



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SMALL-SCALE FISHWORKERS

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PRESS STATEMENT

Monetising Misfortune

Blue Economy's Onslaught on Small-Scale Fishing Communities in India Small-Scale Fishing Communities Reject Government Model of Development

The National Federation of Small-Scale Fishworkers (NFSF) reaffirms its strong opposition to the Blue Economy model of development, which in essence means handing over the ecological resources to the corporate at the cost of traditional, small-scale fishing communities. Large number of ports, logistics corridors and infrastructure, real estate and tourism, nuclear, defence and power infrastructure, oil and natural gas extraction and pharmaceutical industries have been lacerating the coastal ecology. **The ongoing 'India Maritime Week 2025' conclave is a blatant proclamation of the invasion and occupation of the Indian coast.** Hidden behind India's development and global aspirations lay the exclusion of fishing communities from democratic processes, their expulsion from the coast and the extinction of their way of life and livelihood.

Each and every protest of the small-scale fishing communities are crushed through brutal state repression.

78 years of independence has failed to provide any legal right to the small-scale fishing communities over their livelihood spaces. That includes fisheries resources, coastal lands and waters, rivers, wetlands, reservoirs, lagoons, ponds and tanks. This absence of rights is the main reason that facilitates the transfer of these lands and waters from small-scale fishing communities to corporate entities for profits under the sponsorship of the state.

Indiscriminate promotion of capital-intensive mechanised fishing is running havoc to the marine fisheries resources. Encroachments, pollution, excessive diversion of water from water bodies and use of rivers for huge cargo transportation are similarly affecting both inland and marine fisheries resources. Massive promotion of aquaculture is premised upon the ruin of natural fish resources. Boom of intensive/industrial shrimp aquaculture has destroyed the coastal ecology, which is the resource base of small-scale fishing communities. There are wider concerns in the short sighted profit seeking shift to chemical shrimp aquaculture from natural or traditional shrimp production, such as depletion of groundwater and threat to public health with food insecurity and nutritional deficiency.



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Small-scale fishing communities who are least responsible for the climate crisis are bearing its most severe brunt. The small-scale fishing communities are experiencing the climate crisis in severe loss of fishing days, loss of life, boats and nets, habitat destruction and gradual collapse of fish drying activities, which disproportionately affect women from the fishing community. Existing government policies are not only inadequate to compensate for the financial losses faced by small-scale fishing communities, but also are promoting those most responsible for the climate crisis.

To counter the onslaught on small-scale fishing communities, NFSF demands:

1. **Protection and restoration of coastal and inland water bodies, including fish resources;**
2. **Small-scale fishing communities right to access, use and protect water, land and fish resources;**
3. **Stop destruction of the coast in the name of Blue Economy;**
4. **Stop over-fishing and destructive fishing practices and methods;**
5. **Stop intensive/industrial aquaculture;**
6. **Stop criminalisation of small-scale fishing communities**
7. **Climate justice for small-scale fishing communities;**

***Our Coasts, Our Rivers, Our Wetlands are Not for Sale.
Save Water. Save Fish. Save Fisher People.***

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