

Sambhar Lake

August 30, 2021

In news- As per the recent report Sambhar lake is fast losing its glory to illegal mining of salt, encroachments, increasing vegetation and declining migratory birds.

Key findings of the report

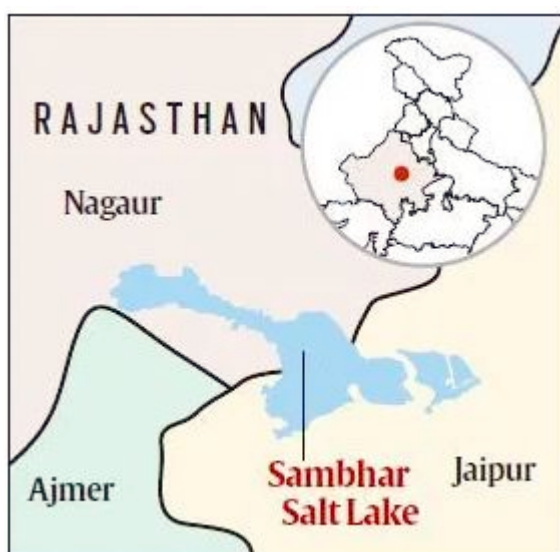
- The report was prepared by the department of environmental science at the Central University of Rajasthan.
- It claimed that **by 2030 the lake will deteriorate to an extent of an 'unrepairable'** situation causing an ecological imbalance in the entire region.
- The researchers have **used the satellite imaging procured from the US government from the base year 1971 to 2021** to state that the wetland has decreased from 159.6 kilometres to just 17.4 kilometres in the same period.
- The report reveals that every year the **lake is shrinking at the constant rate of 4.23%** and going by this rate in 2059 it will completely disappear from the map.
- **The next 8-9 years are important for conservation, else by 2030 it** will achieve a stage that will make it impossible to even move an inch backwards.
- The report indicating major changes from 1971 to 2021 says that the **wetland decreased by 142 kilometres.**
- 30% of the Sambhar Lake's area had been lost to mining and other activities, including the illegal salt pan encroachments.
- As per the scientific analysis of the four types of data- soil, water, birds, and remote sensing data, the **researchers concluded that the situation is heading towards an environmental disaster leading to catastrophic** for surrounding human habitat, flora and fauna.
- The study has recommended an urgent action to restore

the lake's ecosystem for protecting the birds and biodiversity as well as the salt production.

- The **team has recommended that Sambhar Lake Development Authority** should be formed by taking experts from multiple agencies.

About Sambhar Lake

- It is located in Rajasthan.
- The lake straddles Nagaur and Jaipur districts and borders on the Ajmer district.
- Sambhar Salt Lake is India's largest saline lake and is the source of most of Rajasthan's salt production.
- It surrounds the historical Sambhar Lake Town.
- It is surrounded by the Aravali hills on all sides.
- The lake receives water from six rivers: Mantha, Rupangarh, Khari, Khandela, Medtha and Samod.
- Lake has a 5700 square km catchment area.
- The lake is an extensive saline wetland, with water depth fluctuating from as few as 60 centimetres (24 in) during the dry season to about 3 meters (10 ft) at the end of the monsoon season.
- It occupies an area of 190 to 230 square kilometers based on the season.



Ecological significance of the lake

- Sambhar has been designated as a Ramsar site (recognized wetland of international importance) because the wetland is a key wintering area for tens of thousands of pink flamingos and other birds that migrate from northern Asia and Siberia.
- The specialized algae and bacteria growing in the lake provide striking water colours and support the lake ecology that, in turn, sustains the migrating waterfowl.
- There is other wildlife in the nearby forests, where Nilgai move freely along with deer and foxes.