

Climate Change and Rising Sea Level: Need for an International Regime for Displaced People and Geoproperty Rights

Prabhakaran Paleri

No.7, Castle Rock Villas, Chevayur (PO), Kozhikode-673017, Kerala, India
ppalери@hotmail.com

Abstract —*Sea was at an inconceivably low level in the ancient world. The migratory routes traversed by the humans were over hard grounds all around. Suddenly the sea level rose. It was a strange phenomenon for the ancient people. They could not figure out the reason. The sea level continued rising for a long period. The people reflexively drew back to higher grounds. Today, the sea level is again rising. People know the reason. But they do not have a place to retreat or means to recover their losses. The world is delimited by territories fortified by sovereign laws. This paper is centred on this fact. Individuals, groups and national governments will lose geoproperty if their countries are inundated by the rising sea water. When the low lying entities submerge underwater, the high ground countries will face a different kind of overflow—refugees from the sunken world. There will be many collateral issues. One of them will be the sudden spurt in the unlawful act of human trafficking and smuggling. Among the various geopolitical entities, only Maldives and Kiribati have started raising alarms at the international level. Every one heard it, but no one played heed to their plight. People can be displaced internally or externally. The nations that go underwater will generate externally displaced people who will have to relocate elsewhere. The nations that may face migratory influx should be compensated for accepting such refugees. Can it be by transfer of titles of the sunken world? It is too early to mention. An international regime, as coherent as the Law of the Sea or as an adjunct to it, may be able to protect the interests of the people who lose their nations and properties, and of the nations who provide them refuge under humanistic consideration.*

Keywords— Global warming and climate change, Geoproperty, Human trafficking and smuggling, Refugee status.

I. INTRODUCTION

There are various observations on global warming and climate change. There are agreements, disagreements and opportune manoeuvres to gain economic-political advantage in the name of global warming and climate change in the geostrategic line up of nations. In the midst of this clamour, the real issues that are awaiting the humans could get dissolved. A specific problem associated with climate change is the displacement of population in many countries along with loss of geoproperty under water. The victims will range from individuals to the states. Entire nations may vanish in some cases. Some of the nations have already expressed their concerns and continue to do so. The plight could happen any time or, rather, it is already on. There are no pragmatic resolves envisaged so far by national as well as international governments, organisations or communities to handle the threat. This is an issue that would place the entire world in jeopardy when it comes about.

The world is yet to appreciate the seriousness of sea level rise in its clear perspective. Compulsive optimism to contain panic is acceptable under special circumstances. But there are scholars and authorities who are vehemently sceptical on the projected issues. “Isn’t Mars warming up?” some may ask kindling ignorance over enthused scepticism (Paleri, 2009). Notwithstanding many such arguments and associated debates, global warming and climate change are not the topics that could be ignored at policy level. There is a need to raise voice. Responsible institutions, seminars and symposiums need to reach out not only to the governments but also to the people to shatter the inertia of complacency. It should not be once-in-a-year awareness activity. To that extent, this paper is a poser to those concerned.

As mentioned, opinions vary. To quote a recent example, the academic-analyst Kanti Bajpai, writes

in *The Times of India* (June 21, 2014) about climate change effects on the countries along the tropics in South Asia and Southeast Asia. According to him, in a zone stretching to north of India to North Africa, a deadly brew of physical, demographic, economic and political change is festering in a cauldron that will soon explode. He states that this cauldron has been kindling and smoldering for some years, stretching back at least to the Arab Spring, but events in the East and Southeast Asia and now in the heart of Europe in Ukraine have obscured the flammable mix, at least till now. He calls it a new arc of crisis extending from South Asia to the Middle East and terminating across the Mediterranean to the Maghreb. According to him the warmed up situation is partially due to the climate change which also includes the socio-political climate change. His findings on the ongoing (2014) Syrian imbroglio and the Iraqi situation as well as the South Asian incidents of anarchy are partially due to the rising temperatures that are inducing climate change. The pointers are the environmental pressures including draught and water issues. He argues that environmental issues have implicated the problems in Pakistan and India's Maoist insurgency. Under the present geopolitical scenario, the greatest challenges, according to the author, are not in the Baltic or Eastern China Sea and South China Sea but along the equator where there is political anarchy, failed governments and deteriorated governance. According to Bajpai, climate change is one of the causes for this deteriorated socio-political situation. Whether the causative attributes of global warming and climate change can be extended to everything that leads to failed governance or not, the fact remains that the world has started getting the "sinking feeling" associated with climate change already. It is not restricted to a small arc along the equator but the entire world across it in both hemispheres.

