



Mains Practice Question

Q. What is the Blue Revolution? How can it overcome the challenge of sustainability, currently faced by India's fisheries sector? (250 words)

02 Mar, 2019 GS Paper 3 Economy

Approach

- Write about concept of Blue revolution.
- Elaborate the challenges of sustainability currently faced by India's fisheries sector.
- How can blue revolution overcome the above challenges.
- Give a way forward.

Introduction

- Blue revolution: - It has the vision to achieve economic prosperity of the country and fish farmers as well as contribute towards food and nutritional security through full potential utilization of water resources for fisheries development in a sustainable manner, keeping in view the bio-security and environmental concerns.
- It has been targeted to enhance the fish production from 107.95 lakh tonnes in 2015-16 to about 150 lakh tonnes by the end of the financial year 2019-20.

Body

The **challenges** of sustainability currently faced by India's fisheries sector:

- **Unsustainable fishing practices:** The Food and Agriculture Organisation's report notes that nearly 90 per cent of the global marine fish stocks have either been fully-exploited or over-fished or depleted to an extent that recovery may not be biologically possible.
- **Low productivity:** The productivity of inland fishery and fish farming sectors is low — in terms of per fisherman, per boat and per farm. In Norway, a fisherman/farmer catches/produces 250 kg per day while the Indian average is four to five kg.
- **Lack of modern equipments:** Marine capture fishery comprises largely of small fishermen who operate traditional boats — either non-motorised vessels or boats with a basic outboard motor. These vessels cannot operate beyond near shore waters. While the near-shore coastal waters are highly overfished, the high value fish stock proliferates in the deep sea.
- **Lack of variety:** Limited number of species grown, mainly due to weak linkages between research and development and fish farmers' community. High value species such as tuna cannot be caught by fishermen who use traditional vessels.

Blue revolution can overcome the challenge of sustainability and has achieved some success:

- **Adopts a two-pronged approach:** Sustainable capture fishery to harness marine and inland water resources and expanding the horizon of fish farming through increased coverage, enhanced productivity, species diversification and better market returns.
- **Productivity of brackish water** coastal aquaculture has touched 10 to 12 metric tonnes per hectare — a sharp increase from the previous two to four tonnes per hectare.

- **Thirty thousand hectares have been added** to the area under fish farming. The government has invested in hatcheries to meet the ever-increasing demand for good quality fish seed.
- The **introduction of cage culture** in reservoirs and other open water bodies has led to an increase in output. Nearly 8,000 cages have been installed and even though a cage gives a modest yield of three tonnes of fish, this translates into a more than 1,000 per cent increase in productivity.
- The **new National Policy on Marine Fisheries** talks of introducing deep-sea fishing vessels and assisting fishing communities to convert their vessels and gears for the waters beyond.
- **Innovative practices** such as recirculatory aquaculture system aim to realise the goal of more crop per drop. As a result, the productivity of freshwater fish farms has gone up to more than 3 metric tonnes per hectare from the 2.5 tonnes per hectare.
- The investment of Rs 3,000 crore in the Blue Revolution is being supplemented through the Rs 7,523-crore **Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund**. This will meet the capital investment requirement of this sector.

Way forward

- In order to meet the ever-increasing demand for animal protein, global fish production should touch 196 million tonnes by 2025 — it currently stands at 171 million tonnes. India has the potential to bridge this gap. It has a marine fisher population of 3.5 million; 10.5 million people are engaged in inland fishery and fish farming.
- The expansion of aquaculture would increase demand for fish seed/food exponentially. Future policies must prioritise seed production in order to attain self-sufficiency in the sector.
- The country should be producing more than 15 million tonnes fish by the end of 2019. It should be on its way to become a hub for sustainable fish production.

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