



## **NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR SMALL SCALE FISHWORKERS (INLAND)**

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March 28, 2020

**Shri Ajay Kumar Bhalla, IAS.**  
Secretary,  
Ministry of Home Affairs,  
Government of India..

Sub: Exemption of production, transport and sale of fish and fish products that include fishing, fish farming and vending operations from Lockdown restrictions announced to contain Corona Virus (COVID-19) infestation.

Respected Sir,

We are writing this appeal to you at a time when the country alongwith the world is involved in a united and desperate effort to address the menace of Corona Virus. The Honourable Prime Minister has issued necessary and timely directions in this regard including 21 days' lockdown.

NPSSFW(I), as the national platform for small scale fish workers of the country, has also issued an advisory (copy enclosed) for fish workers and their organisations in the matter.

Fish is essential for food security and nutritional status of the people of our country. More than 80 crores of our citizens eat fish. As such it is imperative that production and distribution of fish should be treated as that of an *Essential Commodity*.

Also it may to be noted that the fisheries sector provides employment to no less than 30 million fish workers.

The Government of India in its Guidelines issued under Ministry of Home Affairs Order No. 40-3/2020-D dt.24.03.2020 on the measures to be taken by Ministries/Departments of Government of India, State/Union Territory Authorities for containment of COVID-19 Epidemic in the Country has clearly stated that fish shops will be exempted from the lockdown.

We appreciate that the Joint Secretary of the Department of Fisheries in the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, under his D.O. letter no. 12035/1/2016-Fy(WU) dt.24.03.2020, has written to Chief Secretaries of all the states and Union Territories to make personal intervention and issue necessary directions to exempt fisheries from the lockdown and allow movement of fish and fish products related to fishers, fish farmers, aquaculture farms and other related commercial establishments.



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We have also observed that the 2nd Addendum to Guidelines annexed to the Ministry of Home Affairs Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) Dt. 24.03.2020 has added to Goods and Services exempted from Lockdown.

We bring it to your kind notice that though the Guidelines of the Ministry of Home Affairs exempted shops dealing with 'meat and fish' from the Lockdown, it did not explicitly exempt operations related with production and procurement of the same. This is causing a lot of confusion in the compliance and enforcement of the Guidelines. **There is an urgent need for official directions to exempt activities related to the production and procurement of fish, as has been rightly done in the case of 'Farming operations by farmers and farm workers in the field' under the 2nd addendum.**

In this context, we would request you to kindly take immediate step to issue an official direction **to exempt the production, transport and sale of fish and fish products that include fishing, fish farming and fish vending.**

We take this opportunity to further request you to ensure that the fish workers affected by the Lockdown get both ration and monthly allowance to tide over their difficulties.

Thanking you,

With best regards,

**Pradip Chatterjee,**

Convener, NPSSFW(I)

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