II. RISING SEA LEVEL AND THE WORLD ORDER

The threat associated with the rising sea level need to be appreciated and accepted in real terms as long as global warming is an acknowledged reality. It is evident from the various protocols and regimes on emission control and carbon footprints. The effects of rising temperature are visible from the Arctic to an interior village far from the sea coast in West Bengal, India. The ice is

thinning at an unusual rate in the Arctic that could change the temperature and salinity of sea water and the direction of the ocean currents that balance the global climate and natural environment. The natural levees of the internal waters in the tropics breach swamping the land over them. There are apprehensions in India about the sea devouring the deltas of Sunderbans, the world's largest mangrove forest extending into the neighbouring Bangladesh. Inundation of coastal India displacing people is a reality (Das, 2008). India is seriously concerned about climate change and its effects. While the case of India is partial and localised, it may not be so for small island states devoid of higher grounds and room to get around.

The land was widely spread and interconnected all over in the ancient world. The sea level rose along with the transformation of the planet. It was a mystery to the people in the ancient days (Blainey, 2000). They simply watched and retreated to safer places when the seawater swamped their land and habitats. Today, in the contemporary world, the people are aware in advance that flood waters will come uninvited but cannot think of repeating the act of their ancient ancestors for obvious reasons. Primarily, they are bound by state boundaries and national laws that do not permit cross border demographic movements. The population have increased many times. The demographic density is high, especially near the coastlines and internal waterfronts linked with the sea. Even internal migration is a difficult choice because of ethnic and various socio-economic reasons. Outsiders are slim customers to the local population, the insiders, under the waft of the territorial instinct. Territorial instinct is a primordial signature in not only humans but also various other social life forms. The Clash of displaced life forms is already being witnessed in the ocean. Ocean reflects life on the living planet. Though the human population is highly dynamic, their basic instincts related to territory are primarily static. Local population do not welcome outsiders to come and settle with them anywhere in the world. There are many islands, and coastal and waterfront areas waiting to vanish under the sea and remain there for a very long time. The vanquished population of such entities will be vehemently blocked by hard-hitting laws of the places where they are likely to seek refuge from the fury of nature.

From these basic discernments, it can be appreciated that the effect of sea level rise can dangerously cascade inviting issues that have never been seriously visualised by the national and the international regimes in the past. In the olden days, a disaster could eliminate a human system along with the property they owned in moments. There are many examples of human settlements vanishing along with the people. If the story of Atlantis was mythological and that of Pompeii archival, the fate of the Indonesian island of Krakatau was relatively recent. Krakatau vanished underwater without trace in 1883. *Kaveripoompattinam*, the city much acclaimed in the Tamil epic *Poompuhar*, on the coast of today's Tamil Nadu in India was said to have gone underwater in the Krakatau tsunami. Such disasters were sudden and immediate. Compared to them, sea level rise is a slow process. It gives time. Many islands around, belonging to various geopolitical entities, have already vanished. Indonesia is faced with such situation. Still there is a kind of complacency among national and international governments and communities to think wishfully that sea level rise is not a serious threat. The world does not have an action plan. The UNCLOS, the umbrella law of the sea, does not refer to the consequences of sea level rise and the change in the ocean order. In fact it could further complicate the issues. This paper does not look at them elaborately to avoid marginalisation of the primary topic.

Understanding the nature and characteristics of sea level is important to appreciate the complexity of the situation. Sea level is a reference point in deciding over the ocean property dimension of a geopolitical entity. Ocean property (Paleri, 2002) is the integral element of the ocean comprising various constituents that is to be maximised by integrating maritime security with national security in national governance (Paleri, 2014). It is not relevant to this paper, whereas the nature and characteristics of the sea level are important. Almost everyone has a fair idea of the term 'mean sea level.' They know that heights on the ground are measured in relation to the mean sea level. A rise in sea level means a rise in mean sea level. Or is that so? The mean sea level, anyway, is the average mean height of the sea in relation to a reference benchmark. Defining the benchmark and accurately measuring the mean sea level is an intricate process. Within this complexity lies the

