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# POLICY INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND THE REPERCUSSIONS THESE HAVE HAD ON THE FISHERIES SECTOR IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT:

Recent measures and statements made by the government of India to stimulate and promote the fisheries and aquaculture businesses in the country. A sub-scheme of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PMMSY), the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY) has a total investment of Rs. 6,000 crores. Its goal is to increase the earnings and incomes of people working in the fishing sector, such as fishermen, fish merchants, and proprietors of micro and small enterprises involved in the industry. It has a crucial emphasis on formalising the sector by increasing digital inclusion, access to institutional finance, incentives for risk reduction, value-chain efficiencies, and job development for women.

The government of India has enacted several policy actions to assist and advance the fisheries industry in the country. These measures have had a considerable impact on the sector, helping to stimulate its growth, boost its sustainability, and improve the socioeconomic situations of fishermen and fish farmers.

**Key words:** PMMSY, CAA Act, AI and Sagar Parikrama

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## 1. INTRODUCTION:

The following is a list of significant policy measures, along with their effects:

Launched in 2020, the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) is a flagship program that aims to modernise and develop the fisheries sector. PMMSY is an acronym for the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana. It focuses on expanding fish production, enhancing employment possibilities, tripling fishermen's wages, and encouraging sustainable aquaculture methods, among other things. The plan has allotted significant money for developing infrastructure, managing post-harvest operations, and creating additional value, resulting in improved processing and storage facilities, market linkages, and more significant exports.

The government launched a comprehensive "Blue Revolution" program to encourage equitable and environmentally responsible growth in the fisheries sector. It emphasises the development of marine and inland fisheries, the promotion of aquaculture, the improvement of fisheries infrastructure, and the enhancement of the livelihoods of fishermen and fish farmers. The Blue Revolution has helped contribute to

increased fish production, employment generation, and income enhancement thanks to measures such as establishing a fish farmers' development agency and promoting fish seed production. These are only two examples.

The goal of the National Fisheries Policy is to create an all-encompassing structure that can support the expansion of the fisheries industry. It emphasises the welfare of fishermen and fishing communities and the conservation of biodiversity, fishing resources, and sustainable fishing practices. The policy promotes the adoption of fishing methods that are responsible for the environment, the preservation of marine ecosystems, and incorporating traditional knowledge with modern discoveries.

## **2. Coastal Aquaculture Authority (CAA) Act:**

The CAA Act is a piece of legislation that regulates and promotes responsible practices for coastal aquaculture. It does this while simultaneously protecting the interests of coastal people and the environment. This makes the development of coastal aquaculture more sustainable. As a result of the act's provision of rules for coastal aquaculture operations, licensing procedures, and environmental impact assessments, the aquaculture sector can flourish sustainably.

## **3. Export Promotion Schemes:**

The government has put in place a number of export promotion schemes in order to increase the amount of fish and fishery products that are exported. Exporters can benefit from these programs in the following ways: financial help, support for infrastructure, and participation in market development activities. These programs have contributed to the expansion of fish exports and improved foreign exchange revenues by making it easier to access worldwide markets and by encouraging the production of items with added value. The implementation of these policy changes has had a considerable impact. They have resulted in an increase in fish output, improvements in infrastructure and value chains, expanded market access, and the generation of money for fishermen and fish farmers. Additionally, the efforts have encouraged the adoption of advanced fishing technologies, sustainable fishing methods, resource conservation, and the protection of natural resources. In general, the interventions and policies made by the government have been an essential factor in the expansion and development of the fishing industry in India.

## **4. Establishing Primary Cooperative Societies:**

The primary cooperative societies, particularly cooperatives for the fishing sector are the government's priority, and their establishment at the panchayat level is their primary objective. By adopting this action, the industry will be granted a status closer to an official organisation, fishermen and fish farmers will be given more power, and structured fish production and post-harvest activities will be made possible. A sum equal to 900 crore rupees has been granted to the Ministry of Cooperation to support cooperatives' development through a range of measures. These initiatives include enhanced loan limits, TDS limits, cash deposit limitations, and the construction of a national cooperative database.

The credit target for agriculture and allied industries, which includes fisheries, has been increased to INR 20 lakh crore, and import taxes have been decreased. The fishing industry will have an easier time acquiring

access to institutional financing due to this. Additionally, the reduction in import duty on critical inputs necessary for shrimp feed, fish meal, krill meal, algal prime, fish lipid oil, and mineral and vitamin premixes is predicted to lower production costs and improve aquaculture exports. These inputs include fish meal, krill meal, and algal prime. Fish meal, krill meal, and algal prime are all types of information used here.

