

Title: Need to take Katcha Thivu Island on permanent lease to Sri Lanka and also to safeguard traditional rights of fishermen in Tamil Nadu.

**\*SHRI K.K. KALIAPPAN (GOBICHETTIPALAYAM):** Hon. Chairman Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of this august House the plight of our fishermen in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu, the problems faced by them on the high seas and the steps that are being taken by our dynamic leader and hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr Puratchi Thalaivi to provide safety and security to those hapless poor fishermen and to improve their lot in an effort to ensure progress and prosperity in their lives.

In the recent times, it has become a continuing thing to find the Sri Lankan Navy and Army harming our Indian fishermen who go out to fish in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu. No concrete solution has been evolved as yet and no effort has yielded any positive result to put an end to the problems posed to our fishermen. Fishermen of Tamil Nadu who go for fishing in the high sea waters in the Palk Strait area where Katcha Thivu Islet is also situated are put to innumerable hardship. There is no let up in the violent and brutal attacks on our fishermen in spite of our Government of Tamil Nadu taking it up with the Union Government. Sri Lankan fishermen are also attacking our Indian fishermen in connivance with extremist organisations. Our handing over the Katcha Thivu Islet to Sri Lanka as per the accord reached between our two countries is the root cause of this malady. The then opposition leader and the present Prime Minister of India condemned the handing over of Katchathivu. I would like to remind our Prime Minister of his remarks in this august House on July 24, 1974 against our donating the Katcha Thivu Islet to Sri Lanka.

After our handing over this islet to Sri Lanka following an accord we have lost about hundred of our fishermen shot dead by Sri Lankan security forces. 326 fishermen have been seriously injured and 35 fishing boats have been destroyed. Our catches worth crores of rupees have also been looted. Because of our handing over this islet in our territory to the neighbouring Sri Lanka, the overlapping demarcation of boundaries in the international waters are confusing our fishermen. They are faulted for straying into the other country's area. But at the same time it is quite against natural justice to resort to barbaric attack on innocent fishermen at the hands of Sri Lankan Navy and security forces.

Our founder leader late lamented Dr MGR had depicted the plight of our fishermen in one of his song sequences as to how the lives of our fishermen who are born on the sea shores are adrift in the high seas.

Our leader and the hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr Puratchi Thalaivi has written to our Prime Minister that taking back Katcha Thivu on long lease alone can solve the problem and ensure a lasting solution. She has pointed out that this will facilitate our fishermen to cast nets in and around Katcha Thivu and provide facility to dry our fishing nets. This will also save our fishermen from losing their lives and livelihood.

Hence I urge upon the Union Government to take up with the Sri Lankan Government and take steps to get Katcha Thivu islet on long lease and protect the interests of our Indian fishermen in Tamil Nadu.

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\*Translation of the speech  
originally delivered in Tamil.