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Title: Need to review the law regarding permits issued to foreign fishing vessels.

SHRI K. P. DHANAPALAN (CHALAKUDY): Sir, I would like to raise an important issue related to the illegal fishing within the ocean boundary of India by the foreign fishing vessels leading to the loss of crores of rupees to the country. It was reported that most of the foreign fishing vessels who take away huge amount of fish resources from Indian coasts are carrying on fishing with illegally acquired trolling permits. It is pointed out in a report that India, where there are no proper laws to control marine fishing, is the main focus of the international fishing lobbies who aim to loot our immense fish resources. This led to huge loss both in income and in the fish resources of the country.

Licence is issued at present to foreign fishing vessels using nets like Tuna Long Line net, Mid Water Pelagic net, Hook and Line net, for fishing in Indian seacoasts. However, the foreign vessels illegally use the Long Hook and Liner net which is harmful to the fish resources and even lead to the extinction of some aquatic animals and seabirds, which was banned by the United Nations for the same reason. There is no proper arrangement to supervise and control the illegal use of such banned nets for fishing in our ocean boundary at present.

The foreign fishing vessels who acquire permits for fishing within 200 nautical miles from Indian coast are also not keeping the norms regarding the minimum percentage of Indian personnel to be employed in the foreign vessels each year from the date of acquiring the fishing permits, which is stipulated as 25 per cent, 50 per cent, 75 per cent and 100 per cent respectively from the first to fourth year from the issuance of permits.

Besides, without paying the tax proportional to the price of the captured fish produce, the foreign vessels illegally take it away by shifting to other vessels at the outer sea itself.

Hence I request that considering these points, the Government may take immediate steps for reviewing the laws pertaining to the issuance of trolling permits to the foreign fishing vessels and for its effective implementation.