change in mean sea level that attributes to the real change in the sea level. What the common person perhaps may not know is that the mean sea level does not remain constant over the surface of the entire Earth. For example, the mean sea level of a canal that passes from one sea to another may stand at different heights on either end. The Panama Canal that connects the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific Ocean stands at a difference of 20 cms mean sea levels at both ends (internet, 2009). There will be variations of mean sea levels on the surface of the Earth for different reasons at any given time. Further up is the global changes added to sea water levels. The ocean may gain or lose water by melting or formation of ice; the earth may move up or down relative to the sea level without any change in the volume of water in the ocean by tectonic movements, thermal buoyancy, drying up of ground water, melting of ice sheets, etc. While the technical term used for explaining the former is 'eustatic', the latter is termed 'isostatic.' Isostatic changes and subsequent sea level variations are more or less regular. Global changes in the sea water level by thermal expansion and salinity variation in the oceans is called 'steric'. All these means that the world can sink and rise for various reasons and that need not always be accompanied by an increase in sea water volume all the time. But there will be an increase in sea water volume and reduction in salinity once the change is due to global warming. It further implies that local mean sea level rise and global sea level rise have to be studied separately. Both are equally important in deciding the geoproerty impacts.

III. GEOPROPERTY

Geoproerty, in this study, is about land property and the rights the individuals, groups and governments exercise over it. The geoproerty rights of nations have been a matter of great importance since the days when nations formed. The issue of land has been at the centre of human destiny from the very beginning. At the height of it, property right, besides being a national and citizen issue, also features in the geostrategic context of a nation. The geoproerty rights continue as sensitive issues in most parts of the world. It is a matter of reference in any conflict anywhere. Borderlines and boundaries are drawn and redrawn. Behind such activities lies the urge to claim "another inch more" of geoproerty. Losing an inch, even to nature, therefore, is a grave

matter. Land is the ultimate terrain for all humans under the land clasp syndrome whether it is dry over the surface or unseen under water (Paleri, 2014). But in the world where the climate is changing for the worse, the very existence of human race itself is being affected in many parts of identified territories. Here the underwater property might not have much sheen. But the one on the surface will decide human habitats and demographic serenity. Under such conditions the idea of sunken land property may surface, if not the land itself. This makes the situation more precarious for a nation that could be a victim of sea level rise.

To reiterate, geoproerty, under the context of this paper, means land property and associated rights and ensembles. The term was founded by author Geoff Demarest to mention property ownership as an issue of national security and strategy (1998). Property according to Demarest is more than things people own. It is the mass of rights and duties that associate persons with things especially land. Geoproerty is the key element in conflicts. He looks at land property as an explanatory keystone. The idea can be correlated to military theories of taking and retaining a land terrain. Land property is a part of belief for holdings as a resource in every religious and political mindset. For example, in Islamic law, legitimacy of land property and sanctity and right to defend it is recognised (internet, 2009). In the original Marxist theories, property is owned by the state. Demarest considers property a useful tool in international relations. Property is attached with rights and duties in a human system. Geoproerty rights underline human struggle for survival. There is violation of human rights in arrogation of property by the powerful including the state. Property and struggle in relation to it are the root causes of conflicts between people and people based on rights. The conflict can also be between the people and the state. In spite of such understanding, the duties of the state and international community towards those who lose geoproerty to nature under rising sea level due to climate change are not yet examined by any national or international regime. When the entire country goes under water, the geoproerty lost belongs to the people of that nation. This also includes those under the ownership of the government or any other organised group. The aftermath is not similar to rescuing the people

from a sunken ferry. The ferry did not belong to the passengers or crew. From many such random reservations, it can be seen that the scenario is not vividly imaginative but descriptively critical and abominably realistic when climate change opens its jaws to devour land starting from the bottom along the gradient. It is a kind of reverse flow like the plasmic behaviour of fire against gravity. Sea level rise and subsequent saline inundation will cause damages to geoproerty and destroy habitats, but the displaced life forms are likely to outlast the deluge. The people will outlast their nation’s physical existence. Humans will certainly continue albeit the erosion of land under their feet. What then? What will happen to quality life? Where will the survivors go? Will they be able to migrate to another nation as people who lost their nation to the vagaries of nature carrying their rights to their lost geoproerties with them? What will they be known as? Will they be refugees as defined by international law? Under what condition the host country will accept them? Is it possible if they surrender their rights to the lost geoproerties to the country of refuge? If so will such geoproerty of a sunken country amount to the country itself under international law?

