

# Inclusive Outreach Connects Fishers and Fish Farmers with Policymakers Across 34 States/UTs

## Nation-wide Feedback Sessions Capture Grassroots Voices to Shape Fisheries and Aquaculture Roadmap

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More than 15,000 fishers and fish farmers from 34 States and Union Territories participated in a **nationwide series of virtual interactions organized by the Department of Fisheries (DoF)**, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying **from April to September 2025**. Led by Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, Secretary DoF, this initiative offered a direct channel for stakeholders to express their concerns and aspirations. Fishers, fish farmers, fisheries associations, cooperatives, Fisheries Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs), startups, DoF's subordinate offices, ICAR institutions, National Fisheries Development Board along with State/UT Fisheries Departments participated in these sessions for comprehensive discussions over a period of six months, starting 2nd April till 30th September 2025. The interactions spanned coastal, inland, hilly, island, and North-Eastern regions, ensuring broad representation from nearly every district nationwide. This exercise not only helped identify current challenges but also collect feedback to shape future policy interventions, infrastructure planning, and targeted support welfare measures for the fisheries and aquaculture sector. While sharing their challenges, fishers and fish farmers expressed appreciation for the support received under schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY), Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF), Group Accident Insurance Scheme (GAIS), Blue Revolution and Kisan Credit Card by the government.

### Key Feedback from Stakeholders

During the interactions, fishers and fish farmers emphasized the importance of quality fish seed, brood banks, affordable feed, and local feed mills. Stakeholders also highlighted the need for further strengthening of facilities such as transport, cage culture, mini hatcheries, ice boxes, poly sheets, cold storage, and support for aquaculture, including the integration of solar energy. Additionally, stakeholders highlighted adoption of innovative technology-based solutions, such as drones for live fish transport to expand market reach, satellite applications for the safety and security of fishermen, and potential fishing zone advisories. During the interaction, the fishermen appreciated the initiative of the Government for installing transponders free of cost in their fishing vessels. These transponders have proven instrumental in providing them with timely Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ) advisories, weather alerts and updates on cyclone, navigating them to safer routes. The fishermen also highlighted that the transponders are helpful in providing alerts avoiding unintentional crossing over of international Maritime Boundary Lines.

On the marketing front, participants emphasized the need for strengthening dedicated fish markets, kiosks, and modern fish processing plants to enhance value chains and improve price realization. They suggested that the flagship scheme, Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), should further strengthen the support for alternate livelihoods through activities like seaweed cultivation, ornamental fisheries, and pearl farming. The need for regular capacity-building and training programmes to improve technical know-how, farm management practices, and disease control measures were also stressed upon. Additionally, stakeholders highlighted the importance of aquatic health management system and disease control by providing facilities for water quality testing laboratories.

The mobile-based video conferencing format, enabled participants to connect directly with senior officials from the comfort of their homes. While highlighting the importance of these consultations, **Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi**, observed that these feedback sessions have created a vital bridge between fishers, fish farmers and policymakers. **“The insights received will guide our interventions and ensure that growth in the sector remains inclusive, sustainable, and farmer centric in alignment with the Department of Fisheries’ 5 year roadmap and the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047”**, he said.

### About the Fisheries Sector

The Fisheries sector, acknowledged as a ‘Sunrise Sector’, is crucial for sustaining the livelihoods of nearly 3 crore people in the country, particularly the marginalized and vulnerable fishers and fish farmers. India is the world’s second-largest fish producer, contributing 8% to global output, and also ranks second in aquaculture production globally. Since the introduction of targeted interventions in 2015, the Government of India has approved or announced cumulative investments of ₹38,572 crores across various schemes. Consequently, total fish production has soared to 195 lakh tonnes. The sector has been experiencing an annual growth rate of 8.74%. Seafood exports have also risen to Rs. 60,524 crores in 2023-24. With the notification of 34 fisheries production and processing clusters across the country, the Department is now steering formation of species-specific clusters with focus on strengthening the species-specific value chain for leveraging the latest technologies. This cluster-based approach also aims at women empowerment through formation of FFPOs and cooperatives, boosting domestic consumption of fish, promoting exports and ensuring livelihood support to the marginalized fishers and fish farmers.



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