

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

RAJYA SABHA

STARRED QUESTION No.*108
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10TH DECEMBER, 2025

Deep-sea and offshore fishing

***108. Shri S Niranjana Reddy:**

Will the Minister of **FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the country remains an underperformer in the deep-sea and offshore fisheries sector, according to recent Niti Aayog report;
- (b) whether Government is aware that the country's fisheries fleet in high-seas operations is limited to only 4 Indian-flagged vessels as compared to more than 1000 vessels with Sri Lanka and Iran;
- (c) the key reasons identified for the country's limited presence in deep-sea and offshore fishing; and
- (d) the measures being taken by Government to enhance the country's capacity and self reliance?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING
(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH)**

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

Statement referred to in reply to the Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 108 regarding "Deep-sea and offshore fishing" put in by Shri S Niranjan Reddy, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, for answer on 10th December, 2025

(a): The Government of India, Department of Fisheries, has taken up several transformative reforms for the holistic development of the fisheries sector and socio-economic upliftment of fishers and fish farmers in the country. Due to concerted efforts by the Union Government, States/UTs, and fishers and fish farmers, India's fisheries sector has shown remarkable progress. Overall fish production of the country across marine and inland segments has increased by 106.44%, rising from 95.79 lakh tonnes (2013-14) to 197 lakh tonnes (2024-25), making India the second largest fish-producing country. While Inland Fisheries has shown exceptional growth, increasing by 142% during this period, Marine Fisheries, with production of 44.94 lakh tonnes in 2023-24, has registered a steady growth of 36% during this period. As a result of various well thought policies and initiatives of Government of India, India's seafood exports have more than doubled from ₹30,213 crore in 2013-14 to ₹62,408 crore in 2024-25 by showing more than 100% growth.

Notably, the Marine Fisheries sector in the country has been small-scale in nature, and fishing efforts are mostly confined to the nearshore waters. The NITI Aayog report has highlighted the immense potential for further expansion in deep-sea and offshore fisheries. With an estimated potential of approximately 71.6 lakh tonnes within India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), spanning both conventional and non-conventional species, the sector offers substantial opportunities for sustainable growth.

(b): India is a member of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), which is a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) wherein 04 Indian vessels belonging to the Fishery Survey of India (FSI) are currently registered as Authorized Fishing Vessels. It is a fact that the country's fishing fleet presently operates within the EEZ. However, occasionally, some fishing vessels from the Kanniyakumari district of Tamil Nadu have reportedly ventured into high seas beyond the Indian EEZ.

(c) and (d): Fishing in the deep-sea and offshore regions requires technologically advanced deep-sea fishing vessels capable of undertaking voyages of long endurance and a highly skilled crew to operate such fishing vessels. Besides, an enabling regulatory framework for sea-safety and compliance with conservation and management measures of the RFMOs is required to be followed for the fishing of shared fishery resources in the offshore and high sea areas.

The Department of Fisheries, Government of India (DoF, GoI) had introduced a sub-component namely "Assistance for Deep Sea Fishing" in March, 2017 and another component of "Conversion of Trawlers into Resource Specific Deep-Sea Fishing Vessels" in August, 2018 under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) of 'Blue Revolution' to provide financial assistance to traditional fishermen for promoting deep-sea fishing. Subsequently, the financial assistance is also being provided by the DoF, GoI, under the flagship scheme, Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), through States/UTs to traditional fishermen for acquiring deep-sea fishing vessels (DSFVs) and for up-gradation of existing fishing vessels for export competitiveness. Support for DSFVs is also provided by the DoF, GoI, under the Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF). Under the schemes of Blue Revolution, PMMSY, and FIDF, a total of Rs. 895.9 crore worth of projects have been sanctioned towards

the acquisition of 1243 deep-sea fishing vessels (DSFVs) by traditional fishers and for the upgradation or conversion of 1330 existing fishing vessels for export competency. Besides, training and capacity-building for deep-sea fishing have also been supported under the Blue Revolution and PMMSY schemes. The DoF, Gol, has also taken steps towards the creation of fisheries infrastructure and has sanctioned 117 Fishing Harbours and Fish Landing Centre projects with a total project cost of ₹9,917.27 crore to benefit the whole sector and augment fish production and exports.

The Ministry of External Affairs, on 04th November, 2025, has notified the *Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone Rules, 2025* under the *Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone and Other Maritime Zones Act, 1976*. This landmark initiative aims to empower traditional and small-scale fishermen, Fisheries Cooperative Societies, and Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs) to expand operations, harness untapped resources through deep-sea fishing, and access new income streams through processing and exports, thereby enhancing the country's capacity and self-reliance in deep-sea and offshore fisheries.

The EEZ Rules are framed to promote sustainability of marine ecosystem with optimum utilization of untapped fishery resources. Emphasis is also given to promote ecosystem approach for sustainable harnessing of resources in the EEZ and implementation of the conservation and management measures, such as uniform ban on fishing during monsoon or fish breeding season, minimum legal size of fish, bycatch reduction, best practices for reducing post-harvest losses, conservation of fish stocks or rejuvenation measures including sea ranching, installation of artificial reefs, etc. The Rules also prohibit destructive fishing and juvenile fishing in the EEZ to protect the marine biodiversity of our seas.

The Department of Fisheries (DoF, Gol), by adopting the “whole of government approach”, is collaborating with the Ministry of Cooperation through a Joint Working Group (JWG) to promote small-scale fishermen, cooperatives, and fishers' societies in deep-sea fishing, post-harvest processing, and exports. Ministry of Cooperation supports this initiative by strengthening cooperative institutions and facilitating access to cooperative credit through the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC). As an example, in Maharashtra, 14 DSFVs have been supported by NCDC with a total project cost of ₹20.30 crore, including NCDC loan assistance of ₹11.55 crore, PMMSY assistance of ₹6.72 crore, and society contribution of ₹2.03 crore. Adopting this model, two fishermen societies of Mumbai city have recently received 02 DSFVs under PMMSY on 27.10.2025. This initiative serves as a model of cooperative-led development in the fisheries sector, empowering traditional fishermen to venture into deeper waters and advancing India's transition towards more sustainable and economically rewarding marine harvesting practices. The mechanism further reinforces government efforts by facilitating access to credit, modern technology, training, and insurance. It enables small-scale fishermen, societies, and cooperatives to acquire and operate modern deep-sea fishing vessels, while also supporting the establishment of processing facilities.
