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Title: Need to review the proposal to permit the MNCs to conduct deep-sea fishing in the Indian Seas.

SHRI RABINDRA KUMAR JENA (BALASORE): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to raise an important issue which is affecting almost the entire country, particularly, the people of coastal areas including that of Odisha.

In November, 2014, the Union Government, Ministry of Agriculture has issued a notification by which foreign vessels are allowed to operate outside 12 nautical miles of the State sea territory and 250 nautical miles of the Exclusive Economic Zone. These foreign vessels that have been permitted to do fishing not only pose threat to the marine security of our country but also affect lakhs and lakhs of fishermen who live in the coastal areas.

Madam Speaker, in my State of Odisha alone there are more than 1.5 lakh fishermen who depend on fishing, 2,500 deep-sea fishing boats are fishing in the deep water and 40,000 gill are fishing. So, what does this mean to the livelihood of such people? The livelihood of such people gets completely demolished. They are sitting today on the seacoast and crying. Lakhs and Lakhs of people are just crying because their livelihood has been affected.

So, my question to the Government is this. In whose interest are we working? Are we working for the interest of our own fishermen, of our own people or are we working for the interest of the foreign vessels? They come, catch fish and go home, and take the foreign exchange away. Not only that but they also intrude into the sea territory of our State. The State Government, by and large, have no means to check them day in and day out.

Madam Speaker, through you, I would urge upon the Union Government to take cognizance of this serious menace immediately and withdraw this notification in order to do justice to the people of this country and also to ensure marine security. Thank you.