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Q) Discuss the opportunities and challenges presented by the fisheries sector in India; highlighting the key recommendations made by the parliamentary standing committee and mention the various initiatives taken by the Government for development of this sector.

Introduction India's fisheries sector is a significant component of the country's economy forming the nation's integral part of output. Indian fisheries are abundant and diversified including marine and inland resources.

Challenges :- 90% of world's marine fish populations either completely exploited or overfished.

Increasing demand :- challenge is to reach the increasing global demand for animal protein of increase in fish output.

Insufficient infrastructure :- Many fishermen operate with traditional non mechanised boats limiting their ability to venture into deepwaters for more valuable species.

Key initiatives of Parliamentary standing committee :-

Fishery industry is most powerful income and employment generator and is recognised as "sunrise" sector with record production of 142 lakh tons in 2019-20 with high potential growth.

Schemes and programs

The cabinet on 20th May 2020 approved Pradhanmantri matya sampada yojana (PMSY) with investment of

Rs. 20,050 crores with central share of 9407 crores and states and beneficiaries contributing 4880 and 5763 crores respectively with implementation time limit of 5 years to all states and union territories.

The PMMS has contributed and earned substantial results in inland fisheries, Marine fisheries, fishermen welfare and their infrastructure. Aquatic health management with disease diagnostic centres, mobile centres and testing labs established.

Ornamental fish rearing units of integrated breeding and rearing were approved for seaweed cultivation.

Ministry of fisheries has created a fund namely Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development fund (FID) with a total fund size of 7522 crores. This amount is utilized to various schemes through banks like NABARD, NCD and All scheduled banks.

Kisan credit card (KCC) :- A part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Package, gave institutional credit to fish farmers and fishers.

Ministry has approved a seaweed park in Tamil Nadu. It has announced 5 major fishing harbours (Kochi, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Petaughat) as hubs of economic activities with world class amenities and infrastructure.

Initiatives taken by Government

- 1) Different state governments face different challenges and the problems of local fishermen are different.
- 1) climatic changes and Extreme weather events change ocean temperature and create the loss of marine biodiversity due to exploitative fishing practices.
- 2) Conflicts between India and Neighbouring countries with violations of national jurisdiction and proper awareness among fishermen.
- 3) Vulnerability of external shocks that impact livelihood and deep sea trawling of catching large amount of fish affects tourism.
- 4) Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is also a serious challenge to the Govt governments.

Government initiatives:- Way forward

- 1) Encourage sustainable fishing practices.
- 2) Need to address infrastructure gaps by developing good harbours.
- 3) Need climate Resilience to predict unforeseen environmental events.
- 4) *Discuss your points briefly.* Time for diversification and value addition like promoting ornamental fisheries, improved processing techniques.
- 5) Promote technology adoption and providing subsidies to fishermen.

Conclusion

Next to china, India is the second largest in marine industry. The country has identified the key problems and challenges and is moving forward with various schemes and implementations.