

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

RAJYA SABHA

STARRED QUESTION No.*184
TO BE ANSWERED ON 6TH AUGUST, 2025

Impact of deep sea mining on fisherfolk in Kerala

***184. Dr. John Brittas:**

Will the Minister of *Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying* be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry has assessed the impact of deep sea mining projects proposed to be implemented off Kerala's coast on marine biodiversity and fisherfolk livelihoods;
- (b) whether consultations were held with the Kerala Government, coastal communities and other stakeholders regarding threats to fishing grounds like Kollam Parappu and its socio-economic impact on lakhs of fisher families ;
- (c) if so, the details thereof, including the nature of consultations, studies undertaken and outcomes recorded;
- (d) if not, whether the Ministry plans studies before extraction begins; and
- (e) the steps taken to protect fish habitats and fisherfolk interests amid proposed deep sea mining?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING

(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH)

- (a) to (e): A Statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to the Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 184 regarding "Impact of deep sea mining on fisherfolk in Kerala" put in by Dr. John Brittas, Hon'ble Member of Parliament for answer on 6th August, 2025

(a) to (e): Ministry of Mines, Government of India has enacted the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002 (OAMDR Act, 2002) which came into effect in 2010. The OAMDR Act, 2002 has been amended through OAMDR (Amendment) Act, 2023.

As per the provisions of the Offshore Areas Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 2024, no production operations shall be undertaken except in accordance with a Production Plan. The Production Plan, *inter-alia*, includes Environment Management Plan indicating baseline information, impact assessment and mitigation measures. Ministry of Mines has informed that, in order to protect the livelihood and safeguarding the interest of fisherfolk, the concerns of fishermen and local communities will be specially addressed during the preparation of the Production Plan and Environment Management Plan, which every lessee is mandated under the rules to submit before commencing exploration or production operations.

As per Rule 5(2) of the Offshore Areas Operating Right Rules, 2024, prior consultation with stakeholder Ministries/Departments, is mandatory for Ministry of Mines before notifying any offshore area for grant of operating right. In the present case, the Ministry of Mines has consulted related Ministries/Departments including the Department of Fisheries, and Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), before notification of blocks for auction. The Department of Fisheries, Government of India had advised the Ministry of Mines for safeguarding the fishing grounds and to address the livelihood aspects of the fishermen during preparation of Production Plan as well as in the Environment Management Plan. It was also advised by Department of Fisheries, Government of India that the mining activities must be carried out only outside areas such as the fishing grounds of traditional fishers.

The three offshore sand blocks of the Kerala coast selected are situated beyond 12 nautical miles from baseline. As on date, no mining has ever taken place in the offshore areas including territorial waters, continental shelf or in Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of India.

Section 16A of the OAMDR Act, 2002 provides for establishment of Offshore Areas Mineral Trust as a non-profit autonomous body. Accordingly, the Offshore Areas Mineral Trust has been established vide S.O. 3246(E) dated 09.08.2024. The coastal States have been made members of the Governing Body and Executive Committee of the Trust. The funds accruing to the Trust shall, *inter alia*, be used for research, studies and related expenditure with respect to offshore areas; for mitigating ecological impacts resulting from operational activities; for disaster relief in offshore zones; and for supporting individuals affected by exploration and production operations.

Government of India gives utmost priority for ensuring overall development of Fisheries sector and socio-economic development and welfare of fishers and providing all possible assistance to fishing communities. Under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) implemented by Department of Fisheries, Government of India, during 2020-21 to 2024-25 the fisheries developmental projects of the Government of Kerala worth Rs. 1358.10 crore have been approved. The major activities approved for Kerala include development and modernization of 12 Fishing Harbors, livelihood support to 1,79,316 fishers during fishing ban period annually, boats and nets to traditional fishermen (200 units), skill development and capacity building programmes (179) to the fishers, fish farmers and stakeholders (7,930), Artificial reefs (42 Units), Matsya Seva Kendras (10 Units), Sagar Mitras (222), etc. Besides, 9 Integrated Modern Coastal Fishing Villages and 6 Climate-Resilient Coastal Fishermen Villages have also been approved for Kerala State.
