

Title: Need to create a separate Ministry of Fisheries with two separate wings marine fisheries wing and inland fisheries wing.

SHRI P. SANKARAN (CALICUT): Sir, I may draw your kind attention to the need for a separate Ministry of Fisheries in India. You know that India is blessed with abundant resources in the field of fisheries, both marine and inland in the world scenario. Our country has a coast line of 8060 kilometres comprising of ten States and three Union Territories and Exclusive Economic Zone of over two million square kilometres.

From the time immemorial, fishing has been the profession of several communities who reside on the coastal belt and elsewhere on the banks of inland sectors. As many as one crore people from fishermen community are engaged in traditional fishing activities and in motorised and mechanical boats etc. We have a vast potential in fresh water, and brackish water farms are also having a good scope.

During 1994-95, India earned Rs. 3,600 crore by way of exports from fisheries sector. The export figures in the current financial year are already showing a downward trend, amounting to nearly Rs. 300 crore only, that is ten per cent of the earnings made in the year 1994-95. This has happened for the first time during the last twenty years.

India holds seventh rank in the world and second in the inland fish production. The fisheries sector has gained importance world over in the last few decades. In view of the changes, there are full-fledged Ministries exclusively for fisheries in many developed and developing countries like Japan, Peru, Norway, Philippines etc.

* Not Recorded

Unfortunately, in India, the Fishery Development Programmes are presently supervised by a division in the Ministry of Agriculture. The fisheries sector should be handled with more responsibility and authority. So, a separate Ministry for fisheries may be created with two separate wings marine fisheries wing and inland fisheries wing - for better management of fisheries programmes in the country.

It is also suggested that an Indian Council of Fisheries Research (ICFR), National Fisheries Corporation (NFC) and Inland Fisheries Development Corporation (IDFC) may also be set up. It is hoped that in the interest of this great nation, the Government may consider the suggestions made by me to give necessary boost to the fisheries sector.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, the hon. Member has raised a very important issue. I must say that when I was on that side, I had also been supporting this cause. Our Government, in its National Agenda for Governance, has also decided to give enough importance to the fisheries because it is contributing in an unparalleled way. It is employment-oriented. It gives food and also the export earnings. I will communicate the feelings of the Members, and the clapping and thumping which I suppose is from the entire House, to the Prime Minister to look into this demand.