

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

LOK SABHA

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1912
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11th MARCH, 2025**

Offshore Mining

1912. Dr. Shashi Tharoor:

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

(a) Whether the Government has conducted any study to assess how the offshore mining operations of construction sand in Kerala will directly affect the economic survival of the fisherfolk in Kerala who depend on traditional fishing for their livelihoods;

(b) If so, the details thereof;

(c) Whether any study has been conducted to study the effects of offshore mining activities on the fish breeding grounds and their migratory patterns; and

(d) If so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING

(SHRI GEORGE KURIAN)

(a) to (d): The Ministry of Mines, Government of India enacted the Offshore Areas Mineral and Development Act, 2002, which came into effect in 2010. As on date there is no mining has ever taken place in the offshore areas including territorial waters, EEZ, continental shelf, etc. Hence no such study is conducted to assess the impact of offshore mining off Kerala coast. In order to conserve the marine biodiversity, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has notified 130 Marine Protected Areas across the coastal states and Islands and 106 coastal and marine sites have been identified and prioritized as Important Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Areas (ICMBAs) to take care of marine species conservation. As informed by the Ministry of Mines, the offshore blocks have been carved out by excluding such sensitive areas. As per the provisions of the Offshore Areas Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2024, before execution of an operating right, the bidders are required to obtain all consents, approvals, permits, no-objections as may be required under applicable laws for commencement of production operations. Further, 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. Three offshore sand blocks off the Kerala coast are beyond 12 nautical miles from baseline and issues related to safeguarding the fishing grounds and the livelihood aspects of the fishermen have to be duly addressed during preparation of production plan as well as in the environment management plan. Further, the National Institute of Oceanography has been designated to study the effects of offshore mining activities in the coast of Kerala.
