



DAKSHINBANGA MATSYAJIBI FORUM (DMF)

Trade Union Regn. No.20474/92. Affiliated to National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF)

Head Office: 20/4, Sil Lane, Kolkata – 70015. Phone & FAX: 033-23283989 e-mail: dmfwestbengal@gmail.com

SAVE WATER ★ SAVE COAST ★ SAVE FISHER PEOPLE

DAKSHIN BANGA MATSYAJIBI FORUM HOLDS 24TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A Brief Report

The 24th Annual General Meeting of Dakshin Banga Matsyajibi Forum (DMF) took place on 15-16 March 2016 at the Municipality Hall at Diamond Harbour. 92 fish workers' representatives, 76 men and 16 women from different areas of six districts - Purba Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur, Dakshin 24 Parganas, Uttar 24 Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly participated. Organisations represented were –

1. Kanthi Mahokuma Khoti Matsyajibi Union;
2. Medinipur Zila Upakulya Matsya Vendor Union;
3. Sundarban Matsyajibi Joutha Sangram Committee;
4. Rupnarayan Nad Matsyajibi Union;
5. Hooghly Zila Matsyajibi Forum;
6. Uttar 24 Pargana Matsyajibi Forum;
7. Sagar Matsyajibi Forum;
8. Kultali Matsyajibi Forum;
9. Namkhana Matsyajibi Forum;
10. Kulpi Matsyajibi Forum;
11. Kanthi Mahokuma Khoti Karmachari Samiti.



Debasis Shyamal Speaks



Hoisting DMF Flag



Milan Das Speaks

DMF advisers Sasanka Dev, Soumen Ray and Chittaranjan Mondal joined the meeting.

Small scale fish workers' leaders Narayan Chandra Haldar and V Kumaravelu from of Odisha and Tamil Nadu respectively also participated in the meeting. Ashok Nayek joined the meeting as an observer.

The meeting was also joined by Dr. Sandwip Kumar Mondal, Deputy Director of Fisheries, West Bengal and Sri Surojit Bag, Assistant Director of Fisheries, Diamond Harbour.

The meeting started with hoisting of DMF flag by Sri Pradip Chatterjee, President, DMF and inaugural songs. Debasis Shyamal, General Secretary, DMF welcomed all participants to the Annual General Meeting.

The house observed one minute silence in memory of the members and friends of DMF who departed during the last one year.

Then guests and important dignitaries and leaders were felicitated.

A presidium constituted of Sasanka Dev, Secretary DISHA; Soumen Ray, CC Member of ICAN and Gobinda Das, Vice-President DMF, was formed to conduct the meeting.

Then, one by one, all constituent organisations submitted their reports to the meeting with discussions and comments from the participants.

The reports, inter-alia, mentioned the problems faced, efforts made and achievements registered by different branch organizations working in different areas with different categories of fish workers.

After submission of branch reports, a state report on the prevailing socio-economic and political situation alongwith the problems and prospects of the fisher peoples' movement, activities undertaken and achievements made by DMF during the last one year was presented by Debasis Shyamal, General Secretary.

Milan Das, Assistant Secretary, presented the audited report on the accounts of the organization on behalf of Sujoy Krishna Jana, Treasurer, DMF.

Shri Chittaranjan Mondal, adviser DMF made a brief speech with important suggestions to take the issues of small scale fish workers forward.

About 14 representatives participated in a lively discussion on the state report and a number of suggestions came up proposing important additions and corrections. With these additions and corrections the report was accepted by the house.

Shri V. Kumaravelu from Vangakadal Fisher People Union of Tamil Nadu gave a brief speech greeting the meeting and expressing solidarity.

Next Day a 21 member Executive Committee was elected to look after the coordination of activities in the state with a team of office bearers comprising of –

1. President – Pradip Chatterjee;
2. Vice President – Gobinda Das;
3. Vice President – Debasis Shyamal;
4. Vice President – Ratna Majhi;
5. General Secretary – Milan Das;
6. Assistant Secretary – Bidhan De;
7. Assistant Secretary – Chanchal Ray;
8. Assistant Secretary – Ambia Hossain;
9. Treasurer – Sujay Krishna Jana.



Newly Elected Executive Committee of DMF

The house then took up discussion on future activities and decided on a number of movements to promote the demands of fish workers working in different sectors and areas. The chief areas decided for intervention were –

- i. Community Land rights for fish landing centres;
- ii. Preferential access of small scale fishing to marine fish resources;
- iii. Right to fish in the rivers and creeks of protected areas of Sundarban;
- iv. Security of tenure for pond based small fish farmers;
- v. Proper Market facilities for small fish vendors;
- vi. Right to fish resources for fish sorters and dryers;
- vii. Proper schemes and policy decisions for empowerment of women fish workers.

The house also decided on a *massive gathering of fish workers at the capital of the state to press forward the demands of fish workers.*

The house decided on holding consultations and workshops on –

- A. Women in Fisheries – to understand and specify the women fish workers’ issues;
- B. National Policy on Inland Fisheries – to understand and specify the needs to have a National Policy on Inland Fisheries and push forward its adoption.
- C. Preferential Access of Small Fishing Communities to Marine Fish Resources – to ensure the right of small fishing communities to fish resources, stop destructive fishing, control and restrict mechanised fishing.

Next, the house took several important resolutions regarding –

- Restoration of fish workers’ rights on Jambudwip;
- Establishment of Fishers’ Right to Fish in the waters of Sundarban with implementation of FRA;
- Protection of small scale fish workers’ rights on Sagar Island in the face of threats from proposed Deep Sea Port and Tourism;
- Preferential Access of Small Fishing Communities to Marine Fish Resources;
- Recognition of the rights and entitlements of small fish vendors;
- Adoption of National Policy on Inland Fisheries;
- Protection of Tenure Rights of pond based fish farmers;
- Gender equality and equity in government policy towards fish workers;and
- Livelihood rights of Khoti (fish landing centre) workers.

After this government officials, Deputy Director of Fisheries (M&S) and Assistant Director of Fisheries, Diamond Harbour joined the meet. They gave very important information regarding government schemes and the ways and means to avail those. They dwelt on policy issues as well.

Shri Narayan Haldar speaking on behalf of a 3 member representative team from Odisha hailed the state meet and shared important information regarding cooperative movement in Odisha. He offered to work together.

Shri Asok Nayek placed before the meet his impressions regarding the proceedings and urged to work diligently for the interest of the poorest of the poor fish workers.

In the end, Shri Soumen Ray moved the vote of thanks.



Deputy Director of Fisheries Speaks



Veteran Leader Gobinda Das Felicitated



Assistant Director of Fisheries Speaks



Women



Delegates



Speak



Delegates in Session



Leaders on Dias