

**International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)**  
**IYAFA 2022: Asia Workshop -Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-scale Fisheries**

**PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE**

The following questions aim to identify key issues for small-scale fishers and fishworkers in Asia in line with the Small-scale Fisheries Guidelines and the objectives of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) 2022. The questions cover the environmental, economic, and social aspects of small-scale fisheries, with particular emphasis on strengthening governance and organizations. The thematic areas identified by participants will guide the development of the workshop agenda.

**Response by:** Mr. Pradip Chatterjee, Convener, National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers, India

**Personal Experience**

**1) How are you linked to small-scale fisheries in your country? Can you describe the major characteristics of the sector ?**

I am an office bearer in the National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers (NPSSF).

In India's small scale fisheries sector, fishers and allied workers are directly engaged in work mainly for subsistence. This is in direct contrast to engaging in it for commercial purposes while exploiting others' labour. The sector is also characterized by small ownerships and large partnerships. It is more traditional in its methods, more sustainable in its operations and more equitable in distribution of income among fish workers.

Fishing grounds are near shores, estuaries, rivers, reservoirs, wetlands, tanks and ponds. Manual and motorized non-mechanical boats are both used for fishing. Traditional and passive gear is also utilized. Traditional methods like salting, sorting and sun drying, smoking etc are still very common for fish processing. SSF mainly contributes to local markets and depends on local value chains.

**2) What makes you proud to be involved with small-scale fisheries?**

Small scale fish workers are, by far, the largest primary non-consumptive stakeholders of our water bodies. Good fish needs good water. Hence, small-scale fish workers are the natural custodians of our water bodies and fish resources. Small scale fisheries provide food security, employment and gender balance in employment. This makes me proud to be associated with the sector.

**Environmental Sustainability**

**1) Do you think that some of your fishing practices are sometimes detrimental to fisheries resources and the environment (e.g. aquatic species, flood plains, mangroves)? If yes, how?**

There are many such employed in the sector. Harmful fishing practices like use of mosquito nets, mini-purse seines or ring seines, dynamite, electric shock or poisons indiscriminately destroy fish stock and fish progeny. Aquaculture practices like setting aquaculture ponds cutting down and clearing mangroves destroys the natural resource. Intensive shrimp aquaculture pollutes both soil and water. Unsustainable practices like excessive use of cage or pen cultures degrade open water fish resources.

**2) Have you been involved in conserving or managing (marine or inland) fisheries resources? Are there any lessons that you would like to share?**

Yes. My involvement in conserving or managing (marine or inland) fisheries resources has been mainly with policy level interventions, litigation, and ground level campaigns.

There are many lessons worth sharing.

- \* Our fisheries policies are guided and conditioned not mainly by the virtues of small scale fisheries but by the interests of large scale fisheries and other competing sectors;
- \* Pushing through sustainable and small-scale fisheries friendly policies and implementing them require awareness and active participation of small-scale fish workers;
- \* Concerted intervention on all possible fronts—legislative, judicial and executive—at the national, state and local levels should be made;
- \* It is always important to set examples of change to show possibilities in practice.

**Economic Viability**

**1) What challenges do small-scale fishers face in getting boats, gear and engines in your country? How do they deal with these challenges?**

- \* The first challenge is obviously that of resource. When catch is declining, small-scale fishers are forced into a situation where they struggle to get resources to procure boats, nets or engines.
- \* The government assistance schemes are far fewer than necessary. In addition the system is riddled with corruption and nepotism.
- \* Lesser access to public finance leads to dependence on money lenders and increases debt.
- \* There is very little insurance cover for boats, nets and engines. Losing equipment due to frequent inclement weather and recurrent cyclones makes fishing more vulnerable.

Fishers deal with these challenges by selling off or mortgaging their belongings, working as crew fishers on others boats and also by migrating from fishing for alternative livelihoods.

**2) What challenges do small-scale fishers and fish workers face in accessing local/regional/international markets (e.g.competition from sellers, infrastructural issues,poor access to loans)?Do they receive any support (e.g. from the government) to facilitate access to these markets?**

Small-scale fishers with beach landing crafts lack transport, cold chain and market/auction facilities. They face competition from harbour based larger fisheries entrepreneurs in accessing markets.

