

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

**LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 322  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER, 2025

**Excessive Fishing**

**322. Dr. M P Abdussamad Samadani:**

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the alarming decline in sardine resources along the Kerala coastline as reported by Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) and other scientific institutions;
- (b) whether overfishing, juvenile harvesting, climate-induced changes in sea surface temperature and illegal ring-seine operations have contributed to the sharp reduction in stock;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to regulate excessive fishing effort, including enforcement of mesh-size norms, seasonal fishing bans, vessel monitoring and restrictions on high-powered multiday vessels operating close to shore;
- (d) whether the Government proposes a comprehensive sardine stock-rebuilding plan in collaboration with coastal States such as Kerala;
- (e) whether financial assistance, alternative livelihood packages, and community-based fisheries management systems are being provided to traditional fishermen who face severe income loss due to declining availability of sardine; and
- (f) the time by which restoring sustainable stock levels in this crucial pelagic fishery?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING**

**(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH)**

(a) & (b): The Government of Kerala and the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) have informed that the landings of Indian Oil Sardine along the Kerala coast have shown periodic inter-annual fluctuations, with landings increasing from 3.2 lakh tonnes in 2011 to 3.99 lakh tonnes in 2012, followed by a drastic decline to 0.13 lakh tonnes in 2020. Thereafter, the stocks showed clear signs of recovery, rising to more than 0.35 lakh tonnes in 2021, 1.4 lakh tonnes in 2023, and 1.5 lakh tonnes in 2024. Scientific assessments indicate that Indian Oil Sardine populations are strongly influenced by monsoon-driven rainfall and the nutrient-rich upwelling it generates, which supports phytoplankton growth and improves larval survival, growth, and recruitment. The Indian Oil Sardine fishery is known to be highly sensitive to environmental and climatic variations, and therefore shows periodic annual fluctuations in landings. As reported in the Marine Fish Stock Status Report (2023) published by ICAR-CMFRI, the oil sardine fishery in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of India is currently assessed as sustainable.

(c): The Department of Fisheries, Government of India has taken several initiatives to promote sustainable fishing. The DoF, Gol issues advisories to coastal States/Union Territories (UTs) for strict implementation of gear and mesh size regulations as provided under their respective Marine Fishing Regulation Acts (MFRAs), implementation of conservation and management measures such as uniform ban on fishing for a period of 61 days in the EEZ of India for rejuvenation of fish stock. The DoF, Gol has also prohibited the destructive fishing practices like bull or pair trawling and use of artificial lights/LED lights for fishing in the EEZ, and similar prohibitions are also imposed within territorial waters by the coastal States/UTs. The Department of Fisheries, Government of India is also implementing the Vessel Communication and Support System under the PMMSY to enhance the safety and security of fishermen at sea and strengthening of monitoring, control and surveillance measures.

The DoF, Gol has notified the 'National Policy on Marine Fisheries (NPMF), 2017' as a guiding document towards responsible and sustainable fishing across the country. Further, necessary provisions are included by the State Governments in their Marine Fishing Regulation Acts for installation of Turtle Excluder Devices (TED) for protection of sea turtles. Besides, support is provided under the flagship scheme *Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana* (PMMSY) for installation of artificial reefs along the coastal areas in the country, sea-ranching for ensuring sustainability, promotion of deep-sea fishing and mariculture including seaweed cultivation to reduce fishing pressure in nearshore waters. During the fishing ban period, financial assistance is also provided by the Government towards livelihood and nutritional support to the traditional fishers.

(d): The Department of Fisheries, Government of India has not received any such proposal on sardine stock-rebuilding plan from coastal States including Kerala.

(e): The Department of Fisheries, Gol through its schemes provides financial assistance towards holistic development of the fisheries sector and wellbeing of fishers to all States/UTs including Kerala. Under the PMMSY implemented by the DoF, Gol, during last 5 years, the Department has approved fisheries developmental proposals of Government of Kerala amounting to Rs. 1410.40 crore. The approved activities *inter-alia* include various fisheries related activities towards livelihood strengthening and creation of alternate employment such as (i) mariculture, seaweed farming, bivalve cultivation, (ii) establishment of climate resilient villages, (iii) modern integrated coastal villages, (iv) support during fishing ban, (v) installation of artificial reefs for rejuvenation of stocks, (vi) need based training facilities, (vii) deep-sea fishing vessels, (viii) safety kits and communication devices etc. Besides, the State Government is also supporting the traditional fishermen effected by weather and fishing bans through additional schemes implemented at state level. These interventions are envisaged to uphold the livelihood of fishers and ensure sustainable fisheries management.

(f): Does not arise.

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