International Relations · GS - II

Examine the recurring fishermen-related disputes between India and Sri Lanka in the Palk Strait. Suggest measures to protect fishermen's livelihoods while respecting maritime boundaries.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Palk Strait; Katchatheevu; maritime boundary agreements; fishermen's livelihoods; bottom trawling; bilateral cooperation; sustainable fisheries; consular assistance

Model Answer

Introduction

Fishermen-related disputes in the Palk Strait remain a sensitive issue in India–Sri Lanka relations. Arrests and detention affect coastal livelihoods and can generate diplomatic tensions.

Causes of Disputes

1. Maritime Boundaries

India and Sri Lanka established maritime boundaries through bilateral agreements. Fishing across these boundaries can lead to detention and legal proceedings.

2. Competition over Marine Resources

Declining fish stocks, competition over fishing grounds and the use of bottom trawling contribute to tensions. Bottom trawling can damage seabed ecosystems and affect traditional fishing communities.

3. Socioeconomic Vulnerability

Small-scale fishing families often depend on daily catches and face financial hardship when boats are seized or fishermen are detained.

Measures Required

India and Sri Lanka should strengthen communication between maritime authorities, ensure prompt consular access and pursue humane treatment and timely resolution of detention cases. Joint fisheries committees can address disputes and promote sustainable practices.

India should support alternative livelihoods, deep-sea fishing and the transition to less destructive fishing methods where appropriate.

Conclusion

A durable solution requires diplomatic engagement, respect for maritime boundaries, sustainable fisheries management and protection of fishermen’s rights and livelihoods.

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