Even today there is very little government support for small-scale fishers in accessing local/regional/international markets.

**3) Do you think the income generated from small-scale fisheries is adequate to meet small-scale fishers and fish workers' basic needs?**

No. Because of declining catch and reducing incomes fishers and fish workers find it very difficult to make two ends meet. This is evidenced by a reduction in number of full time fishers. Most seek alternate income opportunities migrate out of the sector.

**Social Sustainability**

**1) What are the main government programmes available in your country for addressing poverty and improving the standard of living of fishing communities (e.g. education, health insurance, pension scheme, housing, sanitation)? What are the barriers to accessing such programmes?**

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) is the largest programme launched by the Government of India that addresses, among other things, occupational assistance, infrastructure and social security issues. PMMSY has both Central Sector (CS) schemes that are fully financed by the government of India, and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) that are co-financed by the central and state governments. Under CSS beneficiary oriented schemes have 40 per cent government subsidy for general beneficiaries and 60 per cent government subsidy for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and women beneficiaries. Three main problems faced by small scale fishing communities with these schemes are:

- \* They are open for entrepreneurs and enterprises;
- \* Many do not match the requirements of small scale fish workers;
- \* Small scale fish workers have no space to administer schemes and face difficulties accessing them.

Apart from PMMSY many states have their own programmes or schemes for fishing communities.

**2) What are the most common fisher and fishworker organizations in your country (e.g. trade unions, cooperatives, community-based organizations)?**

Cooperatives are the largest in number, followed by unions and associations.

**3) Are many fishers and fishworkers members of these organizations? Are women active in these organizations? How do these organizations help fishers and fish workers improve their lives and livelihoods?**

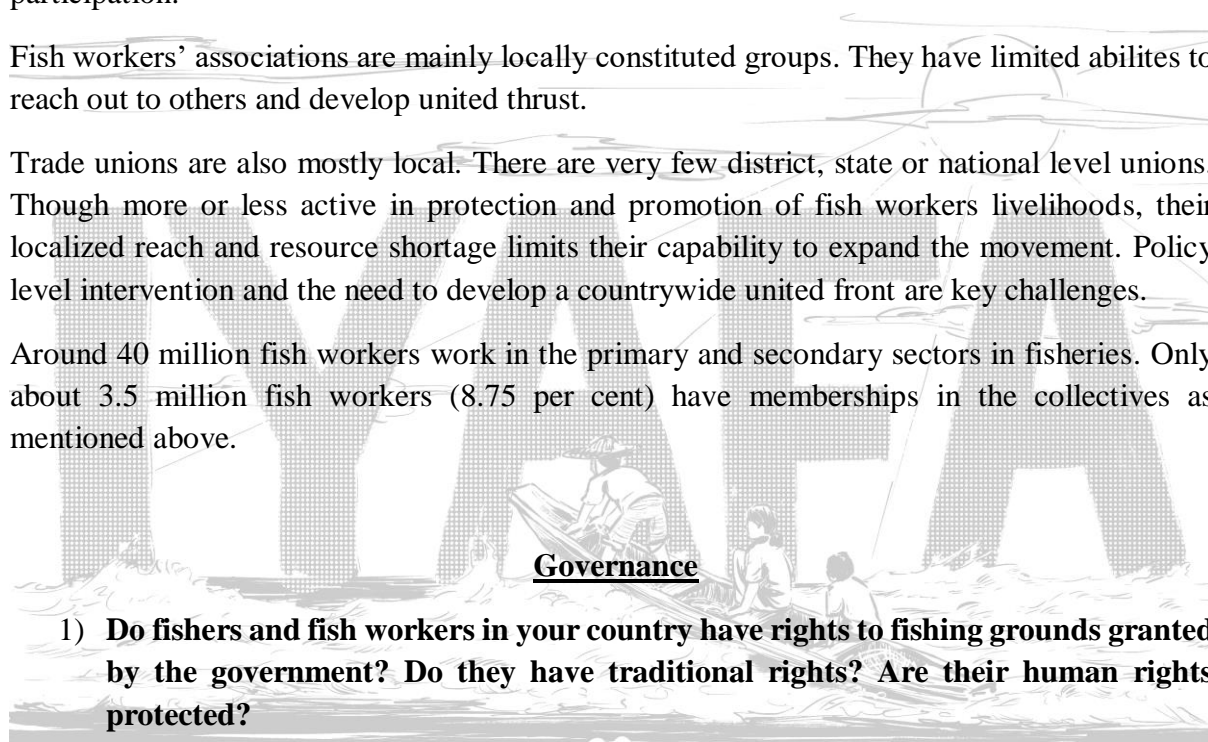
Latest data from the National Federation of Fisheries Cooperatives (FISHCOPFED) has found 21,741 primary level fisheries cooperatives in the country. They have 3,353,115 members. There are also many local trade unions and associations. State level unions are fewer in number. There are two national level trade union federations.

