



O/c

ALL GOA SMALL SCALE RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES UNION
190, Nauxim, Bambolim, Tiswadi, Goa. 403 206
Reg.No.561

Date: 19/05/2023

To,
Shri. Parshottam K. Rupala
Union cabinet minister of Fisheries and Animal Husbandry and Dairying
Government of India,
New Delhi

Respected Sir,

Hearty welcome to Goa on behalf of All Goa Small Scale Responsible Fisheries Union. We are thankful to Goa Fisheries Minister Shri Nilkhant Halarnkar for encouraging us to submit the grievances faced by Fisheries in the State of Goa for your kind attention and redressal.

At the onset we thank you for visiting Goa and making time and taking efforts to listen and to understand problems faced by fishing communities in Goa. We wish to draw your valuable attention to following problems faced by Fisheries sector in Goa:

1. Indian Parliament passed National Waterways Act, 2016 and published in Official Gazette of India on March 26, 2016. Under this law six of Goa's rivers are declared as "National Waterways". These six rivers are Sal, Zuari, Cumbharjua, Mandovi, Moira/Mapusa and Chapora. This was done without consulting fishing communities in Goa even though provisions of this law interfere with inland fishing activities in Goa regarding dredging shifting of river governance from Goa Government to the Union Government with unlimited jurisdiction over river bank land. Kindly delete all the six rivers from the list of National Waterways by passing relevant Amendment to the National Waterways Act 2016 in Indian Parliament.

2. Indian Parliament passed Major Port Authorities Act 2021 for 11 Ports in India, notified in Official Gazzette of India on February 18, 2021 One of these Ports is in Goa known for several decades as Mormugao Port Trust (MPT). Passing of this law changed MPT into Mormugao Port Authority (MPA). We wish to draw your attention to the fact that MPT/MPA has been undermining fishing interests over the past several decades. MPT has carried on demolition of fishing communities residential houses at beaches closeby to the Port at Mormugao. Kharea vaddo and Baina beaches are two such examples. Port has gone about deepening and expansion of berths causing erosion of beaches nearby and even regular pollution of beaches due to Coal handling. It claimed its Jurisdiction over Coastal areas from Vasco to right upto Betul in South Goa. It is also claiming its Jurisdiction over Zuari river right upto Agassaim-Cortalim bridge. MPT in October 2010 leased out over 2,00,000 Square meters of Zuari river front to set up two Marinas- One at Nauxi and the other at Sancoale for 30 years. Since then fishing communities alongside other people of Goa has opposed both these projects. Issue of Nauxim Marina is being heard at Goa Bench of Bombay High Court. EIA report of Nauxim Marina proceed negative irreversible long term effects on fishing activities in case Marina is set up in Nauxim. Several fishing Villages such as Dona Paula, Vaiguinim, Odxel, Marvel, Cakra, Nauxim, Bambolim, Siridao, Agassaim, Cortalim, Sancoale, Chicalim stands to be deprived of their fishing livelihood through small scale fishing activities.

You are requested to prevail upon Union Ministry of Ports and get these two Marinas lease deeds cancelled and file necessary affidavit at the ongoing Court Proceedings. Next date of Hearing is fixed for June 19, 2023.

Additionally inclusion of six of Goa's rivers in National Waterways Act 2017 has extended Jurisdiction of MPA/MPT over all the six river. Major Ports Authorities Act 2021 provides excessive powers including powers to raise equity capital to MPA and it can easily over rule decisions of Goa Government and rent out/ sell out Goa's six rivers whenever it decides too. This is highly objectionable.

We request you to exclude Mormugao Port from the Major Port Authorities Act 2021 through suitable Ammendment in the Parliament.

3. In Canacona Taluka, fishermen are restricted from fishing in Arabian Sea near the Anjadeva Island due to Naval occupation of Goa's territory.

We request you to get Indian Navy at Naval Sea Bird Project at Karwar to relax its restrictions on fishing activities as fishermen cannot be treated as terrorists. Similar restrictions are placed by Navy on fishermen at some locations on Southern bank of Zuari river where riparian land is under Naval occupation. Here too fishing restrictions imposed by Indian Navy must be revoked.