According to a study there are 278 territorial entities in the world—national and non-national territories included (Paleri, 2014). The number can increase or decrease with time. There is only one ocean. It is delineated into five divisions for convenience of governance by the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO). Out of them, all but 48 that are landlocked are open to sea. They are either coastlands or islands. Coastland is a term used to differentiate entities that are neither islands nor landlocked. Every entity, irrespective of its status and geolocation is exposed to the vagaries of the ocean. The distribution of the geopolitical entities is given in table. 1 (Paleri, 2014).

Table 1. Geopolitical entity distribution

	Distribution of Geostrategic entities	Numbers
1	Ocean divisions	5
2	Member States of the United Nations	193
3	External territories of nine member States of the UN	73
4	Others	12

	Total	278
5	Landlocked	48
6	Coastlands	129
7	Islands	101
		278
10	Entities with single ocean link	211
12	Entities with multi-ocean link	19
13	Entities with Arctic Ocean link	9
14	Entities with Atlantic Ocean link	127
15	Entities with Indian ocean link	49
16	Entities with Pacific Ocean Link	65
17	Entities with Southern Ocean link	2

One of the island territories, Bassas da India, in the Indian Ocean, goes underwater during high tide. The atoll belongs to France. It is not inhabited but can legally implicate the French claim of surrounding territories if underwater during low tide too. It can generate new issues in the Law of the Sea regime. That could happen if sea level rises beyond tidal variations in that part of the world. The question whether a nation as the owner of a geoproperty can claim territorial and other jurisdictional rights in the ocean around it when it is completely under water will make an excellent study in international law. What if France raises the Bassas by deep reclamation? This creates a feeling that reclamation of sunken or sinking land properties could be a solution. But there could be much cheaper or acceptable ways of retaining and claiming geoproperty rights of sunken land. Nations have to investigate. When an island comes up at sea because of tectonic movements or other forces under the sea, nearby nations are in a hurry to claim them. This causes maritime disputes. Claiming years later what was legally one's own at one time will be a different matter altogether. It will require legal sanction that sees beyond constructive total loss of a property. Such legal frameworks do not exist today.

The state of other islands need not be identical to Bassas da India. Within the entities that are partially flooded by sea level rise, people can ideally shift retreating to higher grounds as the Palaeolithic people and their successors did. It is a kind of palaeo-option. It is not possible for

islanders who may lose their entire nation. Most of the small islands in the ocean are low lying. The highest point in Maldives is 2.4 m according to the World Fact Book of the Central Intelligence Agency (2009). Every one of the 1,192 islands of Maldives along with its 394,000 strong population will gasp for breath if the sea level rises a few centimetres (2014). The density is large in the 286 sq km area of Maldives. The symptoms of possible demographic dislodgment were visible as a biomodel (Paleri, 2002) in the aftermath of the 2004 Asian tsunami. In Maldives, only nine islands reportedly escaped from flooding being on the lee side of the tidal wave, and not by higher elevation (internet, 2009). The tallest wave reported in Maldives was 14 feet high during the tsunami. The symptoms are clear and present, though the situations in which the nations will flood could be different. Sea level rise is different from flash floods or cyclonic and tsunami inundations. The Maldivians are obviously worried. The anxiety was reflected in the underwater show of the then president Mohammed Nasheed who called for an underwater meeting of his cabinet on 17 October 2009 to raise the voice against rising sea level in an attempt to draw the attention of the world towards their plight (internet, 2014). Their future is at stake. The meeting hasn't changed the scenario.

Kiribati is another geopolitical entity that has been lamenting for the attention of the world towards similar compulsions for a long time. The island nation comprises 32 atolls and one raised coral island in 811 sq km land area (CIA, 2009). The highest point is at an unnamed location on Banaba at 81 m (CIA, 2009). According to Anote Tong, the President of Kiribati since 10 July 2003, "the problem is getting worse" (internet, 2014). The population is 104,488 (July, 2014). Geographically, Kiribati is a unique nation. It is the only country that is geostrategically located in all the four hemispheres. The islands straddle the equator as well as the international dateline. But, it couldn't be long before it disappears from the map of the world. The people of Kiribati (I – Kiribati) would have to be rehabilitated elsewhere. Already large part of the island nation is inundated by saline water making cultivation impossible. It will submerge if sea level rises at the present rate. Kiribati is a paradise that is waiting to be lost if climate change is more than just a faddish imagination of the modern day doomsayers. If

real, the impact of sea level rise will be global. The effects will depend upon the geolocation of the entities and the profiles of their respective land terrain. Where will the people go when their countries simply goes underwater? For the people of Kiribati, sinking of their country is a menacingly pressing reality. The changes are going to affect the daily lives of the residents who stand at the verge of being extinguished along with their culture, thus remaining scattered in the world in suspended cultural animation. It is not something that they consider as an opportunity to gain residency as a more coveted nationality. It could become a need associated with an emergency. If not politically resolved, they can fall prey to the heinous perpetrators of the transnational crimes of human smuggling and human trafficking. In the absence of a competent international regime to help the victims of displacement, the tentacles of unlawful demographic movements may spread further worldwide.