Most fisheries cooperatives are non-operational. Barring few, they lack democratic functioning and are ineffective in promoting members' livelihood practices. A lack of transparency, and corruption in handling government assistance and assets shuts them off from popular participation.

Fish workers' associations are mainly locally constituted groups. They have limited abilities to reach out to others and develop united thrust.

Trade unions are also mostly local. There are very few district, state or national level unions. Though more or less active in protection and promotion of fish workers livelihoods, their localized reach and resource shortage limits their capability to expand the movement. Policy level intervention and the need to develop a countrywide united front are key challenges.

Around 40 million fish workers work in the primary and secondary sectors in fisheries. Only about 3.5 million fish workers (8.75 per cent) have memberships in the collectives as mentioned above.



**1) Do fishers and fish workers in your country have rights to fishing grounds granted by the government? Do they have traditional rights? Are their human rights protected?**

No. Fishers and fish workers in India have no legal rights to fishing grounds. Traditional rights are not officially recognized. Their human rights—which basically means right to decent life and livelihood along with the right to sustainably use and protect the natural resource base of their livelihood—are also not recognized and protected.

**2) What government legislation and policies are relevant to small-scale fisheries in your country (e.g. both inland and marine)? Are they developed in consultation with fishing communities? Is there an official definition of small-scale fisheries?**

India has a Marine Fisheries Policy 2017. Draft policies for inland fisheries and aquaculture and national fisheries have been circulated but are yet to be adopted. The Indian Marine Fisheries Bill has not been tabled in the last three parliamentary sessions due to severe

opposition. Every state has a Marine Fisheries Regulation Act and Inland Fisheries Regulation Act. Apart from these, there are multiple government notifications and orders relevant to small scale fisheries. There exist many legislations, notifications and government orders pertaining to other cross-cutting sectors relevant to the fisheries sector.

There has been no meaningful or effective consultation with fishing communities to develop policies or legislation. There is no officially recognized space for small-scale fish workers to help prepare or execute policy and legislation.

There is no official definition of small-scale fisheries in India. On the contrary, an official attempt was made in the IMFB 2021 to include trawlers and mechanized fishing boats in the definition of small-scale fisheries.

**3) Have you heard of the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)*? If yes, how can the SSF Guidelines improve your well-being?**

Yes, we also participated in the preparatory consultative meeting for VGSSF in Kolkata, India.

The well-being of small scale fishing communities can be improved through compliance of the 13 directive principles mentioned in the Guidelines. This will aid in governance and lead to sustainable social development for fishers.

**Gender Equality and Equity**

**1) What are the major challenges faced by women in fisheries in terms of access to resources, markets and participation in fisher and fish worker organizations in your country?**

There is no government recognition of the role and contribution of women in fisheries. Women have limited access to resources and markets in comparison to their male counterparts. Women's participation in fish worker organizations are much lesser—both in terms of numbers and raising issues.

**2) Are there laws or policies that benefit or protect the rights of women in fisheries?**

There is no law that specifically caters to the rights of women fish workers in India. Some of the general laws (not specific to fisheries) happen to serve women fish workers as well.

Policy statements mention gender justice and the need to ensure women fish workers can access resources and schemes. But these policy statements are not matched by on ground strategies.

Some states in India have schemes dedicated either to women fish workers or to sectors in which women fish workers are dominant. But many of them are not operational and/or lack resource allocation.