#### **5. Centres of Excellence and Digital Infrastructure:**

The establishment of three artificial intelligence (AI) Centers of Excellence in India would contribute to the growth of the country's already established AI ecosystem. This opens up opportunities for improving fish marketing systems and implementing solutions based on blockchain technology to ensure the quality and traceability of fish products. The proposed Digital Public Infrastructure and Agricultural Accelerator Fund will serve as a driving force for additional innovation along the fishing value chain.

Because of the consistent rate of growth seen in the Indian fisheries sector, the country is now the third-largest fish producer, the second-largest aquaculture producer, and the fourth-largest exporter of fish and fisheries products. During the fiscal year 2021–22, it achieved an annual growth rate of 10.34%, a new record for the quantity of fish produced, which was 162.48 lakh tons. In addition, it established a new record for the amount of fish paid. Over 28 million people, particularly those living in marginalised communities, have sustainable means of survival thanks to the industry's contributions, which have contributed to socioeconomic improvement.

The government's policies aim to accelerate growth in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. This will be accomplished by increasing the flow of institutional finance, lowering the risks associated with the industry, expanding local and international markets, and supporting new methods. It is hoped that the results of these efforts will be an increase in the industry's contribution to India's economy and to the welfare of the country's people.

The fishing business in India is the principal source of income for millions of fishermen and their families, and it substantially contributes to the country's economy as a whole. India is home to the world's third-largest fishery and the world's second-largest aquaculture industry, which produce fish on a significant scale. Because of the Blue Revolution, the importance of India's fishing and aquaculture industries is now more widely recognised. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and improve the standard of living and economic standing of people residing in rural areas, the government of India has decided to implement an all-encompassing plan. Consequently, more opportunities for individuals to earn a living would become available.

The Indian government has initiated "SagarParikrama," which consists of a circumnavigational journey in the water along the country's coastal belt. This is being done as a part of the 75th Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav that is now taking place. This journey aims to demonstrate solidarity with those who fish, fish farms, and other stakeholders in the fishing industry. The government seeks to address the issues these communities are having and make it simpler for them to improve their economic situation through the numerous fisheries

schemes and programs it runs, such as the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) and the Kisan Credit Card (KCC).

This was the first day of the Sagar Parikrama, which began on March 5, 2022, in Mandvi, Gujarat, with the theme of "KRANTI se SHANTI." This day marked the beginning of the pilgrimage. It took place in Gujarat, Daman and Diu, Maharashtra, and Karnataka throughout four distinct phases, and it travelled to many locations across these states. The program has had a total of 50,000 people actively participate in it, and it has been live-streamed on several social media sites, where around 30,000 more people have viewed it. The Sagar Parikrama organisation has disseminated a song about the event in three different languages: Gujarati, Marathi, and Kannada. Their goal is to raise awareness about the event.

As part of SagarParikrama's upcoming Phase V, which will take place in six distinct localities across the states of Maharashtra and Goa, participants will travel to Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Vasco, Maorugoa, and Canacona. These destinations are located in India. The Indian state of Maharashtra has a total coastline distance of 720 kilometres and five coastal districts. Eighty-two per cent of the state's overall fish production comes from its marine fisheries. The marine fish output in Goa is estimated to be 86,027 metric tons per year, while the inland fish production is estimated to be 3,669 metric tons yearly. Goa has a total coastline length of 104 kilometres. This food source holds a prominent position in the state of Goa because more than ninety per cent of Goans consider fish an essential component of their diet.

The occasion will include the attendance of Union Ministers, State Ministers, officials from the administration, members of legislative bodies, and representatives from fishery organisations, all of whom will be present. Progressive fishermen, fish farmers, and young fisheries entrepreneurs will be entitled to receive certifications and sanctions about various programs such as PMMSY, KCC, and state schemes. These sanctions and certificates will be related to the fishing industry. The event will feature the world debut of a song in the Marathi language pertaining to Sagar Parikrama, and it will make an effort to raise awareness of the steps through various media outlets.

The journey known as the Sagar Parikrama has as its primary objective the building of a sustainable equilibrium between utilising marine fisheries resources to guarantee the nation's food security and the livelihoods of coastal fisher communities. In addition to this, it places a priority on the protection of marine ecosystems, the creation of fishing communities, and the construction of necessary infrastructure, such as fishing harbours and fish landing facilities. This is to ensure that fish populations continue to thrive in the future. Adopting an ecosystem-based strategy aims to foster responsible and sustainable growth by minimising the gaps between fishing communities and the expectations held by those communities.