In 2013, there was a unique case in a court in New Zealand where, for the first time in the world, an alleged climate refugee from Kiribati sought a decision for remaining in New Zealand on expiry of his visa on the grounds that his country was sinking under climate change. The court, however, rejected his appeal on the ground that he was not eligible as he was not a refugee under the UN Refugee Convention. The court also observed that he was not going to face persecution on return as his position was not different from any other Kiribati national. The argument was “unconvincing,” the court observed. Presently there is no law under which similar displaced personnel can qualify for asylum (Paleri, 2014). But such people do face persecution by nature.

Kiribati and Maldives are not the only nations that should be sensitive to sea level rise. Even landlocked nations have reasons to worry. They too are maritime nations. They are influenced by the ocean for survival (Paleri, 2014). For example, Laos, a landlocked country, can get flooded with the rise of Mekong River linked to the sea. The rivers that are the lifelines of the countries can also turn to be their destroyers. The Amazon can be flooded. The Great Lakes can dig deeper into the United States and Canada. Bangkok in Thailand is already experiencing rise in the meandering Chao Phraya River. Ingress of water into the city of Bangkok has to be controlled by artificial levees. Soon it could be dykes as in the land of the Dutch.

Anoto Tong, the president of Kiribati is convinced that his country is going to be a modern day Atlantis by the end of the century, with some difference.

IV. EMISSIONS AND GLOBAL WARMING

The modest advisory of the United Nations is that the global temperature rise can be limited to two degrees Celsius if the world imposes an annual cut of 40 to 70 percent in green house gas emissions by 2050 (AFP-JJI, 2014). But two degree rise can still be fatal for various low lying land areas. It is not just an economic issue that could be tackled by macroeconomic experts. It is more a matter of the elements of national security (Paleri, 2002) including demographic security. People’s survival is at stake. A certain section of human race is slowly being lead to becoming “refugees” of nature, more specifically sea level rise. Such people are not yet defined in legal terms. This will make them difficult to claim refugee status for secured asylum or finding a land of refuge. Environmental refugee is a lighter word if not a misnomer. The counter argument is on economics substantiated with facts on record that show the sea levels have been rising at varying levels every year for the last 10,000 years quoting the world climate report (Birdnow, 2009). According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) there is no significant acceleration of sea level rise (2001). That means there was continuous sea level rise with not much of acceleration that may or may not have been caused by human activity but more by the natural variability. Are we sure? If that is so what is facing the nations that are losing geoproerty to the sea? Is that poor farming methods or that they chose wrong nations to live? Of course, nationality by birth is not a choice. There are many questions to ponder. But the reality is that there are people already slipping backwards when land contorts under their feet almost every day.

Another question is, “Are there an upside to global warming?” The melting ice, while on one side, may sink and wipe out nations, on the upside may open up new territories. That could create new found geoproerty fit for capital investment as a factor of production and generation of wealth. It may open up the northern sea route changing the ocean routes and sea lines of communication. Another example will be the transformation of Greenland. It is the world’s largest island. It is part

of the Kingdom of Denmark since 1721. The melting glaciers around it are revealing economic opportunities and a possibility of becoming a free country if Denmark is willing. In all probability, Greenland may become an independent entity (Funk, 2009). The Inuit natives of Greenland call their territory '*Kalaallit Nunaat*,' Land of the People. It could be the name given to the new territory if it gets out of Danish control. Today, thanks to global warming, Greenland is getting a new geographical dress code. Melting ice has extended its shipping and fishing seasons, opened up avenues for mining and farming boom, exposed usable geoproerty in real estate terms, increased the potential for tourism (disaster tourists could watch massive glaciers sliding into the sea generating thundering noise) and, above all, made the Greenlanders hopeful of a major economic shift by boosting personal income. Also it won't matter to them that a distant Kiribati or Tuvalu goes under the water released by their glaciers. Greenland is rising as hard rock. Here also lies an interesting aspect though may not be exactly factual: for a loss in geoproerty under nature's vagaries, there is also a gain elsewhere. Is there a way to balance it in geoproerty rights? Can Kiribati buy Greenland? Of course not, but Kiribati nationals could think about it.

