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Title: Need to restore 75% central assistance for construction of fishing harbours and fish landing centres.

SHRI M.K. RAGHAVAN (KOZHIKODE): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to raise a matter of public importance relating to the Ministry of Agriculture. The Central assistance for construction of fishing harbours and fish landing centres under the Centrally-Sponsored Scheme has been reduced.

Presently, the State of Kerala is availing Central assistance of 75 per cent under the Centrally-Sponsored Scheme. There are 24 fishing harbours in the State including those under construction. The Government of India is giving assistance of 75 per cent for seven on-going fishing harbours and fish landing centres. Unfortunately, the Government of India has now issued a circular to enforce 40 per cent ceiling on capital cost of infrastructure.

Kerala has a long coastline of 570 kms. and fishing is a traditional occupation in the State with over 12 lakh fishermen engaged in this sector. The fisheries sector contributes 10 per cent of the total GDP of the State. Kerala is also the largest marine exports State in the country.

The fishing sector needs fast technological changes including availability of deep-sea fishing vessels, satellite-aided probable fishing zone identification, advanced fish processing technology, etc. Therefore, the present decision will not only adversely affect the upliftment of the sector and the fishing community, but it will also face cost escalation in all the Centrally-Sponsored Schemes and burden the State exchequer. With Kerala being a consumer State, this will heavily burden the State's economy, especially, when the fishing sector contributes 10 per cent of the GDP of the State.

Madam, through you, I would like to again request the Government of India that the amended decision of 40 per cent should be withdrawn immediately, and the 75 per cent Central assistance should be restored. Thank you, Madam.