In the annals of human history, fishing is one of the earliest known vocations, dating back even further than agriculture. Fishing has taken on a much more significant role in today's world due to the rapid increase in the world's population and the decreasing supply of natural resources on the land. Fish is an abundant source of protein and essential vitamins, such as vitamins A, B, and D, in addition to being an excellent source of each of these nutrients individually. Around 18,000 of India's 30,000 native fish species can be found within

the country's borders. India is home to roughly 30,000 different species of fish. Fish is an essential component of the diet in the coastal areas of several Indian states, including Kerala, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Gujarat. Goa and Gujarat are two further examples of conditions that contain coastal regions.

Fish production in India comes from various sources, including maritime and inland fisheries, which are distinct fisheries. Fishing activities that take place within the continental shelf up to a depth of 200 meters are included in the category of marine fisheries. These activities include coastal, offshore, and deep-sea fishing. On the other hand, inland fisheries refer to fishing activities in inland bodies of water, such as rivers, lakes, canals, reservoirs, ponds, and tanks. At the present time, the nation of India is the world's third-largest producer of fish and the world's second-largest producer of inland fish. During the last twenty years, the quantity of fish raised in captivity in India has increased by almost a factor of 2.5.

The production of fish for human consumption, the creation of jobs, the increase in nutritional quality, and the generation of revenue in the form of exports are all critical contributors to the vitality of India's economy. More than 11 million people are employed in some capacity by the fisheries industry in India, either directly or indirectly. This sector is responsible for around one per cent of the country's overall agricultural production.

To encourage the expansion of fisheries, the division of the Department of Agriculture that is in charge of fishing has been putting into action several production-oriented programs, input supply programs, infrastructure development programs, and policy formulation programs. This is being done in collaboration with the governments of the states. The primary goals of these fisheries development programs are as follows:

- Increasing production and productivity for fishermen, fish farmers, and the fishing industry.
- Improving the nutritional standards of the population through increased fish production.
- Earning foreign exchange through the export of marine products.
- Improving the socioeconomic conditions of traditional fishermen.
- Generating employment opportunities.
- Conserving fish species that have been overfished.

Fish Farmers Development Agencies and the National Programme for Fish Seed Development are two key projects the government has established to recognise the relevance of inland fisheries. Both of these initiatives were started in recognition of the importance of inland fisheries. The National Program for Fish Seed Development is responsible for these different programs. Providing help to fish farmers is the goal of every one of the more than 300 distinct Fish Farmer Development Agencies. One of the key focuses of the National Programme for Fish Seed Development, with the production of fish seeds being the program's fundamental purpose, is the establishment of fish seed incubators around the country.

In addition, plans have been developed to utilise organic waste for aquaculture. Due to these plans, several farms have been constructed to use the litter. One illustration of how the cooperative sector has made the cultivation of reservoir fisheries a priority includes a program that was initiated in 1989–1990 to develop

27,000 hectares of reservoir land in Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Karnataka in conjunction with the National Cooperative Development Corporation. This is only one example. This is one of many areas that have been prioritised more than others.

In fact, fisheries play an essential role in the provision of food, nutrition, employment, and income in India. At its most basic level, the business gives over 16 million fishers and fish growers a means of livelihood. However, as one moves up the value chain, employment opportunities become available for almost twice as many people. Fish, an affordable and nutrient-dense source of animal protein, contributes to the solution of hunger and malnutrition by combining these attributes. As a possible result of this project, the government envisions the possibility of more than tripling the incomes of fish farmers and fishermen who operate in the field.

India is lucky to have abundant, diverse fisheries resources, including deep seas, lakes, ponds, rivers, and many fish and shellfish species. These advantages make India a prime destination for fishing enthusiasts. More than ten per cent of the world's overall biodiversity can be attributed to these resources in this area. In addition to the wide Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) that encompasses 2.02 million square kilometres and the continental shelf area that covers 0.53 million square kilometres, the marine fisheries resources are spread over the extensive coastline that extends for approximately 8,118 kilometres. This is the case with the EEZ and the continental shelf area. "inland resources" refers to bodies of water such as rivers, canals, floodplain lakes, ponds, tanks, reservoirs, and brackish water areas. The rivers and canals cover a total area of 1.95 million kilometres; the floodplain lakes cover 8.12 million hectares; the ponds and tanks occupy a total area of 24.1 million hectares; the reservoirs cover a total area of 31.5 million hectares; and the salty water regions cover a total area of 12.4 million hectares. These inland resources, many of which are underutilised or not employed at all, hold enormous opportunities for the growth of livelihoods and economic success; nevertheless, these resources are underutilised or not utilised at all.

