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Shaphari: Certification Scheme for Aquaculture Products

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Why in News

Recently, the **Marine Products Exports Development Authority (MPEDA)** has developed a certification scheme for aquaculture products called 'Shaphari'.

Key Points

- **About:**

- Shaphari is based on the **United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization's** technical guidelines on aquaculture certification.
Shaphari is a Sanskrit word that means **superior quality of fishery products suitable for human consumption**.
 - It is a market-based tool for hatcheries to **adopt good aquaculture practices** and help **produce quality antibiotic-free shrimp products** to assure global consumers.

- **Components and Process:**

- **Two Components:**

- **Certifying hatcheries** for the quality of their seeds.
Those who successfully clear multiple audits of their operations shall be granted a **certificate for a period of two years**.
 - **Approving shrimp farms** that adopt the requisite good practices.

- **Process:**

- The entire **certification process will be online** to minimise human errors and ensure higher credibility and transparency.

- **Significance:**
 - The certification of hatcheries will **help farmers easily identify good quality seed producers.**
 - Certified aquaculture products will **help exporters to export their consignments to markets under stringent food safety regulations** without the fear of getting rejected.
 - It will **bolster confidence in India's frozen shrimp produce**, the country's biggest seafood export item.
- **India's Shrimp Exports:**
 - **About:**
 - India exported frozen shrimp worth almost **USD 5 billion in 2019-20**, with the **US and China** its biggest buyers.
 - Frozen shrimp is **India's largest exported seafood item**. It constituted 50.58% in quantity and 73.2% in terms of total USD earnings from the sector during 2019-20.
 - **Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu are India's major shrimp producing States**, and around 95% of the cultured shrimp produce is exported.
 - **Concern:**
 - **Container shortages** and incidents of **seafood consignments being rejected** because of food safety concerns.
 - Consignments sourced from Indian shrimp farms have been **rejected due to the presence of antibiotic residue** and this is a matter of concern for exporters.
- **Other Initiative for Food Safety of Exported Products:**

National Residue Control Programme:

- National Residue Control Plan (NRCP) is a **statutory requirement for export to European Union countries**.
- It is **regulated and carried by MPEDA**, under NRCP, **definite sampling schedule and sampling strategies are drawn every year** for monitoring the residues of substances like Antibacterial/Veterinary Medicinal Products and environmental contaminants.
- **Samples are collected from hatcheries, feed mills, aquaculture farms and processing plants**, located in maritime states and **tested for the presence of any residue/contaminant**.

Marine Products Exports 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**.
- It functions under the **Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

- It is **headquartered** in Kochi, Kerala.
- Its mandate is to **increase exports of seafood** including fisheries of all kinds, **specifying standards, marketing, processing, extension and training** in various aspects.

Source: TH