



Purse Seine Fishing

Prelims: 12 Nautical Miles, Western Coasts, Exclusive Economic Zone, State Subject.

Mains: Purse Seine Fishing Technique and its Advantage.

Why in News?

The Centre has told the [Supreme Court](#) that a ban imposed by certain coastal States on purse seine fishing, which is known to disadvantage endangered species, is not justified.

What are the Issues?

- Currently, bans on purse seine fishing are implemented in the **territorial waters** of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry, Odisha, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands **up to 12 nautical miles**.
- While States such as Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, West Bengal have not imposed any such ban.

What is Purse Seine Fishing?

- **About:**
 - A purse seine is made of a **long wall of netting framed with floating and leadline and having purse rings hanging from the lower edge** of the gear, through which runs a purse line made from steel wire or rope which allow the pursing of the net.
 - The technique has been widely deployed on India's western coasts.

▪ **Advantages:**

- Purse-seine fishing in open water is considered to be **an efficient form of fishing**.
- It has **no contact with the seabed** and can have low levels of by catch.
- It can also be **used to catch fish congregating around fish aggregating** devices
- It is used in the open ocean to target dense schools of single-species pelagic (midwater) fish like tuna and mackerel.

What are the Concerns?

- In some States, this technique **linked to concerns about the decreasing stock of small, pelagic shoaling fish** such as sardines, mackerel, anchovies and trevally on the [western coasts](#).
- The scientific community argues that **climatic conditions, including the El Nino phenomenon, are responsible for the declining catch** of such fish in the last ten years.
- However, fishermen using traditional methods have placed the blame squarely on the rise of purse seine fishing, and fear a further fall in the availability of these small fish if the ban is lifted.
 - They have also demanded that, **as the Centre has supported the lifting of the ban, it should publish the expert committee report** it has based its stance on.
- A major concern is the **dwindling availability of oil sardines, a favourite of Kerala fish eaters**.
 - In 2021, Kerala recorded a catch of just 3,297 tonnes of sardine, a sharp decrease from the haul of 3.9 lakh tonnes in 2012.
- Purse seine is a non-targeted fishing gear and catches all sorts of fishes which **come in the way of the net, including juveniles**. Hence, they are very much **detrimental to marine resources**.

What is the Union Government's Argument Against Ban?

- The Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has **recommended the lifting of the ban on purse seine fishing** on a report submitted by an expert committee.
- The expert panel has said that **this mode of fishing “per se has not resulted in any serious resource depletion** so far, given the available evidence”.
- The expert panel has **recommended purse seiners to fish in territorial waters and the Indian Exclusive Indian [Exclusive Economic Zone \(EEZ\)](#)** subject to certain conditions.
- The committee has also suggested the framing of a “national management plan on purse seine fisheries.

What is the Jurisdiction of Fishing?

- **Fishing is a state subject** and the management plan for marine fisheries in territorial waters is the job of the State.
- State subject consists of **61 subjects (originally 66 subjects)**.
 - These are of **local importance such as, local government, public order and police, agriculture, forest, public health and sanitation, fisheries, education, State taxes and duties**. The states under normal circumstances have exclusive power to make laws on subjects mentioned in the State List.

[Source: TH](#)