**3) What are the major programmes, policies, initiatives or organizations that help improve the visibility and participation of women in the fisheries sector?**

PMMSY provides 60 per cent subsidy to women in its beneficiary oriented scheme. The mention of gender justice and equity in the National Marine Fisheries Policy and the Draft National Fisheries Policy may serve its purpose if translated into strategies and schemes at the ground level. There need to be women specific schemes. Women fish workers should be given preferential access to general schemes. Sectors dominated by women fish workers need more resources. Women fish workers need their own organizations, leadership and demands. They can even be part of general fish workers' organizations.

**Food Security and Nutrition**

**1) Is there any legislation or policy recognizing food security and nutrition as a human right in your country (e.g. right to food act, nutritional guidelines)?**

Yes. India has The National Food Security Act 2013 (also called 'Right to Food Act'). The Act provides for food and nutritional security in the human life cycle approach, ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices for people to live a life with dignity. It has also contributed to women's empowerment. But it has not prescribed monitoring of nutritional standard and linkages with important production sectors like fisheries or poultry.

**2) How do small-scale fisheries contribute to local food security and nutrition?**

Fish provides cheap and good quality animal protein. More than 800 million people eat fish in India. Small scale fisheries, as against large scale or mechanized fisheries, are by far the largest contributor to local food security and nutrition. Their service is rendered through shorter value chains and efficient distribution of catch through a vast network of small-scale fish vendors connected with primary producers (fishers and fish farmers) in the sector.

**3) Are there similarities between fishing and farming communities in your country (e.g. in terms of challenges, opportunities, culture, social organization)?**

There are both similarities and dissimilarities. Both communities are dependent on natural resources, and suffer from its degradation. They are both subject to market fluctuation and face resource crunch in pursuing their livelihoods. Both fishing and farming have a heritage of community governance administered through village councils and/or fish landing centre councils.

On the other hand, fishers, unlike farmers are non-consumptive users of water resources. Good fish needs good water and therefore fisher always try to protect water. Farmers are only interested in regular supply. Chemical farming contaminates open water resources. Small-scale fishing and fish farming—intensive aquaculture being the exception—is non-polluting. The vestiges of traditional community based governance is more prominent in small-scale fisheries.

## Resilience

### 1) What kind of changes did the COVID-19 pandemic cause in small-scale fisheries in your country? How did fishers and fishworkers respond to these changes? Did they receive any support from the government or other organizations during the pandemic?

Small-scale fisheries were severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Fishing, transportation, market, everything was jeopardized. What helped small scale fisheries survive was their shorter value chains. Local informal markets were operating through the pandemic.

Small-scale fish workers and their organization (NPSSF and affiliates) responded to Covid-19 impact in three different but interconnected levels:

- A. Policy Level: By issuing advisories for small-scale fish workers and continuously interacting with the central and the state governments to relax lockdown restrictions and resume livelihood activities with caution.
- B. Ground Level: By starting and continuing with fishing activities to earn livelihood during Covid-19 restrictions. Interacting with local authorities. Arranging for relief for those affected.
- C. Migrant fish workers: Working for the protection of migrant fish workers stranded mostly in harbours and their safe return home.

### 2) What are the major threats fishers and fishworkers face and what are their impacts?

**These may include environmental threats (e.g. cyclones, typhoons, coastal erosion and degradation) and other threats (e.g. eviction, aquaculture development, sand mining, river diversion, land reclamation, infrastructure development, industrial activities, pollution).**

Some of the major threats, their causes and impacts faced by small-scale fish workers are briefly stated in the following table –

Major Threats	Causes	Impacts
Eviction from fishing grounds	Competing interests like industries, transport, and tourism. Lack of right of small scale fishers for water and fish resources.	Large scale migration of fish workers from fishing to other occupations and/or areas. Most prominent in river fisheries.
Over Fishing and Destructive Fishing	Marine Sector: Trawling, purse-seining, LED light fishing, use of fish finders, use of mono-filament nets etc.	Reduction of fish resources in general. Severe loss in share of fish resources for small-scale fishers.

	Inland Sector: Fishing with mosquito net, electric current, dynamite or poison.	
Diversion of water resources	Water resources from rivers and wetlands are diverted for other uses harming biodiversity and ecological services.	Reduction of fish resources.
Pollution	Industrial and municipal discharge, agricultural runoff, waste from intensive aquaculture.	Reduction of fish resources.
Recurrence of cyclones and inclement weather	Climate Change	Loss of fishing time. Loss of fishing equipment and habitats. Impact on fish drying.
Alteration of species composition in fish resources	Climate Change	These changes entail difficulties in catching, processing and marketing.