The tremendous unrealised potential of India's fisheries has the potential to significantly contribute to the general health and prosperity of the country's inhabitants. If the industry is able to harness the resources in a way that is environmentally responsible, invests in infrastructure and technology, adopts best practices, and makes it easier to gain access to markets, it has the potential to make significant contributions to the reduction of poverty, the development of rural areas, and the expansion of the economy. The fact that the government is focusing on more than doubling the incomes of fishers and fish farmers reflects the government's awareness of this potential and its commitment to fostering the socioeconomic advancement of fishermen and fish farmers.

In addition, in order to ensure the industry's sustained prosperity over the long term, fishing practices that are both responsible and sustainable are an absolute must. Taking steps to preserve ecosystems, as well as adopting an ecosystem-based strategy, is an absolute necessity if one is interested in maintaining a state of equilibrium between the exploitation of resources and the preservation of the environment. Suppose fishermen and fish farmers in India have access to the information, training, and assistance they require. In

that case, the country may fully realise the potential of its fisheries industry while preserving its invaluable aquatic resources. However, this will only be achievable if sustainable practices are encouraged, and fishermen and fish farmers are given the required information, training, and assistance. Because India's population is increasing, the fisheries and aquaculture industries in the country are taking on an increasingly vital role in the country's ability to meet the rising demand for protein. During the fiscal year 2021-2022, India achieved record levels of fish production, with inland fisheries contributing 12.12 million metric tons (MMT) and marine fisheries contributing 4.13 MMT, for a total fish production of 16.25 MMT. This was a record for India.

During fiscal 2021–2022, India's ornamental fisheries exports reached 4.54 million dollars. As a consequence of this, India is a significant exporter of fisheries of this kind. When it comes to exporting ornamental fish, some of the most common destinations include Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Jordan, and Taiwan. Other popular destinations include Jordan and China. It has been established that several states, including West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Kerala, Odisha, Gujarat, Karnataka, Assam, and Manipur, have the potential to develop ornamental fisheries. Other states that have this potential include Karnataka and Assam.

India already possesses a sizeable quantity of necessary infrastructure to sustain its fishing industry. This infrastructure consists of 1,548 fish landing centres, 677 cold storages with a capacity of 450,220.27 metric tons (MT), 45 chilled warehouses with a total of 24,194.80 MT, 93 dry fish storages with a capacity of 39,481.92 MT, and 625 processing plants with a capacity of 36,523.92 MT. In addition, the area has 67 smaller fishing harbours and seven larger fishing harbours.

In the Union Budget for the year 2023, a brand new sub-scheme of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) will be introduced. The amount of 6,000 crores expected to be invested in the sector is meant to stimulate and assist the operations of micro and small enterprises, fish dealers, and fishermen. This investment is planned to take place over the next three years.

These initiatives and investments prove that India's government is committed to the expansion and growth of the fisheries industry in the country. These efforts aim to raise the industry's standard of living for those who make their living in it by increasing output levels, improving infrastructure, and enhancing the overall quality of the physical environment in which they work.

## **6. Conclusion:**

The Indian fisheries industry has made considerable advancements, becoming the third-largest producer of fish, the second-largest producer of fish from aquaculture, and the fourth-largest exporter of fish and fisheries products. Both the yearly growth rate of the industry, which was 10.34% in FY 2021–22 and the record fish production of 162.48 lakh tons indicate the significant contribution that the sector makes to the Indian economy.

Over 28 million people, particularly those from disadvantaged and vulnerable regions, depend on the fishing industry for their livelihoods, and this business has been vital in making this possible. It has been

highly essential in helping to improve the socioeconomic conditions of those who are less fortunate, which has helped to reduce poverty and expand inclusive development.

The inclusion of financing within the proposed budget for the Department of Fisheries for the fiscal year 2023–2024 reflects the government's priority for expanding and enhancing the industry. The sector's capacities will strengthen due to a focus on primary cooperative societies, enhanced loan targets for agriculture and associated sectors, investment in digital infrastructure, and enhancement of the value chain. These initiatives will solve the problems that the industry is now dealing with.

After the implementation of these measures, the Department of Fisheries will be in a strong position because it will be able to stimulate sustainable development, promote entrepreneurship, raise production, and ensure the welfare of fish farmers and fishermen across the country. These goals can be achieved through the Department's increased ability to stimulate sustainable development. It is anticipated that the Indian fisheries industry will continue contributing to India's attempts to attain food security, produce employment opportunities, and increase its economy. All of these things bode well for the sector's future, which in turn bodes well for the sector's future.

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