

Title: Need to take suitable steps to retrieve Kachchathivu island from Sri Lanka.

SHRI T.G. VENKATESH BABU (CHENNAI NORTH): The centre's apathy to the plight of Tamil Nadu fishermen continues. Over 1000 fishermen have been so far killed or maimed by the Sri Lankan Navy. This brutality continues even after the change of guard of Sri Lanka. Narrowed into a tiny area, they are deprived of their traditional fishing rights and their livelihood is shattered.

Whether Kachchathivu was a disputed territory or a ceded one is the bone of contention before the Apex court, where the cession is challenged by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

The Raja of Ramnad had the sovereignty over Kachchathivu. Geology Professor M.S. Ramasamy stated that Kachchathivu, but its land mass, was an integral part of Tamil Nadu. The church there was built by Ramasamy Padaiyachi, a Tamilian. All these are documented. So there can be no dispute. It was also under the permanent occupation of Tamil Nadu fishermen.

While the median line was drawn in equidistance on the Bay of Bengal and the Gulf of Mannar, as mandated by the International maritime law, it was not so on the Palk Strait, sine Kachchathivu lies closer to Tamil Nadu.

1974 and 1976 agreements were mere executive orders and were not ratified as mandated by Section 8 of the 1974 agreement.

The present Government on the one hand is trying to retrieve the island, on the other hand to evade the question of Kachchathivu, the centre is proposing deep sea fishing as an alternative. To facilitate this, the centre has to allot Rs. 1520 crore as special fund and also a recurring grant of Rs. 10 crore per annum for maintenance & dredging.

Sri Lankans are scuttling any Settlement of this issue.

Hence, the solution lies in the retrieval of Kachchathivu, which is a sovereign right of Tamil Nadu.