

Report on Post-Budget Webinar on "Agriculture and Rural Prosperity" with a Focus on the Breakout Session: "Framework for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries Resources in the EEZ and High Seas with a Special Focus on Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep"

Date: 1st, March 2025

Organized by: Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare

Key Participants:

- Shri Rajeev Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh, Union Minister, MoFAH&D
- Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel, Union Minister of State, MoFAH&D
- Shri George Kurian, Union Minister of State, MoFAH&D
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi (Keynote Address)
- Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, Secretary, Department of Fisheries (Breakout Session Chair)

Introduction

The post-budget webinar on "Agriculture and Rural Prosperity" focused on discussing key areas of agricultural growth and rural development and was held on 01.03.2025 at 11 am in hybrid mode. A significant portion of the discussions was regarding the fisheries sector, with special emphasis on the sustainable harnessing of resources in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the High Seas. The breakout session was chaired by Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, which specifically addressed the strategies for the development of deep-sea fisheries in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

Breakout Session on the "Framework for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries Resources in the EEZ and High Seas with a Special Focus on Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep"

The session focused on sustainable management and development of fisheries in India's EEZ and High Seas, particularly in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

Key discussion points included:

1. Sustainable Fisheries Management: Responsible fisheries management practices are needed to ensure that marine resources are used without exploiting ecosystems. Stakeholders discussed the importance of balancing environmental sustainability with economic growth in the fisheries sector.

2. Development of Deep-Sea Fisheries: The session addressed the potential for deep-sea fishing, focusing on the design and procurement of fishing vessels, smart harbour development, and operational efficiency. Using **mother and factory vessels** for deep-sea fishing was explored to improve logistics and sustainability.

3. Financial Support for Fisheries Cooperatives: It was proposed to extend **credit facilities** to fisheries cooperatives for procuring and operating deep-sea vessels, improving productivity and enhancing sustainability across the sector.

4. Enhancing Infrastructure and Market Linkages: Discussions included enhancing the **value chain** in the fisheries sector by improving processing, packaging, and export mechanisms, ensuring India's fisheries products have global market access.

5. Regional Focus on Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep: The Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep were highlighted as regions with vast untapped marine potential. The development of **fisheries clusters** in these areas will boost the local economies, improving infrastructure, and creating sustainable livelihoods for coastal communities.

6. Policy and International Commitments: The session underlined the need for aligning India's fisheries policies with international sustainability standards, ensuring that India's fisheries sector contributes to global food security and environmental conservation.

Conclusion

The session provided a comprehensive framework for the sustainable development of India's fisheries resources, particularly in the EEZ and High Seas. It emphasized collaboration among stakeholders, including government agencies, local communities, and international bodies, to ensure responsible fishing practices, economic growth, and long-term sustainability, especially in the strategically important regions of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

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