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FISHERIES IN INDIA: A LIFELINE FOR INDIAN ECONOMY

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) is being implemented across all States and Union Territories (UTs) in India for a five-year period, from FY 2020-21 to FY 2024-25. Under this scheme, the Department of Fisheries (DoF), Government of India, has approved fisheries development projects submitted by the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, with a total investment of Rs. 135.17 crore for the period from 2020-21 to 2024-25. The approved activities include the construction of rearing and grow-out ponds, ornamental fish-rearing units, cold storage facilities, the establishment of a brood bank for seaweed, fish value-added enterprises, transport vehicles, and freshwater aquaculture initiatives. Additionally, the scheme includes the development of a smart and integrated fishing harbour at Vanakbara in Diu.



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FISHERY SECTOR IN INDIA:

Category	Details
1. GDP Contribution	The Fisheries sector contributes approximately 1.09% to India's total Gross Value Added (GVA) at constant prices in 2022-23, amounting to Rs. 1,37,716 Crores.
2. Employment	The Fisheries sector provides livelihood to about 16 million fishers and fish farmers at the primary level, with additional employment along the value chain.
3. Contribution to Agricultural GVA	Fisheries contribute around 6.72% of the total agricultural GVA.
4. Inland Fisheries	75% of the total fish production in India comes from the Inland Fisheries sector.
5. Marine Fisheries	25% of the total fish production comes from the Marine Fisheries sector.
6. Important Species	Major fish species include Shrimps, Prawns, Sea Bass, Pearl Spot, Groupers, carp, and Ornamental Fish. Aquaculture of high-value species like Rainbow Trout is also a significant focus.
7. Top States	West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Kerala are the top states contributing to fish production, especially in Inland and Marine fisheries.
8. India's Rank in the World	India is the third-largest fish-producing country in the world and ranks second globally in fish production through aquaculture, just after China.

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Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi



- PMMSY will transform the fisheries sector
- This scheme brings with it highest investments worth Rs. 20,050 crores in the fisheries sector
- To add strength to the efforts of building an Aatmanirbhar Bharat
- Infuse the sector with latest technology with focus on value addition
- Upgradation of critical infrastructure
- Boost welfare of those associated with fishing
- To boost employment creation

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES/POLICIES:

- 1. National Surveillance Programme on Aquatic Animal Diseases (NSPAAD):** Monitor and manage aquatic animal diseases for biosecurity and export certification. Disease surveillance, diagnostics, and quarantine facilities across 59 centres.
- 2. Directorate of Aquatic Animal Health and Quarantine (DAAHQ):** Strengthen quarantine and disease diagnostics for aquaculture. New quarantine units and diagnostic labs at key ports (Chennai, Mumbai).
- 3. Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY):** Enhance fish production, infrastructure, and livelihoods. Expansion of inland and brackish water aquaculture, seaweed farming, cold-water fisheries, and modernization of markets and infrastructure.
- 4. Tilapia Culture Promotion:** Promote high-yield, sustainable tilapia farming. Focus on closed water bodies and genetic improvement programs to increase tilapia production.
- 5. Scampi Culture Promotion:** Boost scampi farming with high-quality seed production. Genetic improvement and enhanced scampi seed production through hatcheries.
- 6. Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs):** Empower fish farmers through collective organizations. Formation of 720 FFPOs to enhance economic outcomes for farmers.
- 7. Group Accidental Insurance Scheme (GAIS):** Provide insurance coverage for fishers. Coverage for accidental death, disability, and hospitalization.
- 8. Saving Cum Relief Fund:** Support fishers during fishing bans and lean periods. Financial aid of Rs. 4,500 per family to help during lean seasons.
- 9. Sea Cage Culture Development:** Promote fish farming in reservoirs through cage culture. Installation of 20,000 cages to produce 60,000 MT of fish.

