



# National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF)

(A Federation of State Level Trade Unions in India)

Reg. No. 487/85 Email : nff@nffindia.org, Website : www.nffindia.org



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**Chairperson :**

**Narendra R. Patil**

Email: rpatilnarendra@gmail.com, Mobile : 09923241641

**General Secretary :**

**T. Peter**

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Date: 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

Shri Pratap Chandra Sarangi  
Minister of State  
Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying

Respected Sir

Greetings from the National Fishworkers Forum

As the disruptions of the global pandemic COVID-19 continue to increase, given the state of economy and the weaker health infrastructure in India, the crisis will not be addressed until serious and timely measures which are comprehensive and humane are implemented anticipating the impact on lives and livelihoods of crores of people.

While the address of the Prime Minister on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March at 8.00 pm specifies a complete lockdown for the next 21 days across India, the current focus of the government lies in immediate health responses and social distancing. However **National Fishworkers Forum** do not bifurcate between the health risk from the economic risk to the household of crores of workers dependent on the natural resources for their livelihoods. Hence it is essential for the government to have a comprehensive approach to address the pandemic through necessary health precautions as well as devising immediate economic and social security measures to the unorganised workers too. They do serve as the backbone of the economy too.

As you must be aware due to ongoing control and containment of COVID-19 pandemic, the country has been instructed to undertake a complete lock-down to stop further spreading of the virus.

As you must also be aware that the central Department of Fisheries vide letter **D.O. No. 12035/1/Fy (WU) dated the 24<sup>th</sup> of March, 2020** has requested Chief Secretaries of all States/UTs for their personal intervention and to issue necessary directions **to the law enforcing authorities to include fish and shrimp in the list of commodities to be exempted from the lockdown and allow for the movement of fish and fish products.**

**It is with great regret that the National Fishworkers Forum to state that many boats with fish who ventured to the sea prior to the lockdown were forced to forgo their catch in the harbour across the coastal states. This has to be stopped with immediate effect by providing the adequate advisory to the states. Adequate measures to compensate the fishworkers for their losses as a result of this lockdown must be announced**

As you must also be aware that the fisheries sector in the state comprises of the inland and marine sectors, in addition to the fish farming sector, and includes a diversity of fishing forms that include but are not limited to shore-based, non-motorised, motorised and mechanised fishing, as well as single



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and multi-day fishing trips. According to the Fisheries Statistics of India 2018 engaged in fisheries activities is as follows

a) No. of family members

i. Total	<b>1,60,96,975</b>
ii. Males	1,05,26,758
iii. Females	55,70,217

The number of fish landing centres in the coastal states are **1547**.

As you must also be aware that fish forms the primary diet of millions of fishers including the communities that they reside in and work with.

As you must also be aware that fishworker community is a community with major number of migrants to other occupations and areas of work and residence and that there is the high possibility of community transmission of the virus.

As you must also be aware that fish workers rely on a natural-resource base, collective work and daily unorganised work to sustain themselves as well as their communities.

As such, during the period of the lockdown the economic and the nutritional needs of fish worker households, and millions of others, will be severely affected. Fish is an important food source for coastal people. If they do not have access to it, it will affect their food availability too.

In this context, National Fishworkers Forum would like to **highlight that directions given with regards to fisheries should foremost consider the safety, security and well-being of the fish workers**. In complying with the request by the Joint Secretary issued vide letter D.O. No. 12035/1/Fy (WU) dated the 24<sup>th</sup> of March, 2020 we request you to consider the following steps:

- **Immediately announce a economic package specifically to fishing community keeping in mind that the monsoon ban season is arriving and will also affect the livelihoods of crores of fishworkers and ones who are dependent on the occupation. National Fishworkers Forum demands that a monthly allowance of Rs 10000/- upto three months be provided in advance.**
- **Supply adequate number of masks with proper instructions on its use and use of soap water;**
- **Build awareness campaigns in fishing community hubs in collaboration with local fish worker organisations;**
- **Provide clear guidelines for undertaking fishing based on the diversity of the sector to ensure that all fish workers in the value chain are included and their safety addressed;**
- **Ensure that safety and testing equipment is set up at fish-landing sites, as well as at sorting and marketing sites to ensure that the conditions for restricting the spread of the virus are met;**
- **Ease out the loan payment of the fishworkers during the lockdown period.**



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In addition, with regards to the immediate livelihood needs of the fishworkers:

- Ensure there adequate supply of ration with cooking fuel to the fish workers;
- Provide monetary allowance to attend to other essential needs during lock-down and affected period;

Yours respectfully,

**Narendra R Patil**  
Chairperson

**T Peter**  
General Secretary

1. Machimar Adhikar Sangharsh Sangathan(MASS - Gujarat)- Usmangani Sherasiya- 09427443976
2. Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samiti (MMKS) (Maharashtra)- Kiran Koli- 9702265813
3. Shramik Macchimar Kriti Samiti (Maharashtra)- Ravikiran Toraskar- 9225900303
4. Goenchea Ramponkarancho Ekvott (GRE- Goa)- Olencio Simoes- 9158875851
5. Coastal Karnataka Fishermen Action Committee (Karnataka)- Vasudev Bloor- 9449207805
6. Kerala Swathanthra Malsyathozhilali Federation (KSMTF- Kerala)- Jackson Pollayil- 9349447166
7. Ramnadu District Fishworkers Union (Tamil Nadu)- Paul Samy- 94423-22393
8. Vangakadal Meen Thozhilalar Sangam Tamilnadu (Tamil Nadu)- Dr. Kumaravelu- 9442867035
9. Democratic Traditional Fisher's and Fish workers Forum (Andhra Pradesh)- Debasis Paul 8555809779
10. Orissa Traditional Fish Workers Union (Odisha)- K. Allaya- 9437069286
11. Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum (DMF – West Bengal)- Abdar Mallik
12. Traditional Fishworkers Trade Union, Andhra Pradesh – K Lakshmi - 9247477604
13. Pondhicherry Fishworkers Forum – Venkatesh Perumal –
14. Deep Sea Going Artisanal Fishworkers Union – Pesarumai Anduraipilla

Cced

Dr Jujjavarapu Balaji  
Shri Sagar Mehra  
Dr. Rajeev Ranjan, IAS, Secretary