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Title: Need to increase the safety measures for fishermen of Kollam Coast in Kerala.

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you for giving me an opportunity to raise an important matter.

I wish to invite the attention of this august House to a heart-breaking tragedy which occurred in the southern sea coast of Kerala before two days. Due to turbulent sea in Kollam and Alappuzha coasts in Kerala two persons have died and two fishermen are missing along with losses of seven fishing boats and 73 injured on last Sunday.

A large number of fishermen who ventured out into the sea for fishing in country crafts were stranded in the deep sea for many hours as a rare phenomenon of high tidal waves and darkness occurred. The fishermen lost direction and some of the crafts got capsized.

Sir, on the basis of numerous mishaps occurred in fishermen population, including this, one serious issue arises among them now-a-days is that the safety of fishermen in deep sea areas is always insecure. The Government is liable to provide sufficient safety measures to each and every fisherman in the country through using modern technologies along with the timely upgradation of concerned government machineries such as marine enforcement and coast guard.

Sir, lakhs of fishermen in our country are considering fishing as their conventional livelihood. Ninety-five per cent of this community belongs to poor families and a number of them are still living as just similar to the tribes. They are not aware about modern systems supported to fishing including weather forecasting or rescue systems and marine security measures. A number of developed countries are providing modern information systems and arranging rescue forces along with the help of marine researchers and space science. In India we are providing only nominal safety measures to them. These systems are insufficient and the machineries are not helpful in time, when an emergency arises.

So, I would request the Ministry of Defence, through you, that the operations of Coast Guard should be strengthened as it is a major Department which is liable to protect the lives of fishermen through timely actions. So, the Government should make availability of sufficient force, equipment and infrastructure in various coastal areas in States including Alappuzha and Kollam districts as these coasts are considered unhinged with tidal waves also. Also the operations of marine enforcement should expand to more areas including Kollam and Alappuzha, as it needed on the basis of such frequent episodes.

So, I would urge upon the Government to send a fact finding team with experts to Kerala to study the unnatural phenomenon which occurred day before yesterday in Kerala.