



World Fisheries Day: 21st November

Why in News

World Fisheries Day (WFD) is observed on the 21st November every year.

- The award ceremony was organised by the **ministry of fisheries, animal husbandry and dairying, in Bhubaneswar** on the occasion of WFD.
- Balasore district (Odisha) has been awarded India's "**Best Marine District**".

Key Points

- **WFD** is celebrated to **demonstrate solidarity with all fisherfolk, fish farmers and concerned stakeholders** throughout the world.
- It was started in the year 1997 when "**World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers**" met at New Delhi leading to formation of "**World Fisheries Forum**" with representatives from 18 countries and signed a declaration advocating for a global mandate of sustainable fishing practices and policies.
- It is aimed at drawing attention to **overfishing, habitat destruction and other serious threats** to the sustainability of marine and inland resources.

Fisheries Sector

▪ About:

- Fishing is the capture of **aquatic organisms in marine, coastal and inland areas**.
- Marine and inland fisheries, together with aquaculture, provide food, nutrition and a source of **income to around 820 million people around the world**, from **harvesting, processing, marketing and distribution**. For many it also forms part of their traditional cultural identity.
- One of the greatest threats to the sustainability of global fishery resources is **illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing**.

▪ Indian Scenario:

- In 2019-20, with an overall production of 142 lakh tons, India produced 8% of the global share.
 - During the same time period, India's fisheries exports stood at Rs 46,662 crore, constituting about 18% of India's agricultural exports.
- India aims to **achieve a target of producing 22 million metric tonnes of fish by 2024-25**.
- The fisheries sector has witnessed **three major transformations in the last few years**:
 - The growth of **inland aquaculture, specifically freshwater aquaculture**.
 - The **mechanization** of capture fisheries.
 - The successful commencement of **brackish water shrimp aquaculture**.
- As compared to last year there has been a 34% increase in the budget for the fisheries sector in 2021-22.

▪ Significance of Fisheries for India:

- India is the **second major producer of fish** through aquaculture in the world.
- India is the **4th largest exporter of fish in the world** as it contributes 7.7% to the global fish production.
- Currently, this sector provides **livelihood to more than 2.8 crore people within the country**. Nevertheless, this is a sector with untapped potential.
 - The Economic Survey of India, 2019-20 estimated that, only 58% of the country's inland potential has been tapped so far.
- Despite challenges pertaining to infrastructure, the measures by the Central government in the past six years ensured that the fisheries sector continued to register an **annual growth rate of more than 10 %**.

▪ Challenges for Fisheries sector:

- The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** points out that nearly 90% of the global marine fish stocks have either been fully exploited or overfished or depleted to the extent that recovery may not be biologically possible.
- Discharge of harmful substances like plastics and other waste into water bodies that cause devastating consequences for aquatic life.
 - **Changing climate.**

▪ Government's Effort to Improve Fisheries:

◦ Fishing Harbours:

- The development of **five major Fishing Harbours** (Kochi, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Paradip, Petuaghat) as hubs of economic activity.

◦ Seaweed Park:

- Multipurpose **seaweed** park in Tamil Nadu would be the center of production for quality **seaweed-based products**, developed on a hub and spoke model.

◦ **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana:**

- It strives to create direct employment to 15 lakh fishers, fish farmers, etc. and about thrice this number as indirect employment opportunities.
- It also aims to double the incomes of fishers, fish farmers and fish workers by 2024.

◦ **Palk Bay Scheme:**

- The Scheme, "Diversification Of Trawl Fishing Boats From Palk Straits Into Deep Sea Fishing Boats", was launched in 2017 as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**. It was launched as part of the umbrella **Blue Revolution Scheme**.

◦ **Marine Fisheries Bill:**

- The Bill proposes to only grant licenses to vessels registered under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, to fish in the **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**.

◦ **Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF):**

- FIDF is created to attract private investment in creation and management of fisheries infrastructure facilities.

◦ **Kisan Credit Card (KCC):**

- The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme was introduced in 1998 for providing adequate and timely credit support from the banking system under a single window with flexible and simplified procedure to the farmers for their cultivation and other needs like purchase of agriculture inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. and draw cash for their production needs.

◦ **Marine Products Export Development Authority:**

- MPEDA is a nodal coordinating, state-owned agency engaged in fishery production

and allied activities.

- It was established in 1972 under the Marine Products Export Development Authority Act (MPEDA), 1972.

Way Forward

- States need **to be inspired by each other and explore options to grow** in the marine sector.
- There is **a need to come up with environment friendly fishing** and also look for sustaining the sector while continuing the consumption.
- India needs to develop more scientifically its fishing system and other related aspects such as freezing, packaging, etc.

Source: PIB

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