4. We request Union Fisheries Ministry to provide four patrol boats to the Goa Fisheries department with required grants for its functional feasibility. Currently there is just one such boat with Goa Fisheries department and that too is highly inefficient with constant breakdowns, absence of 24 hour staff to respond to the call. Department has 24 hour Telephone helpline at the Fisheries Control room but it is not useful in the light of absence of functional patrol boats in navigable preparedness.

5. Kindly issue advisory/directions to all the State Fisheries Departments to ensure that all the personell holding posts of Fisheries Surveyors and Fisheries Officers must have compulsory swimming skills. Due to absence of such skills this staff is reluctant to impliment enforcement measures against illegal trawling and illegal purse seine fishing regularly in Coastal waters within 5 kms and inside Rivers such as Zuari river. Swimming skill details of these officials must be declared on State Fisheries Department website.

6. Kindly issue Advisory/directions to the State Fisheries Departments to disburse accumulated corpus funds to the fishing communities facing various kinds of disasters such as gutting of fishing boats, fishing nets and other fishing assets due fire. Currently corpus funds at Goa Fisheries department is being operated in non-transparent manner and those fishers faced with distressed conditions don't get access to this fund. Details of corpus fund accumulated must be disclosed to public on State Fisheries Department website.

7. Inland fishing in various rivers of Goa has created severe threat to marine life. Though this is State subject kindly raise it with Goa Government as inspite of High Directions against sand mining in Goa it goes on clandestinely. It is taking place from mid-night to early morning in illegal manner. Mandovi river is ongoing example. Enforcement mechanism to crackdown on illegal sand mining in Goa is inefficient. Sand mining in front of Coastal Security Police Station goes unnoticed in Mandovi River.

8. Mandovi River was extremely good for fishing. However for one additional reason fishing activities has affected very badly. Concrete debris of the Mandovi bridge that collapsed on July 05, 1986 are still in the middle of river near Panjim creating obstructions to water flow affecting entry of fish from Arabian Sea upstream into Mandovi Estuary. Inspite of our petitionings Goa Government hasn't acted.

We request you to issue directions to the Goa Government remove the above mentioned bridge debris from Mandovi River and clear out obstacles for water flow and fish movement.

9. Stationing of offshore Casinos at the mouth of Mandovi River has dealt major blow for fishing activities. Once lucrative fishing ground at Panjim has turned into Gambling den promoting unethical activities and disruption and blocking of fishing activities due to presence of several huge gambling vessels in Mandovi waters. Location of Casinos in Mandovi is a conquest of Goa's rivers. And yearns to be freed. This is an ongoing disaster for fishing and we request you to prevail upon Goa Government to shift out these casino vessels away from Mandovi River.

10. Aggressive promotion of water sports in rivers is having detrimental effect on fishing in Goa. In Zuari watersports activities being operated from Hotel Grand Hyatt is causing tearing off of fishing gill nets in the river. Water sports engine sound drives away fish, leakage of engine oil contributes towards marine pollution.

Mandovi River on Divar Island water sports being carried on by Champions Island that is corporate entity has disrupted fishing activities, destroyed fish breeding sites through dredging. Water sports inside Rivers must not be permitted. Champions Island, a private company was given permission for Cage fishing but instead what goes on is water sports. Goa's Director of Fisheries has been taken for a ride. You are requested to take adequate steps in this regard.

11. Fishing communities in Goa must be given secure rights over water for fishing so that we are not tossed around by various vested interests. In this connection we request you to enact law in the Parliament of India providing rights to fishing communities just like Tribals and Other First Dwellers are given rights over forest Through Tribals and Other Forest Rights Act 2006. This will go a long way in serving needs of fishing communities in India and securing food security.

Kindly initiative action on all the above points and keep us updated.

Thank you again for the opportunity to communicate with you.

Yours Sincerely,

Shaila
Shaila D'mello,
President

Laximan
Laximan Mangueshkar,
Secretary

Copy to:

1. ✓ Shri Nilkhant Halarnkar, Hon. Minister of Fisheries, Government of Goa, Secretariate, Porvorim, Goa.

2. ✓ Secretary (Fisheries), Government of Goa, Secretariate, Porvorim, Goa.

3. National Convener, National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers, New Delhi.