

UK seafood industry imports from India 2018*		
Fish type	Value, £	Weight, tonnes
Warm Water Shrimps and Prawns	78,830,136	11593
Other Fish	5,371,949	1571
Prepared and Preserved Shrimps and Prawns	11,554,854	1327
Surimi	1,689,308	862
Squid	2,016,980	532
Mackerel	807,858	220
Mixed	1,148,163	207
Tuna	501,136	167
Nephrops	281,713	141
Other Shellfish	470,285	78
Crabs	336,242	60
Cuttlefish & Squid	232,733	56
Swordfish	220,206	43
Tilapia	19,449	15
Anchovies	29,035	12
Other Flat Fish	14,852	12
Sardines	17,748	12
Octopus	55,529	11
Catfish	12,768	9
Offal	7,942	3
Ornamental	28,315	2
Dogfish/Shark	2,188	1
Seabream	916	0
Sardinella/Brisling/Sprat	1,120	0

*Source: Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

Introduction

This report is part of a series of country risk profiles that are designed to provide an understanding of the social risks associated with source countries that play a key role in the UK's seafood industry. Each report covers risks related to the production and processing of wild catch and aquaculture seafood products.

This report covers issues such as forced and child labour, working conditions, and impacts of the industry on local communities; and the mitigation efforts and regulatory frameworks put in place to address these issues.

This country risk profile has been compiled by Verisk Maplecroft on behalf of Seafish. Information on issues has been collated from publicly available sources, varying from international rankings and ratings, research by academics and other organisations, through to media articles. It has been prepared for general information only. You should not rely solely on its contents; always verify information from your own suppliers in your own supply chain. References for all information sources are provided.

Overview

India's 8,000-kilometre-long coastline gives it a natural advantage in terms of aquaculture production. The Indian seafood industry makes up 6.3% of the total global fish production and it is a profession for over 14.5 million people in the country.¹ In 2018, India's seafood exports reached \$7 billion and The Marine Products Exports Development Authority (MPEDA) estimates this will reach \$10 billion in 2022² with frozen shrimp being its flagship export to the US and EU. Major seafood exports from India to the UK include shrimp, other marine fish, squid, other cephalopods and surimi.

Social Risks

Within the commercial fishing and fish processing industries, women are highly exposed to labour violations.

Although labour violations are present throughout India's seafood industry, the greatest risk is within the processing sector where women account for approximately 70% of the workforce across processing operations. In fact, they account for 90% of the workforce engaged in shrimp peeling. A high figure given shrimp production accounts for 80% of India's seafood export earnings.³

The already weak enforcement of women's rights throughout India translates into a greater likelihood of wage and working hours exploitation within the fish processing industry.⁴ Credible NGO reports have found that women in seafood processing face low daily wages without access to insurance programs, with only 15.7% covered under the Employee Provident Fund. Additionally, the development of technology could automate much of the human work at the processing level which would disproportionately affect the country's already small, female workforce - the female participation rate is only at 27%.⁵

Labour violation risks are also present for informal, migrant labourers in the fishing sector albeit to a lesser degree than in the processing industry. Other vulnerable groups participating across India's seafood industry include internal migrant workers from northern India, who are largely employed on fishing boats for extended periods of time.⁶ Migrant workers can be exposed to labour violations as they are likely to face isolated working conditions on fishing vessels and would be employed as contract labour. Contract labour in the seafood industry in India tends to be exploitative in nature, including long working hours without formal contracts; severely unhygienic conditions; frequent injuries and illnesses; and limited medical care or safety equipment.⁷

Child labour risks present in aquaculture where smallholder farms account for a large portion of the sector.

Aquaculture, which accounts for 65% of India's seafood output,⁸ is largely conducted by smallholder farms, including family-run farms. Family-run farms, particularly in rural regions where workforce is limited, often rely on child labour to help generate income. According to a Global March report, young persons are employed across multiple activities, both at-sea and onshore, within a few districts. Of note, girls above the age of seven are employed in cleaning, salting and drying fish.⁹ Yet, because of the small-scale nature of these farms, labour violations are less likely to be reported.¹⁰

Regulations and risk mitigation

India ratifying two fundamental conventions on child labour is a step forward, but much more work is needed to effectively combat the issue in its seafood industry. In 2017, India ratified two ILO conventions – the Minimum Age Convention and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention – to tackle the staggering problem of child labour in the country. However, the biggest problem remains lack of adequate information and monitoring systems for eliminating child domestic labour in India, especially in the informal sector like India's small-scale fisheries where millions of children are victimised.

According to a former ILO economist, eradicating child labour is going to be a difficult task unless there is a social movement.¹¹ The government must invest in primary and secondary education to help prevent children from being pushed into labour, while also addressing the current problems of unemployment to ensure that children have good job prospects after completing their studies.