V. REGIME FOR THE SINKING WORLD

Erosion of geoproerty under natural consequences is a matter of great concern for which the world has not identified a solution yet. Anthropogenic global warming and other reasons of land depletion puts moral and economic onus on developed and more secure nations. So where does the problem lie on geoproerty erosion and how the world will react when low lying nations like Kiribati or Maldives vanish from the scene? Is it an acceptable idea? Will it be demographic amalgamation instead of demographic shift at the end? It is not arguments but the signs of the grim reality of the sinking world that is visible from anywhere—on a shore line, deep in the interior on the banks of unsettled rivers or from an ice-capped mountain. The good news is that the responsible world has understood the truth that is inconvenient in many ways. The intricate world is likely to go under water one day taking with it all that is visible today even according to the ancient scriptures. What the responsible people can do in the meantime is to examine the repercussions. Though humankind is intelligent and can see

through the future to prevent or preempt most of the calamities, it can also fall prey to misgivings and judgments under prejudice and pressures of governance. Geoproerty management under falling environmental conditions is more than managing economy in recession. The tipping points of environment are worse than a decline in economic stability. They are mostly irreversible. The entropy is high. Under such conditions managing geoproerty will go beyond the hope that precludes every meeting and discussion in balancing global warming. In this scenario, the emphasis has to fall on the prime property available to humankind—the land. It also involves geoproerty rights.

Many nations and cities are already at risk. Records are available. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) met in Bonn June 4 through 15, 2014 on its fortieth session. As usual, the business discussed was reducing greenhouse gas emissions and strengthening climate resilience. There was no reference to safeguarding the interest of the ordinary person on the ground that will be flooded or nations that is going to be swallowed by the sea. Saving the planet from overheating is one and protecting lives and geoproperties when the attempts do not work out is another. Action has to go together especially when the chances are more for the latter. Here is where the world needs a specific regime for managing the effects of sea level rise. The regime should identify the measures for the world community for demographic rehabilitation without loss of ethno-cultural identities, retention and sharing of geoproerty rights and possible recovery of lost properties on a subsequent date generations later.

The world is yet to think about them. The voices from Kiribati and Maldives are too feeble to be heard. Either the terms of reference of UNFCCC need to be amended to include the issues of managing the damages to the geoproerty and human settlements caused by global warming or the United Nations should urgently open up the second phase of the law of the sea—a convention to examine the law of the sea against the certainty of the rising sea level and the consequences thereon. There is an amazing array of issues waiting to be resolved either by prevention or preemption of advance threat perception, or by mitigation in case the world falls prey to the threat. This will include the following: -

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- Identification of geoproerty and demographic targets of sea level rise.
- Identification of locations of refuge.
- Identification of considerations for the holders of such locations.
- Identification of systems for keeping ethnic means and cultural diversity.
- Earliest freezing of maritime zones with reference to baselines as defined under the law of the sea with reference to a select time period.
- Establishing all recognised and internationally accepted ocean related geoproerty claims including maritime zone claims in perpetuity even when underwater if the cause is sea level rise due to climate change.
- Balancing geoproerty gains and losses on equity principles internationally.
- Establishing liabilities, compensation and fund for the victims of sea level rise including nations.
- Establishing the status of existing maritime disputes vis-à-vis the proposed Convention

V. CONCLUSIONS

The world should know by now that sea level rise is a reality and numerous people are likely to get displaced. The calamity could be better handled if the United Nations urgently looks at a legal regime as an adjunct to or independent of UNCLOS. This paper limits the propositions without elaborately looking into finer points since the objective is to introduce the topic related to an impending calamity that will be slow, silent, stealthy and almost steady like a predator. Besides, it is early to identify specific issues as the interests of the nations will vary. The preparation and execution, therefore has to follow the norms accordingly.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I express my gratitude to the Chinmaya Institute of Technology, Kannur, Kerala, India, where I presently teach management as adjunct professor, for supporting me in teaching, research and other academical activities on socially and strategically relevant topics.

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BIOGRAPHY OF AUTHOR



Author is former director general of Indian Coast Guard with also naval and marine customs background. Presently he is an academician, author and researcher in management and strategic subjects. He has been a visiting senior research fellow in India and abroad and member of corporate boards. He has authored seven books and various research papers.