

**Report of the
4th National Conference of
National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers
(Inland)
NPSSFW(I)**

16-17 July, 2019. Jawharlal Nehru National Youth Centre. New Delhi-110002



4th National Conference of National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers (Inland)

**Delegates from 15 States of India Resolve to Take the
Struggle Forward**

**"Upliftment of Small Scale Fishing Communities is our motto.
We are committed to Antodaya or Sarvodaya.**

**As Mahatma Gandhi said 'We do not need mass production,
we need production by masses.'"**

**- said Sri Pratap Chandra Sarengi, Hon'ble Minister of State in
Charge of Fisheries.**



National Conference is in Session with Sri P.C. Sarengi (MoS in Charge of Fisheries); Pradip Chatterjee (Convener, NPSSFWI); Dr. R. K. Ranjan Singh (MP, Imphal Manipur); Sri Jagannath Sarkar (MP, Ranaghat, West Bengal) and Dr. Dilip Kumar seated at the head of the conference table.

4th National Conference of Fish Workers (Inland) took place in Delhi on 16-17 July, 2019 at the Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre. Delegates from 15 states of India participated in the meeting. Dr. Dilip Kumar, Ex- Director/Vice-Chancellor of Central Institute for Fisheries Education and Chairman of the Expert Committee appointed by the Government of India to prepare the draft National Inland and Aquaculture Policy inaugurated the Conference on 16th July 2019 at 9.30 am by

lighting lamp. He was assisted by Mr. Johann Ivanov, Deputy Representative Program Director, Social Justice, FES, India Office and Pradip Chatterjee.

Sri Pratap Chandra Sarangi, Hon'ble Minister of State in charge of the Department of Fisheries, Government of India, addressed the conference on 17th July, 2019 as the Chief Guest of Honour. **Dr. R. K. Ranjan Singh** and **Sri Jagannath Sarkar**, respected Members of Parliament respectively from Imphal, Manipur and Ranaghat, West Bengal also spoke in the conference as Guests of Honour.



Dr. Dilip Kumar and Mr. Johann Ivanov inaugurating the Conference by lighting lamp. They are flanked by Soumen Ray, National Coordinator and Pradip Chatterjee, National Convener.

The inaugural session was also addressed by Guests of Honour **Mr. Johann Ivanov**, Deputy Representative Program Director, Social Justice, FES, India Office; **Sri Sandeep Chachra**, Country Director of ActionAid, India and Sri Anup Srivastava, Programme Adviser, Labour and Industrial Relations, FES, India.

Soumen Ray, National Coordinator of NPSSFW(I), welcomed all the delegates and guests to the 4th National Conference of the Platform and requested all to actively participate in the discussions so that the platform takes decisions through an exercise of collective wisdom.

The conference observed **1 minute silence** to pay respect for departed fish workers and fish workers' organisers and leaders.

The **Guests of Honour were felicitated** by **Pradip Chatterjee**, Convener NPSSFW(I) by presenting them with Conference kit.



The House observes silence for one minute in respectful memory of departed community members and leaders



Felicitating Dr. Dilip Kumar with Conference Kit

Dr. Dilip Kumar, thanked NPSSFW(I) for the efforts it has taken in organising a nationwide Platform of small scale fish workers, for preparing very useful set of Recommendations and for coming out with a Mission Statement for consolidation of small scale fishing communities. He said that the fishing communities are not visible because they do not assert their rights, they are not organised. He assured the National Platform of all help on his part.

Mr. Johann Ivanov stressed the role of fisher people in conservation of water and water bodies. He said that he was from Northern Germany which is full of water bodies and fisher people. He informed the Conference that FES as an overseas agency of the Social Democratic Party of Germany tries to support development of awareness and capacity of the workers to get their rights and entitlements. He said

that he was happy to attend the national conference of small scale fisher people and would like to help the small scale fish workers and their collectives.

Sri Sandeep Chachra, welcomed the initiative of NPSSFW(I) and said that ActionAid has been keen to see the marginalised fish workers assert their rights. He stressed the need to empower women fish workers and make it a pointer to the success of the Platform. He also reminded the platform to reassess their position in the context of changing techno-economic situation.

Sri Anup Srivastava, Programme Adviser, Labour and Industrial Relations, FES, India greeted the conference delegates and said that as unorganised workers they should be aware of the labour laws and the rights and entitlements accruing from those laws. In this context he stressed the need of training and capacity building. He referred to the revision of minimum daily wage and indicated the wide gap between the just minimum wage and the currently prescribed one.



Dignitaries Address the Conference

In the next session Pradip Chatterjee as Convener of NPSSFW(I) submitted the **National Organisational Report** to the National Conference. He mentioned the achievements and organisational development of the NPSSFW(I). He reported that in the 2 years and 10 months of its existence NPSSFW(I) has been able to extend its organisational reach to 15 states of the country. Successfully raised the demand of a National Policy on Inland Fisheries. prepared a Mission Statement for the National Platform approved by the National Committee. He mentioned the need to strengthen state level organisations and develop regional hubs to build up the capacity of the National Platform. He also stressed the need of training activists to help them take up the challenge. *[full report attached]*



Pradip Chatterjee, Convener NPSSFWI delivers organisational report flanked by Dipak Dholakia, Delhi Coordinator and Soumen Ray, National Coordinator

The submission of the National Organisational Report was followed by **submission of reports of groups and organisations** coming from 15 states namely Assam, Manipur, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Andhra

Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, Goa and Uttar Pradesh.



