

## National Fisheries Policy 2020 - UPSC Notes

The draft National Fisheries Policy was released by the Fisheries Department in September 2020 aiming to integrate the various existing policies related to fisheries in India. In this article, you can read all about the draft National Fisheries Policy 2020. It is an important topic for the [UPSC exam](#) polity and economy segments.

### National Fisheries Policy 2020

The National Fisheries Policy 2020 has been drafted merging three existing policies, namely:

1. National Policy on Marine Fisheries, 2017 (NPMF)
2. Draft National Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (NIFAP)
3. Draft National Mariculture Policy (NMP)

Post-harvest elements have also been integrated into the draft policy.

#### Background

- The Indian fisheries sector encompasses a diverse range of resources and ranges from the Himalayas to the coastal plains and the Indian Ocean.
- The sector employs millions of people and is a source of livelihood for them.
- The fisheries biodiversity also includes diverse physical and biological components.
- Fisheries are a very crucial source of food, livelihood, nutrition and income in India.
- The sector gives livelihoods to almost 16 million fishers and fish farmers at the primary level and about twice the number along the value chain.
- Fisheries have now become a commercial enterprise and its share in the GDP has increased from 0.40% in 1950-51 to 1.03% in 2017-18.
- India is one of the leading exporters of seafood in the world.
  - It hence contributes to the foreign exchange also in a big way.
  - Marine exports constitute about 5% of the total exports and about 19% of agricultural exports.
- The marine fisheries sector is dominated by the socio-economically backward artisanal and small scale fishers whose lives are closely intertwined with the oceans and seas. However, 75 percent of the total marine fish production comes from the mechanized sector, 23 percent from the motorized sector and only 2 percent from the artisanal sector.
- Additionally, fish is a cheap and good source of animal protein and hence, a good option to reduce hunger and malnutrition.

#### Fisheries Management Structure in India

Fisheries is a state subject and therefore, states play an important role in managing and promoting the growth of this sector in the country.

- Inland fisheries are entirely managed by the state governments.
- States and UTs develop and regulate seawater fisheries inside the 12 nautical mile territorial limit.
- In the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) waters beyond 12 nautical miles and up to 200 nautical miles, the Union Government is responsible for fisheries.

#### Constraints in the Fisheries Sector Growth

Some of the constraints in the fisheries sector's growth are given below:

- Limited scope for expansion due to overcapacities in territorial waters, inefficient management, weak regulation and dominance of traditional fishing practices.
- Inadequate infrastructure especially fishing harbours, cold chain and distribution systems, poor processing and value addition, wastage, traceability and certification, non-availability of skilled manpower, etc. are some of the other factors constraining the growth.
- The seasonal nature of fishing activity in inland fisheries is an important constricting factor in this sector's growth.
- The use of obsolete technology along with low capital infusion are also other limiting factors in this sector.
- Culture fisheries suffer from problems such as the bad physical condition of resources, low productivity, incidents of diseases, low investment, low technology adoption, shortage of skilled manpower, etc.

### National Fisheries Policy Vision & Mission

The vision of the National Fisheries Policy 2020 is to develop an ecologically healthy, economically viable and socially inclusive fisheries sector. Another vision of the policy is to provide food & nutritional security to the country in a sustainable manner.

The Policy's mission is to develop, manage, regulate and conserve responsibly the fisheries resources.

### Objectives of NFP, 2020

# NATIONAL FISHERIES POLICY, 2020 OBJECTIVES



- Optimally harness the capture and culture fisheries potential of the country by enhancing fish production and productivity in a responsible and sustainable manner.
- Promote inland fisheries and aquaculture through standardized SoPs, inputs and farming systems for sustainable and responsible culture and capture fisheries.

- A robust management and regulatory framework with necessary legal backing for effective fisheries resource management through an Ecosystem Approach of Fisheries (EAF) management within the overall framework of relevant national and international instruments, policies and standards.



- Modernize, rationalize (infuse science and technology) and diversify fishing practices in oceans and seas with sustainability of resources as the core philosophy.
- Promote community partnerships, private participation and effective cooperative movement in fisheries sector.

- Conserve and manage native fish genetic stocks and associated habitats and ecosystem.
- Strengthen and modernize value chain including creation of fisheries infrastructure to increase shelf life, reduction of post-harvest losses and production of value added products.



- Market, trade and export of global competitive fish and value-added fish products benchmarked with global standards.
- Access to institutional credit as priority lending on the lines of crop sector especially to small and marginal fishers and fish farmers and unemployed youth.

- Generate gainful employment and entrepreneurship opportunities along the value chain leading to higher income of fishers and fish farmers, improve their living standards and usher in economic prosperity.
- Ensure food and nutritional security by increasing the per capita availability of safe, affordable and quality fish.



## Draft National Fisheries Policy, 2020 - Strategies

Some of the important interventions under the scheme are given below.

1. A state-level Inter-departmental Coordination Committee for Fisheries will be formed. The Agriculture Production Commissioner will be the chairperson of the committee.
2. The GOI will formulate 'Fisheries Management Plans' (FMPs) for the scientific regulation & management of marine fisheries resources.
3. The state governments will formulate Fisheries Spatial Plans along with the Central Government for data management, analysis, modeling and decision making.
4. The government will develop an Integrated Fisheries Development Plan, especially for the islands to improve their share in the economy.
5. A capacity appraisal framework will be developed to assess the feasibility of engaging in sea ranching for rebuilding stocks without changing the natural genetic diversity.
6. The Fisheries Act will be updated to prevent the use of destructive gear in inland waters.
7. A cluster-based approach will be implemented to develop aquaculture.
8. Standards will be established for fish and fishery products in conformity with international food safety standards.
9. Public Private Partnerships will be encouraged to leverage investments from the private sector into the fisheries sector.

## Draft National Fisheries Policy, 2020 - Concerns

A few experts have expressed their reservations regarding the draft fisheries policy. Some of the concerns are mentioned below.

- The policy seems to be export-oriented, production-driven and based on capital investments. This might lead to small fishers being denied to their rights of access to commons. It could also be potentially harmful to the environment in the long run.
- The policy does not talk about women, classes and castes associated with the fisheries sector in India. Most of the fishers are from the marginalised communities and they are also not a homogenous group. This has not been adequately addressed in the draft policy.
- The policy seems to be silent on protecting the fishing communities according to the National Fishworkers Forum (NFF), which is a trade union of small scale fishers.
- Some experts feel that integrating all the sectors of fishing into one is not a good idea as the marine fishing is quite different from inland fishing. Also, capture and culture fishing is entirely different sectors.
- Others feel that some of the strategies included in the sector require capital-intensive technologies and can also be ecologically hazardous.
- Regarding inland fisheries, some opine that the idea of leasing out these water bodies to private entrepreneurs will lead to traditional fishers being adversely affected. They will lose their rights to these water bodies and become contract labourers.
- Aquaculture can cause a lot of pollution since it leads to eutrophication of water bodies ultimately leading to habitat destruction and also destroying livelihoods of those who invest in this fish farming method. The draft doesn't mention what the mitigation factors will be for this.
- Another criticism is that the language of the draft policy is about resource exploitation rather than management. It focuses more on the technological and economic dimensions and ignores the other important dimensions of the fisheries sector, ecological, social, ethical and institutional.

