, values, and behaviours that are needed to achieve sustainability.

Session 1: The Ocean in Simple Terms

On 18th March the course started, and Mr Sunil Murlidhar Shastri conducted the course with the simple topic: Description of the World Ocean in simple terms, where he explained plate tectonic theory, introduced the pacific ring of fire and various other terms making the participants familiar with the diverse topics.

Session 2: Concepts of Sustainability

On the second day of session (19th March), Dr Ram Boojh emphasized the critical importance of sustainability for our future. He introduced the ABCD of challenges framework, though its specifics weren't elaborated. Dr Boojh also discussed the role of organizations like the Indian Ocean Rim Association in promoting regional cooperation for sustainable development. He stressed aligning efforts with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, he highlighted the concept of creating value capital, combining various assets like human, intellectual, networking, brand, and globalization capital to drive progress. Overall, his talk offered insights into the interconnectedness of sustainability, regional cooperation, and value creation.

Session 3: Goods and Services provided by the Ocean.

On the third day of the course (20th March), Mr Sunil delved into the myriad goods and services offered by the ocean. He explored the coastlines of various countries and elucidated the significance of continental shelves, providing a detailed explanation. Additionally, he discussed the concept of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), delineating their importance in maritime governance and resource management. Mr. Sunil further delved into the topic of ports and harbours, shedding light on their role in facilitating trade and commerce. He also covered the diverse resources present in the ocean, ranging from minerals to marine life, and elaborated on the energy resources harnessed from the sea. Moreover, he emphasized the essential services provided by large marine ecosystems, underlining their ecological and economic importance. Overall, Mr. Sunil's session provided a comprehensive overview of the ocean's contributions to various aspects of human life and the economy.

Session 4: Governing Global Commons

Fourth session (21st March) was conducted by Mr Sunil, he led a discussion on governing the global commons, with a focus on delineating rights and duties within areas of national jurisdiction and the concept of the common heritage of humankind. He underscored the imperative of adopting sustainable and equitable practices in utilizing natural resources, while also respecting the sovereignty of nations in managing their resources independently. Mr. Sunil delved into the notion of the common heritage of humankind, which encompasses resources deemed to belong to all humanity, such as the deep seabed and outer space. He highlighted the intricate challenges and complexities associated with governing these resources and emphasized the necessity of international cooperation and collaboration among nations to ensure their responsible and equitable utilization for the benefit of all. This session

shed light on the crucial principles and frameworks necessary for effectively managing and preserving the global commons.

Session 5: Threats to the National Security arising from Sea

On the fifth day (22nd March) of the session, Capt. Dr K.K. Agnihotri delved into the complexities surrounding the identification of potential causes of national insecurity, including the threats posed by organized criminal groups and the ramifications of natural disasters. He emphasized the necessity of adopting a multifaceted approach to address these challenges effectively. This approach entails bolstering law enforcement capacities, enhancing disaster response mechanisms, fortifying critical infrastructure against potential risks, and tackling underlying socioeconomic vulnerabilities. Dr Agnihotri underscored that by taking proactive measures in these areas, we can mitigate the adverse impacts of such threats on national security, thereby fostering a more stable and secure future for our nation.

Session 6: Ocean Governance and Law of the Sea

On the 6th day of the session (26th March) Mr. Sunil continued his discourse, this time focusing on ocean governance and the law of the sea. He elucidated the intricate framework of regulations governing maritime activities, including the delineation of national maritime zones and areas beyond national jurisdiction. Mr. Sunil provided clarity on terms such as straits, archipelagic waters, and islands, crucial for understanding maritime law. He highlighted how the Law of the Sea has evolved, creating new terminologies and delineating numerous maritime zones beyond the original two. Delving into each zone in detail, he offered a comprehensive understanding of their significance and regulatory implications. Overall, Mr. Sunil's session provided valuable insights into the complex legal framework governing the world's oceans.

Session 7: Strategic Importance of Ocean

On Seventh day (27th March) Dr Ram Boojh took the floor to elucidate the strategic significance of the ocean, particularly focusing on the Indian Ocean region. He highlighted the notable transformations occurring in this region, emphasizing their profound strategic implications. Dr Boojh underscored the critical need for collaborative efforts among countries in the region to uphold stability and security effectively. This entails bolstering cooperation in maritime security, fostering economic development and investment, and resolving territorial disputes through peaceful channels. By emphasizing the importance of regional collaboration and diplomacy, Dr Boojh articulated a pathway towards ensuring the stability and prosperity of the Indian Ocean region.

