

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

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION No - 1396

ANSWERED ON 28/07/2026

Traditional Fisheries

1396. Dr. M P Abdussamad Samadani:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that overcapacity and unregulated expansion of the mechanised trawler fleet have severely degraded the inshore benthic environment along India's continental shelf;
- (b) the concrete steps taken to strictly enforce the 5-nautical-mile prohibition zone for mechanised trawlers to safeguard traditional fishers; and
- (c) whether the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) will conduct comprehensive at-sea benthic surveys, rather than relying solely on landing data, to assess true ecosystem health?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING

(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH)

(a) ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CMFRI) has assessed that the trawl-based landings have shown no palpable decline in fish landings during 2021-2025. As per the Marine Fish Stock Status of India (2022) publication of the ICAR-CMFRI, the marine fish stocks of the Indian waters are in good health, and 91.1% of the 135 fish stocks evaluated in different regions of the Indian EEZ were found sustainable.

(b) 'Fisheries' is a state subject, and each Coastal State has its Marine Fishing Regulation Act (MFRA) for governance of fishing activities within the territorial waters up to 12 nautical miles from the baseline, including zoning of fishing areas for traditional and mechanised fishing vessels, mesh-size and gear regulations, seasonal fishing bans, minimum legal-size limits for fish capture, prohibition of destructive fishing practices such as paired/bull trawling and use of artificial/LED lights, and prevention of juvenile fishing. The Department of Fisheries, Government of India is implementing the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), under which activities such as installation of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) in trawl nets for protecting the sea turtles, sea ranching, and installation of artificial reefs in coastal waters towards enhancing fish stocks are undertaken for safeguarding the livelihood interests of traditional fishers. PMMSY also promotes acquisition of deep-sea fishing vessels, open-sea cage culture, and mariculture, including seaweed farming to divert fishing pressure away from the inshore coastal waters.

(c) The ICAR-CMFRI has informed that it conducts long-term monitoring of marine fisheries and ecosystems using a statistically validated, FAO-recommended stratified multistage random sampling design. The ICAR-CMFRI generates high-quality time-series data on fish landings and fishing effort from over 1,300 landing centres along India's 11,000 km coastline to assess fish stock status and infer ecosystem changes. Further, Institute also informed that it implements national programmes on marine biodiversity, benthic ecosystem health, trophic interactions, and the impacts of bottom trawling.