FISHERY SECTOR IS A LIFELINE FOR THE INDIAN ECONOMY:

- 1. Economic Contribution:** It plays a key role in GDP, providing protein and driving foreign exchange through exports.
- 2. Employment Generation:** Over 14 million people are employed in fishing and aquaculture, supporting coastal and rural communities.
- 3. Women Empowerment:** Women are central in fish processing and marketing, gaining financial independence and skills.
- 4. Sustainable Development:** Focus on responsible fishing and aquaculture practices ensures environmental sustainability.
- 5. Cooperative Federalism:** Central and state governments collaborate to implement schemes like PMMSY, boosting fish production and infrastructure.
- 6. Alternate Source of Income:** It provides economic stability, especially in rural areas with limited agricultural options.
- 7. Marine Fish Exports:** India is a leading exporter of seafood, particularly shrimp, contributing significantly to foreign exchange and global trade.

CHALLENGES:

- 1. Lack of Organized Sector:** The sector remains largely unorganized, making it difficult to implement standards, quality control, and efficiency.
- 2. Climate Change:** Rising temperatures, altered rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events affect fish habitats, breeding cycles, and overall productivity.
- 3. Poor Infrastructure:** Inadequate cold storage, transportation, and fishing harbour facilities hinder efficient production and reduce export potential.
- 4. Disputes with Neighboring Countries:** Tensions between India and Sri Lanka, particularly over fishing rights in the Palk Strait, disrupt fishing activities and trade.

5. Less Competitive in Global Market: India faces stiff competition from countries like Japan and China, which have more advanced technology, better practices, and economies of scale in aquaculture.

6. Fragmented Approach: State-level initiatives often lack coordination, leading to inconsistent implementation of policies and fragmented development across regions.

7. Lack of Credit Availability: Small-scale fish farmers struggle to access affordable credit, limiting their ability to invest in technology, infrastructure, and sustainable practices.

WAY FORWARD:

1. Fisheries Cooperatives: Encourage the establishment of cooperative models, similar to Maharashtra, to improve collective bargaining power, access to resources, and sustainable practices.

2. Increased Credit Access through KCC: Provide more financial support to fish farmers through the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme to enhance their investment capabilities.

3. Sustainable Fishing Practices: Promote environmentally friendly and resource-efficient fishing techniques to ensure long-term sustainability and reduce environmental impact.

4. Improved Storage and Cold Chain Infrastructure: Expand cold storage and warehousing facilities through initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) to reduce post-harvest losses.

5. Adoption of Best Practices from Japan: Learn from Japan's advanced aquaculture techniques, including technology adoption and better management practices, to boost productivity and quality.

6. Resolve Fishing Rights Disputes: Address and resolve fishing rights disputes with Sri Lanka to ensure peaceful and productive cooperation in shared maritime zones.

7. Exploring Lakshadweep's Potential: Unlock the untapped aquaculture potential of Lakshadweep to develop new marine fisheries and expand the nation's fishing capacity.

CONCLUSION

The Indian fishery sector holds immense potential for economic growth, employment generation, and sustainable development. The implementation of government schemes like PMMSY is a step in the right direction, addressing infrastructure gaps, promoting sustainable practices, and enhancing the livelihoods of millions involved in the sector. However, challenges like climate change, inadequate infrastructure, disputes with neighbouring countries, and lack of access to credit need urgent attention. A coordinated, forward-looking approach that includes the promotion of fisheries cooperatives, improved access to credit, sustainable fishing practices, and better infrastructure will ensure the sector's growth and global competitiveness.

PRELIMS QUESTION:

Q. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), consider the following statements:

1. The scheme aims to enhance fish production, infrastructure, and livelihoods for the period from 2020-21 to 2024-25.
2. It includes the construction of cold storage facilities for fish crops and promoting seaweed farming.
3. The scheme is being implemented only in coastal states and Union Territories.

How many of the above-given statements are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Answer: B

MAINS QUESTION:

Q. Discuss the importance of the fisheries sector in India's economy. What are the key challenges it faces, and how can the government address them to ensure its sustainable growth? (250 words, 15 marks)

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