**3) How are fishers and fish workers adapting to or responding to the above threats (e.g. through advocacy, impact assessments, early warning systems, life-saving equipment, insurance schemes)?**

Fishing communities are raising demands for their right to water and fish resources as well as to protect those resources locally and at policy level. In the marine sector small scale fishers have put forward a demand for preferential access right to marine fish resources.

Early warning systems and life saving equipments have been adopted but there is a need to upgrade their operation, availability and use.

Though there is an accident insurance scheme, its availability needs to be enhanced. Insurance scheme for equipments like boats, nets and engines are almost non-existent.

There is urgent and overarching need to develop and support climate resilient livelihood practices and habitats in small-scale fisheries sector.

Non-availability of catch compels small-scale fishers to use smaller mesh nets and harmful fishing practices like ring-seines. Inclement weather conditions provoke some fish workers to use formalin or pesticides in fish drying.

**4) Are there any other national, regional, or international issues relevant to small-scale fisheries that the workshop should address?**

International: Small scale fisheries should be promoted as sustainable fisheries with equitable distribution of income contributing to food security and employment with gender balance. All international guidelines and negotiations regarding international food resources, labour and trade should consider this as an overarching principle to be adopted in regional, national and local conditions.



Regional: Special regional initiatives need to be taken to protect regional ecosystems and SSF. Regional cooperation among states need to be built up basing the cooperation and coordination of small scale fish workers and their organisations.

National: The most important issue for small scale fishing communities in India is recognition of their right to water and fish resources which means:

- \* Right to use water bodies and their fish resources for sustainable fishing and fish farming; and
- \* Right to protect the water and fish resources.

Effective exercise of small-scale fish workers right to water and fish resources entails their right to finance, infrastructure, information, market and social security.



**International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)**  
**IYAFA 2022: Asia Workshop -Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-scale Fisheries**

**PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE**

The following questions aim to identify key issues for small-scale fishers and fishworkers in Asia in line with the Small-scale Fisheries Guidelines and the objectives of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) 2022. The questions cover the environmental, economic, and social aspects of small-scale fisheries, with particular emphasis on strengthening governance and organizations. The thematic areas identified by participants will guide the development of the workshop agenda.

**Response by:** Ms.Madhuri Mondal, Programme Officer, Dakshin Foundation, India

**Personal Experience**

**1) How are you linked to small-scale fisheries in your country? Can you describe the major characteristics of the sector ?**

I work with [Dakshin Foundation](#), a non-profit working towards wellbeing of small-scale fishers. I have been working with fishing communities in southern Odisha and the Andamans for the last three years. I am from Andaman and Nicobar and have been associated with the fisheries sector for the last 5 years.

In Andaman, I am associated mainly with [marine fisheries](#). Andamans also has some inland fisheries. Fishing grounds in the Andamans are spread throughout the archipelago except the MPAs.

Motorized boats are used for fishing in the sea. Non-motorized boats are used in creeks and shallow water. Around 50 to 100 mechanized boats also operate from the islands. Various gear is used. This is dependent on the targeted species—ranging from hook and line, long-line, gillnets, cast nets. Sienes and some trawl nets are also used. The catch is mostly just frozen and chilled for export. There is minimal drying. Catch is exported to national and international markets. The main species exported are groupers, crabs and lobsters.

**2) What makes you proud to be involved with small-scale fisheries?**

I am from the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, one of two island systems in India. Fish has been an integral part of our diet and culture. Working with small-scale fishers for their wellbeing and resource sustainability gives me a chance to give back to the community which brings nutrition to our plate. It also allows me to be close to coastal and marine ecosystems.

**Environmental Sustainability**

**1) Do you think that some of your fishing practices are sometimes detrimental to fisheries resources and the environment (e.g. aquatic species, flood plains, mangroves)? If yes, how?**

Yes, practices like bottom trawling, poison fishing, and the use of very small-sized mesh nets are detrimental to fisheries resources. They destroy the ecosystem and hamper replenishment of fish stock. The scale of fishing is also increasing at a rapid scale with mechanized fishing vessels from the mainland (states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu) operating out of Andaman and Nicobar. This creates pressure on the island's fishing zones. Small-scale fishers are also forced to compete with them for ice, diesel, landing centers and markets. There have been protests about this. Additionally, mangroves are being reclaimed in the islands for various purposes. In the northern part of the island this has caused a decline resources like crabs.

