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Title: Need to form a separate Ministry for Fisheries Development-laid.

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA) : Formation of separate Ministry for Fisheries Development is a matter which requires urgent attention of the Government of India. At present Fisheries Department is a part of the Ministry of Agriculture. As a major Department, Agriculture ministry can not focus on fisheries sector and it is treated as a minor subject. If a separate Ministry of fisheries is formed, it would provide massive fillip to the economic development of the fishermen population of the country.

As all are aware India is endowed with vast fisheries resources in terms of a coastline of 8118 kms and 2.02 million sq. kms of Exclusive Economic Zone. These resources are one of the main sources of livelihood for the rural poor, particularly the fishermen community. an estimated 14 million people are engaged in fishing, aquaculture and ancillary activities in the country. The fishermen communities are mostly poor and their living conditions are not good. The estimated fisher folk continues are not good. The estimated fisher folk population of Kerala is 11 lakhs and Alappuzha district is in the first place with a fishermen population of 1.90 lakhs.

India is the third largest produce of fish in the world and the second largest produce of fresh water fish in the world. 20% of fish production in the country is from Kerala. The total value of marine products exported from the country during 2006-07 was Rs. 8363.53 crores.

As the fisheries sector provides livelihood to a sizeable number of people whose living conditions are poor, special and urgent attention of Government is warranted in implementing schemes for their welfare. In the above circumstances, I urge the Government to kindly take urgent action to form a separate ministry for Fisheries Development by bifurcating the Agriculture ministry.