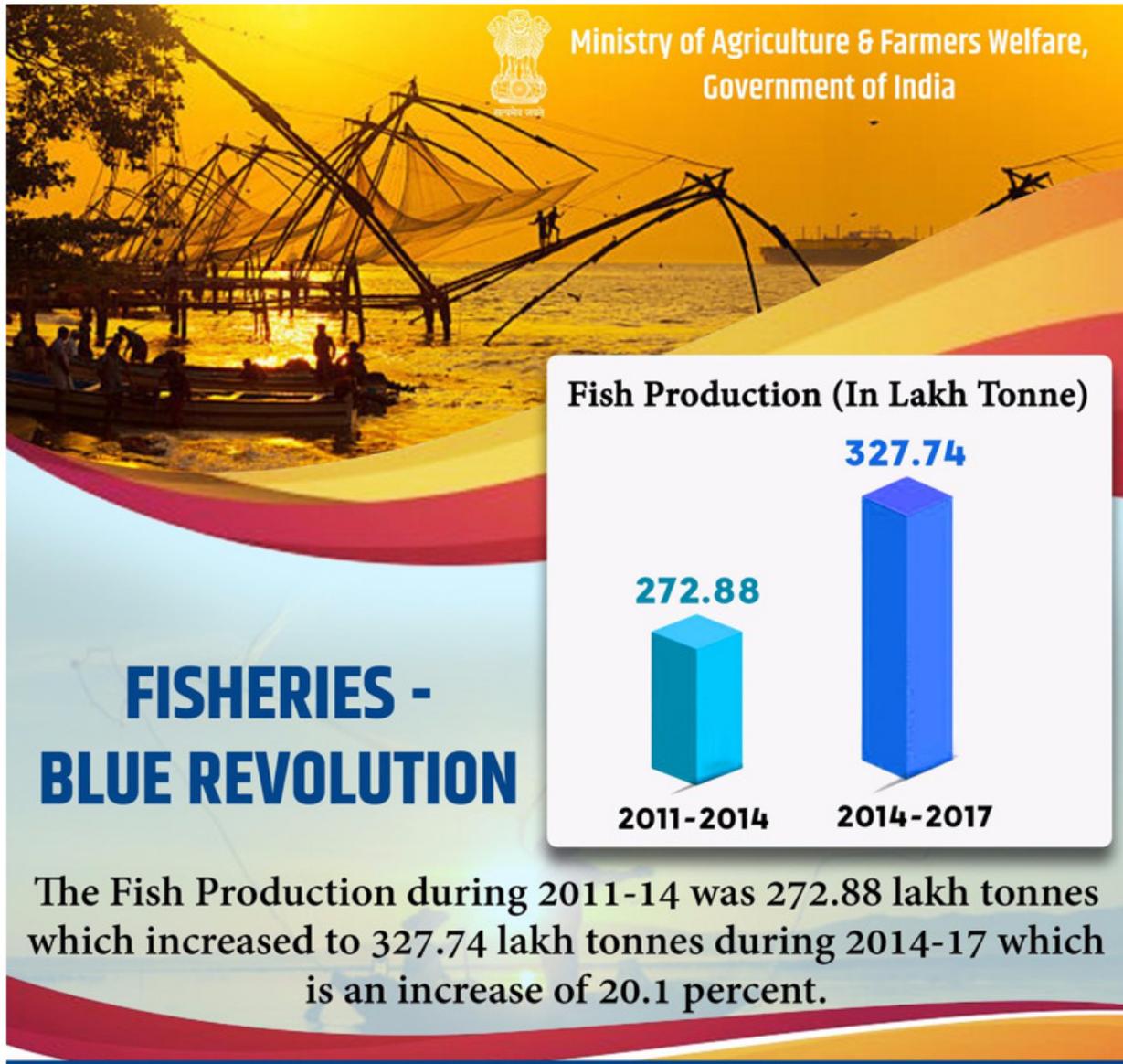


BLUE REVOLUTION THAT WILL BE



Creating a separate department for fisheries in the Union government is a significant step.

Fisheries are the primary source of livelihood for several communities. A concentrated effort by an **independent department** could help the government achieve its objective of doubling farmer's income, provided its policies address the challenge of sustainability.

The fisheries and aquaculture production contribute **around 1% to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** and **over 5% to the agricultural GDP**.

According to **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report "The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2018"** apparent per capita fish consumption in India [average (2013-15)] lies between a range of 5 to 10 Kg.

India in Fish Production:

India is the world's second-largest fish producer with exports worth more than **Rs 47,000 crore**.

Fisheries are the **country's single-largest agriculture export**, with a growth rate of **6 to 10 per cent** in the past five years.

Its significance is underscored by the fact that the growth rate of the farm sector in the same period is around 2.5 per cent.

India's long coastline has the potential of becoming the strength of the economy, particularly through **exploitation of the Blue Economy**, to ensure better standards and quality of life for a large number of **people living in the coastal areas**.

Our efforts in the **Sagarmala programme** will be scaled up and we will develop other inland waterways faster.

The **Blue Revolution mission aims at doubling the income of farmers** and in the last four & half years, Rs. 1915.33 crore has been released for the implementation of Blue Revolution Schemes.

Fish Consumption must not lead to Exploitation which affects Sustainability:

However, like in rest of the world, India's fisheries sector faces the **challenge of sustainability**.

The **Food and Agriculture Organisation's State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture reports** note 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**.

In order to meet the **ever-increasing demand** for animal protein, global fish production should **touch 196 million tonnes by 2025** and it currently stands at 171 million tonnes.

Taking into account the current depletion rate of marine fish stocks, that seems **next to impossible**.

But **India has the potential to bridge this gap** provided it concentrates on **aquaculture fish farming**.

Harnessing these resources sustainably will bring immense benefits:

- The **new National Policy on Marine Fisheries**, therefore, talks of introducing deep-sea fishing vessels and assisting fishing communities to convert their vessels and gears for the waters beyond.
- We, however, need to be cautious of falling prey to the temptation of introducing **large-scale industrial fishing**.
- We must factor in the **sustainability challenges** and acknowledge that fishing is a **primary livelihood activity** for a large number of communities and individuals.
- The policies framed by the new department should **aim at enhancing productivity, better returns and increased incomes**.
- The policy envisages **intensive fish farming** through increased stocking of seed, better feed quality and diversification of species.

- Innovative practices such as **re-circulatory aquaculture system** aim to realise the **goal of more crop per drop**.

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.

However, the performance of this sector in India is **impressive** when one compares it with the **average growth of the fisheries sector** all over the world.

The **Blue Revolution scheme** launched a few years ago seeks to **make fishery and aquaculture a viable and rewarding vocation**.

The scheme adopted a **two-pronged approach**.

- **Sustainable capture fishery** to harness marine and inland water resources
- **Expanding the horizon of fish farming** through increased coverage, enhanced productivity, species diversification and better market returns.

Conclusion:

India has a comparative advantage in the sustainable usage of Fisheries. It has a **marine fisher population of 3.5 million; 10.5 million people** are engaged in inland fishery and fish farming.

The **new department** will give undivided attention to **creating and strengthening infrastructure facilities in marine and inland fisheries** and give a boost to aquaculture and post-harvest activities.

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**.

The **expansion of aquaculture** would **increase this demand exponentially**. Future policies must prioritise seed production in order to attain self-sufficiency in the sector.

Our **coastline** and **our ocean waters** powering **India's development and growth** is the **New Dimension of our Vision**.

An integrated approach towards *agro and food processing, preservation, packaging and maintenance of the cold chain* will be our focus of attention.