

Title : Problems being faced by the farmers of the fisheries industry in Kerala due to ban on non-iodized common salt.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR (CALICUT): Sir, the ban on non-iodized common salt has led to several problems. The entire fisheries sector in Kerala and elsewhere are in standstill because of the non-availability of ordinary salt. As you know, the 'dry fish' industry cannot survive without salt. According to the Government Order, non-iodized salt cannot either be bought or sold or displayed. The fisheries sector has now to use iodized salt. It is not at all possible to run units in the fisheries sector using iodized salt by paying Rs. 500 per sack instead of Rs. 80 for common salt. Many of the units have already been closed and many more are on the verge of closing. Forty per cent of the fish catch in Kerala is small fish and it cannot be stored without salt. Kerala is having thousands of such small units where the small fishes are processed, stored and distributed. Most of the workers in this sector are women and they have lost their livelihood. Salt is also required for the functioning of ice plants in large quantities. The price of ice has gone up steeply and fisheries units are not in a position to buy ice blocks at such an uneconomical price.

The Boat Owners' Association and other Associations have already given a memorandum to the hon. Prime Minister and are planning to go on strike. I urge the Government through you, Sir, to relax the provisions in the Order banning non-iodized salt and save the livelihood of thousands of people in the fisheries sector.