Milan Das
(WB)



D. Pal
(Andhra)



Shailesh Suiyani
(Gujarat)



Dr. Ghulam Rasool
(J&K)



Budhaji Dhamse
(Maharashtra)



Chitta Ranjan Barik
(Odisha)



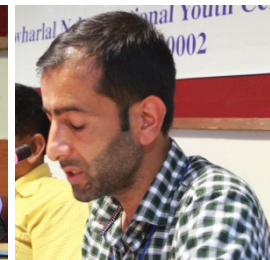
Arvind Murti
(U.P.)



Kesab Chhatradhara
(Assam)



Oinam Rajen Singh
(Manipur)



Shakeel Ur Rasool
(J&K)



Sebastio Rodrigues
(Goa)



Julien
(Kerala)



Jharna Acharya
(West Bengal)



Munna Barman
(Madhya Pradesh)



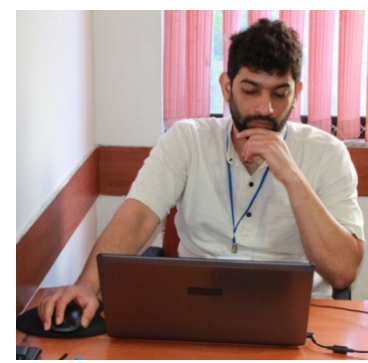
Gobindaji Meena
Rajasthan



Ramashankar Chaudhury
(Jharkhand)



Babu Lyons with Arun Mohan interpreting
(Kerala)



Siddharth Chakrabarty
(Taking Minutes)

Delegates Speak

The Convener's report was accepted unanimously after discussion.

On 17th July 2019, Hon'ble Minister of State in Charge of Fisheries **Sri Pratap Chandra Sarengi**, addressed the conference as the Chief Guest of Honour. **Dr. R. K. Ranjan Singh** and **Sri Jagannath Sarkar**, respected Members of Parliament respectively from Imphal, Manipur and Ranaghat, West Bengal also spoke in the conference as Guests of Honour.



Felicitating Hon'ble Minister



Hon'ble Minister Speaks

Sri Pratap Chandra Sarengi, Hon'ble Minister of State in charge of Fisheries, said that he felt honoured to be present at a conference of fishing communities from 15 states. The fishing communities are the natural custodians of water bodies. Water is the mother of all life. The fishing communities are natural custodians of water bodies. They are under pressure. He said that the principles of Antodaya or Sarvodaya have to be revived and the people at the bottom should be helped to get their legitimate share. Quoting Mahatma Gandhi he said "We do not want mass production, we want production by masses" he said. He asked for the resolutions taken in the Conference and said that he will discuss the matters in detail.



Felicitating Dr. R.K.Ranjan Singh, MP



Dr. R.K.Ranjan Singh Speaks

Dr. R. K. Ranjan Singh, MP, himself a veteran activist of Loktak Lake, said that to preserve water it is necessary to protect fisher people. He briefly mentioned the problems confronted in Loktak Lake in particular and Manipur in general. He spoke against the Loktak Hydel Project, Ithai Dam and Bird sanctuary that have either harmed the quality of the lake water and fish stock or have barred the access of the fishers to the lake. He pledged all support to the struggle of the fishing communities.



Felicitating Jagannath Sarkar, MP



Jagannath Sarkar Speaks

Jagannath Sarkar, MP has been well conversant with the problems of Mathabhanga and Churni rivers in Nadia. He said that he will take up the issues with the Ministry of Water Resources. He also suggested that to enhance fish farming low lying fallow lands should be converted into water bodies for fish farming. This will generate large employment, resources and food.



Group Photo of Honourable Minister and MPs with Some Delegates

Pradip Chatterjee, Convener NPSSF(I) and D. Pal, fish workers' leader from Andhra Pradesh, handed over an appeal to the Minister of Fisheries to take immediate steps to **repatriate 22 fishermen from Andhra Pradesh imprisoned in Pakistan**. The Hon'ble Minister said that he will definitely look into the matter and take up the issue with the Union Foreign Minister.



**Venu
(ICSF)**



**Dipak Dholakia
NPSSF WI**



**Soumya Dutta
India Climate Justice**

A number of **resolutions** on different important issues were moved for consideration of the house. The resolutions were also accepted with some amendments proposed by the house. The resolutions were in the matters of -

- A. Mission Statement of the National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers (Inland);**
- B. Draft National Inland Fisheries & Aquaculture Policy;**
- C. Small Scale Fishers' and Fish Farmers' Right to Water Bodies;**
- D. Resolution on Fast Increasing Climate Crisis;**
- E. Resolution on Use of Social Media;**
- F. Resolution on Organisational Structure of the National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers (Inland).**

Copies of Resolutions attached.