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Title : Need to withdraw move for providing licence to the Deep see fishing travellers.

DR. K.S. MANOJ (ALLEPPEY): Sir, the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries under the Ministry of Agriculture has issued a notification on 17th May, 2005 inviting application for issuing licences to deep see fishing trawlers. This notification has been issued in the midst of the protest and demands from the part of various fishermen groups, trade unions, organisations and people's representatives to withdraw the existing licences and also to avoid renewing of the licences given to the deep see trawlers.

One of the recommendations of the Murari Committee constituted in 1995 for reviewing the deep see fishing policy was to review the deep sea fishing policy in every three to five years. As per this, the Government has appointed an Expert Group with the Deputy Director General (Fisheries), ICAR as the Chairman. Pending recommendation from this Expert Group, the Government have given licences to the foreign vessels behind the label of Indian-owned foreign vessels. No tenure has been fixed to these vessels. At present, 25 Indian companies have been allowed to acquire 95 numbers of vessels. Also licences given to some of the Indian companies as per the Charter Policy, 1986 are also fishing in the Indian territorial waters and Indian Exclusive Economic Zones. As a result of the over exploitation of Marine resources by the unscrupulous round the clock fishing by these factory mother ships and many baby ships, marine fisheries is facing severe depletion of resources. Various species of fish have become extinct. Out of the marine resources, 58 per cent is distributed in inshore, 34.9 per cent is in offshore and only seven per cent is in deep sea. In order to explore and exploit these resources in deep sea, existing fishing vessels are more than sufficient^[1].

Further licensing of deep sea trawlers will result in encroachment of territorial waters, which is the operational area of traditional crafts, by the deep sea trawlers and over exploitation and depletion of resources. It also creates unrest in this occupational field. This move is also a departure from the accepted recommendation of the Murari Committee Report.

In order to exploit the marine resources in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone, technically upgraded motorised traditional craft is adequate. No factory ship is required for that.

In view of all these factors and pending report of the expert group to review the deep sea fishing policy, I would request the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Minister of Agriculture to abandon the move to issue new licences to deep sea fishing trawlers. They should also withdraw the licences already issued and also the notification issued in this regard. Thank you.