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Title: Need to assess and take measures to protect marine life and livelihood of small fishermen communities.

SHRI NILESH NARAYAN RANE (RATNAGIRI-SINDHUDURG): Traditional fishermen of Konkan coast of Maharashtra have been facing livelihood problems due to Chinese and Korean fishing net and mechanized fishing vessels such as trawlers. Wrong fishing practices, highly mechanized fishing, overfishing and destruction of ecological base of fishery pose serious threat. Marine ecological sustainability is the larger issue but the specific issue is the problem of mechanized fishing and its impact on livelihood security of lakhs of small and poor fishermen of Konkan, especially of Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts.

Besides, I want to highlight the problem of marine ecological damage caused by environmental degradations. Periodic changes in the natural phenomena such as ocean currents, water temperature and oxygen layers affect the ecological and environmental balance. Continuous human intervention, indiscriminate mechanized fishing along with environmental degradation has depleted the marine resources. In addition, marine ecological pollution, caused by direct or indirect dumping of excessive sewage, industrial effluents and toxic materials into the coastal sea has also deleteriously affected marine resources. Another area of concern is climate change and its resulting impact on marine life. Advanced countries are doing higher level research and studying the pattern of changes in fish breeding locations on the sea bed while no such research is apparently being done in India.

I urge upon the Government to commence a scientific study at national level to assess the damages done by climate change and environmental/ecological degradation on marine life. Urgent policy steps need to be taken to protect the livelihood of small fishermen communities.