

**Title:** Need to ensure safety of Indian fishermen in South-Eastern Coast of Tamil Nadu.

SHRI D. VENUGOPAL (TIRUPPATTUR): \*Sir, fishing in the high seas is the main occupation of several coastal villages, especially in Thanjavur, Pudukkottai, Ramanathapuram, Nellore and Kanyakumari Districts of Tamil Nadu. These villagers from Tamil Nadu who have this traditional occupation from time-immemorial are now facing a threat to their security in the Bay of Bengal, especially near Pak Straits and Gulf of Mannar. As an aftermath of Sastri-Sirimavo agreement, Kachchativu a small islet (which was under the domain of the Indian Princely Kings of Sethupathi Dynasty) was handed over to Sri Lanka. Now it is understood that Sri Lankan Navy set their camps there and shoot at Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu without any provocation. So far, more than 500 Indian fishermen have been killed. Sri Lankan Navy men confiscates the fishing boats of Indian fishermen. They cause huge loss by destroying the fishing nets and looting the catches. This affects fishing industry heavily.

At times they take our Indian fishermen as prisoners and take them to Sri Lankan soil to put them behind bars. Thus the condition of these fishermen is pitiable.

Hence, I urge upon the Government of India to take up this issue with the Sri Lankan Authorities to evolve a permanent solution to ensure security to the life and properties of Indian fishermen who have got natural rights to continue their fishing occupation. They belong to that zone down the centuries which is now very much the Indian Economic Zone and hence Government of India must act immediately.

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\*Original in Tamil