



Azim Premji University Faculty Seminar Series

presents

"Frenemies: unpacking neoliberal support and its consequences for wildlife conservation in the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary, eastern India "

Speaker

Madhuri Ramesh

Date: March 01, 2017 (Wednesday)

Time: 9.30 am to 11.00 am

Venue: Seminar Hall, 10th Floor, Pixel A, Azim Premji University

About the Talk

In the past few decades, the value and scale of marine fisheries has greatly increased in developing countries because they supply most of the global demand for seafood. Simultaneously, the numbers of marine wildlife killed as by-catch during industrial fishing operations has also risen and international concern over such mortality has often been mobilised to impose a significant barrier to export-oriented trade. As a result, many supplier countries have been forced to adopt mitigation measures or intensify wildlife conservation efforts in order to safeguard their marine fisheries from major economic loss.

In this presentation, I will describe how what is now considered an iconic marine protected area (MPA) for olive ridley turtles, the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary in eastern India, was actually established to defuse such a trade-related crisis in 1997. In view of this history and the increasing influence of neoliberal actors with respect to the management of the sanctuary, I go on to argue that such MPAs serve as ecological fixes i.e. token spatial solutions that remove environmental barriers to the accumulation of capital. Therefore, they provide minimal protection to wildlife and instead, their main role is to shield industrial development from environmental scrutiny and severely restrict both conservation discourse and practice.

About the Speaker

Madhuri Ramesh is completing a PhD in Conservation Science and Sustainability Studies at the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE). Her current work deals with the political ecology of marine turtle conservation in Odisha. In the past she has worked in diverse geographic regions and cultures, and these have contributed to her long-standing interest in inclusive forms of conservation.