The Indian government set a 'Human Rights At Sea' (HRAS) commitment to increase the country's 'consciousness' on human rights issues in the fishing industry. HRAS's mission is to raise awareness, implementation and accountability of human rights provisions throughout the maritime environment, especially when they are currently absent ignored or being abused.

In February 2019, the Indian government, in conjunction with the National Human Rights Commission, convened the IMO and other international bodies in Mumbai to help drive forward the HRAS agenda. The session led to the identification of non-payment of wages and abandonment of seafarers as the most common human rights violations on the seas, of which Indian seafarers make up the largest group.

The Director General (DG) of Shipping highlighted that the current issues of abandonment of Indian seafarers and highlighted how it had helped to close a “loop-hole” in the MLC 2006 regime. The loop-hole allowed for the repatriation of an abandoned seafarer but did not cast any obligation on the insurance agency to provide a replacement seafarer”.¹² The new amendments give: effect to the continuation of a seafarers’ contract during the period of their captivity; makes an entitlement to wages and other emoluments during the contract period; and places responsibility for their repatriation on employers.

International conventions and rankings

The following tables indicate which international labour conventions India has ratified. The ratification of these conventions is a good indicator of a source country’s commitment to enforcing internationally accepted best practices in the seafood industry when combined with thorough national legislation and well-resourced enforcement mechanisms.

International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions	Ratification
Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise (No. 87)	No
Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining (No. 98)	No
Forced Labour (No. 29)	Yes
Abolition of Forced Labour (No. 105)	Yes
Equal Remuneration (No. 100)	Yes
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) (No. 111)	Yes
Minimum Age (No. 138)	Yes
Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182)	Yes
Hours of Work (Industry) (No.1)	Yes
Weekly Rest (Industry) (No.14)	Yes
Protection of Wages (No. 95)	No
Minimum Wage Fixing (No.131)	No
Occupational Safety and Health (No. 155)	No
Occupational Health Services (No. 161)	No
Labour Inspection (No. 81)	Yes
Maritime Labour Convention (No. 186)	Yes
Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188)	No
Private Employment Agencies (No. 181)	No
Maritime Labour Convention (No. 186)	Yes
Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188)	No

United Nations (UN) Conventions	Ratification
Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children	Yes
Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	Yes
Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation and the Prostitution of Others	Yes
Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	No
Convention to Suppress the Slave Trade and Slavery	No
FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing	No
Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery	Yes

Other Conventions	Ratification
FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing	No

Rankings in global indices

US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report

The TIP report is released annually by the US Department of State and offers a summary of the laws and enforcement efforts of various countries with respect to human trafficking. Specifically, it ranks countries based on a '3P paradigm' of prosecuting traffickers, protecting victims and preventing crime. Scoring on these elements is then collated to give each country a ranking. The rankings range from Tier 1 which indicates governments of countries that fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Prevention Act (TVPA) minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking to Tier 3 for the governments of countries that do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

Rating: Tier 2

According to the US Department of State's 2019 Trafficking in Person's report, India does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, its government is making the effort to do so and over the most recent reporting period has demonstrated an overall increase in efforts compared to the previous reporting period.

Global Slavery Index

The 2018 Global Slavery Index measures the extent of modern slavery country by country, and the steps governments are taking to respond to this issue, to objectively measure progress toward ending modern slavery.

There are two rankings:

1. Rankings of countries by prevalence of the population in modern slavery. Rankings range from 1 to 167 - with 1 the worst and 167 the best, in terms of the prevalence of slavery.
2. Rank of countries in terms of government response to the issue. This is an indication of how governments are tackling modern slavery. This ranking ranges from AAA at the top to D at the bottom, with AAA denoting the most effective and comprehensive Government response.

For prevalence India's ranking is: 53/167 (where a ranking of 1 indicates highest risk).¹³

In terms of government response India ranks B. This indicates that the Indian authorities have introduced a response to modern slavery with limited victim support services, a criminal justice framework that criminalises some forms of modern slavery (or has recently amended inadequate legislation and policies), a body or mechanisms that coordinate the response, and has policies that provide some protection for those vulnerable to modern slavery. There is evidence that some government policies and practices may criminalise and/or deport victims and/or facilitate slavery. Services may be provided by International Organisations (IOs)/NGOs with international funding, sometimes with government monetary or in-kind support.

EU Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Watch List

Under the IUU Regulation, non-EU countries identified as having inadequate measures in place to prevent and deter this activity may be issued with a formal warning (yellow card) to improve. If they fail to do so, they face having their fish banned from the EU market (red card) among other measures.

India is not on the EU IUU watch list.

Endnotes

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For further information see the [Seafish ethics in Seafood web page](https://www.seafish.org/article/ethics-in-seafood). Available at: <https://www.seafish.org/article/ethics-in-seafood>