

>

Title: Need to lift the ban imposed on catching of Sea Cucumbers-laid.

SHRI P. MOHAN (MADURAI): Sir, for many centuries our fishermen in our coastal areas have been diving and catching sea cucumbers as a traditional occupation. Livelihood of thousands of such fishermen folk is dependent on these catchments as this has been providing them with job and daily bread.

In the name of conserving rare species in 2001, Government of India banned the catching of 56 kinds of sea organisms including sea cucumber. During the winter session of 2001, when members raised it, certain relaxations were announced. But the ban on sea cucumbers continues still.

It was announced that there would be a review of this ban after three years and the ban would be lifted after five years. But there is no re-look even after 7 years. A single country going for such a ban is not going to serve the purpose when other neighbouring countries are not banning the same. The views of experts on this lopsided ban must be seen in the light of the fact that there is no such ban by Sri Lanka which is just 20 Kms. away from Indian main land. So the ban by our Government is unjustified and meaningless as the sea cucumbers die a natural death after growing for a particular period under the sea. These soft creatures are devoured by crabs easily.

Efforts at saving these species must be restricted by the banning of big ships catching these sea cucumbers in a big way using giant nets. There can be a total ban during their reproductive season. Thus there must be check and balance but not an illogical total ban on fishing sea cucumbers. Protecting the traditional rights of our fishermen is also important along with efforts to preserving various species of the sea.