

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:680  
ANSWERED ON:03.08.2011  
RETRIEVAL OF KATCHATHEEVU ISLAND  
Lingam Shri P.

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu had met the Prime Minister recently and urged him to make efforts to retrieve Katchatheevu Island and the sea adjacent to it and restore the traditional fishing rights of the fishermen from Tamil Nadu; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SMT. PRENEET KAUR)

(a) & (b) The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu met the Prime Minister on 14 June, 2011 and submitted a Memorandum on a number of issues including the Retrieval of Katchatheevu and restoration of traditional fishing rights of Tamil Nadu fishermen.

The Government of India considers its maritime boundary with Sri Lanka settled under the Agreements concluded with Sri Lanka in 1974 and 1976. Both these Agreements were subsequently laid before Parliament. The 1974 Agreement on the demarcation of the International Maritime Boundary Line between India and Sri Lanka as also the Exchange of Letters of 1976 on the issue of fishing rights stipulate that fishing vessels and fishermen of India shall not engage in fishing in the historic waters, territorial seas and the Exclusive Economic Zones of Sri Lanka. Indian fishermen, therefore, do not have the legal right to fish in the waters in Katchatheevu Island. Under the Agreement, Indian fishermen are allowed access to the island for rest, for drying of nets and for the annual St. Anthony's festival. The right of access is not understood to cover fishing rights around the island.