Session 8: Conservation Issues in the Coastal Habitats

On the Eighth day (28th March) Mr. Sabyasachi Chakraborty led the discussion, focusing on the coastal regions and underlining their significance and our dependency on them. He provided an overview of the ecosystem services rendered by coastal areas, emphasizing their crucial role in supporting various aspects of human life. Mr. Chakraborty elaborated on the diverse habitats found in coastal regions, including mangroves, mudflats, rocky and sandy shores, coral reefs, and sand dunes, among others. Each habitat was thoroughly explained, highlighting its unique characteristics and ecological importance. Furthermore, he delved into the diverse biological components inhabiting these habitats, such as seaweeds, sponges, sea anemones, barnacles, and gastropods, elucidating their interactions and ecological significance. By offering insights into the intricate ecosystems of coastal regions, Mr. Chakraborty underscored the importance of conservation and sustainable management practices to preserve these vital ecosystems for future generations.

Session 9: Mangrove Ecosystem: Insurance in Climate Change

In his discussion on March 29, 2024, Mr. Sabyasachi Chakraborty shed light on the invaluable role of mangrove ecosystems, particularly emphasizing their significance as a form of insurance against the impacts of climate change. Mangroves, characterized by their unique ability to thrive in coastal intertidal zones, serve as natural buffers against storm surges, coastal erosion, and flooding. They act as a crucial defence mechanism, protecting coastal communities and infrastructure from the adverse effects of extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change. Additionally, mangrove ecosystems contribute to carbon sequestration, helping mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and combatting climate change. Mr. Chakraborty's understandings emphasized the importance of preserving and restoring mangrove habitats as part of broader climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, highlighting their resilience and adaptive capacity in the face of environmental challenge.

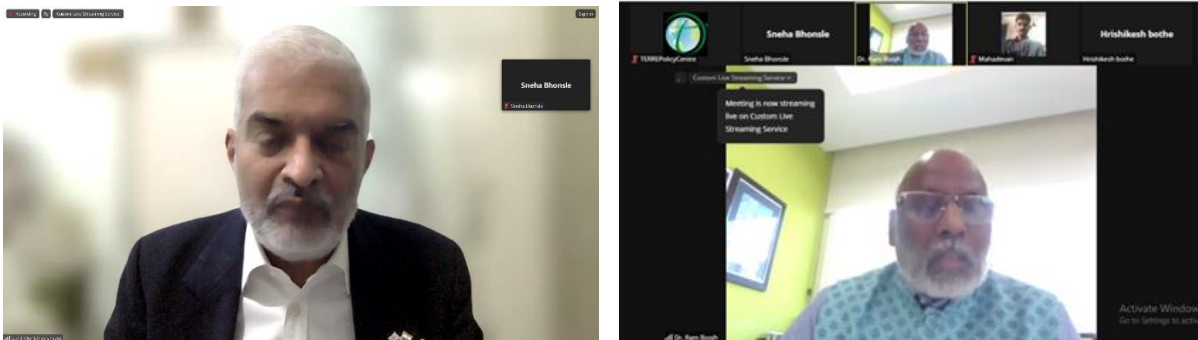
Session 10: Living with the Ocean & Improving Coastal Protection

On the 10th day i.e. on (01st April), the session was conducted by Dr Ram Boojh addressed several critical topics concerning coastal regions, including coastal flooding, erosion, and accretion. He elucidated the significant risks faced by coastal cities due to these phenomena, emphasizing the existential threat they pose to their survival. However, Dr Boojh didn't solely focus on the risks; he also provided insights into coastal defence strategies and risk management approaches. He delineated between hard and soft defence mechanisms, discussing their respective merits and applicability in mitigating coastal hazards.

Additionally, Dr Boojh drew attention to the challenges confronted by Small Island Developing States (SIDS), highlighting their vulnerability to climate change-induced impacts on coastal areas. He supplemented his discussion with pertinent facts about SIDS, emphasizing the urgency of addressing their unique challenges in the context of coastal resilience and adaptation efforts. Overall, Dr Boojh's session provided a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted issues surrounding coastal risks and the imperative of proactive measures to safeguard vulnerable communities and ecosystems.

Knowledge Assessment Test

On the same day of the course (01st April), the concluding session was organized in the presence of Mr Sunil Sir, Dr Ram Boojh, Dr K.K. Agnihotri and Dr Vinita Apte and all the participants. Giving a summary of all the ten sessions, an assessment test of the participants was conducted. The 05th batch of the Ocean Literacy Course was concluded with vote of thanks. The certificate of participation is awarded to all the participants and sent by mail.



Why Are Oceans so Important?

- ❖ Oceans make up over 70% of the Earth's surface.
- ❖ There are over 700,000 different species of animal that live in the ocean. It is important to protect the oceans to make sure their habitats are safe.
- ❖ The ocean is also full of tiny plants which help to produce oxygen, which we need to breathe.
- ❖ Oceans also provide food for many creatures, including humans!