**2) Have you been involved in conserving or managing (marine or inland) fisheries resources? Are there any lessons that you would like to share?**

Yes, to some extent. We have been planning to work on Fisheries Co-management in Odisha and Andamans. I have been involved in conversations with fishers to understand the challenges they face when raising concerns with the authorities.

Some of the learnings are below:

- \* There is a lack of cohesion and ability to collectivize within small-scale fisheries. In Wandoor for example, this inability to make collective demands is a deterrent in managing fisheries resources and engaging with the administration.
- \* Not involving fishers when making decisions and rules on fisheries management hampers conservation and management of fisheries resources.
- \* Traditional ecological knowledge is eroding amongst fishing communities in places like Ganjam, Odisha.

**Economic Viability**

**1) What challenges do small-scale fishers face in getting boats, gear and engines in your country? How do they deal with these challenges?**

Accessing schemes and subsidies is a complicated process in both Odisha and Andaman islands. Corruption at various levels—like the Andaman and Nicobar Fisheries Federation—has made it tougher for the fishers to benefit from existing opportunities. Most fishers in Odisha end up taking loans from money lenders and fall into a debt trap. Fraudulent micro-finance companies also provide loans. This has become a big issue.

**2) What challenges do small-scale fishers and fishworkers face in accessing local/regional/international markets (e.g. competition from sellers, infrastructural issues, poor access to loans)? Do they receive any support (e.g. from the government) to facilitate access to these markets?**

Based on my knowledge, disruptions like the Covid-19 pandemic, lockdowns, closure of the airport in Andamans, change in trade policies etc. have affected fish workers' access to distant

markets. During the lockdown, fish workers faced heavy losses amidst closure of markets and transport mechanisms. The lack of government support is conspicuous. There are no direct flights from the islands to other countries. All produce has to go through mainland India. This might change in near future with the construction of the international airport underway.

**3) Do you think the income generated from small-scale fisheries is adequate to meet small-scale fishers and fishworkers' basic needs?**

In Andamans, Jungli ghat fish workers say their income, in general, is good. But, during shocks like the lockdown it was difficult for some families to meet their basic needs. Fishers in Wandoor had secondary livelihood options like areca nut plantations to fall back on.

In Odisha fisher income is low but sufficient to meet basic needs. However, basic needs like healthcare is expensive exacerbated by a lack of proper government healthcare systems. A lack of knowledge about financial management means many fishers fall into a debt trap. More research is required to understand this.

### **Social Sustainability**

**1) What are the main government programmes available in your country for addressing poverty and improving the standard of living of fishing communities (e.g. education, health insurance, pension scheme, housing, sanitation)? What are the barriers to accessing such programmes?**

There are several schemes run by the central and state government to address poverty and improve standards of living. Some schemes are more accessible to communities. Access differs from department to department. Some of the most common barriers to accessing the schemes is a lack of knowledge among those its intended for and corruption in the delivery system.

**2) What are the most common fisher and fishworker organizations in your country (e.g. trade unions, cooperatives, community-based organizations)?**

Some of the common organizations are the National Fishworkers Forum, NCPC and other state unions like the Odisha Traditional Fishworkers Union (OTFWU).

In South Andaman there are village fisheries committees. In Junglighat they are active but in Wandoor they are not. In Odisha there village and zonal committees as well.

**3) Are many fishers and fishworkers members of these organizations? Are women active in these organizations? How do these organizations help fishers and fishworkers improve their lives and livelihoods?**

Most active fishers are members of these committees or unions. Migrant fish workers are not members of these committees. There is no representation of women in local fisheries committees.

In Andhra, migrant fish workers formed a new body for migrant fish workers collectivization post the Covid-19 lockdowns.

## Governance

- 1) **Do fishers and fishworkers in your country have rights to fishing grounds granted by the government? Do they have traditional rights? Are their human rights protected?**

State policies allocate waters near shores exclusively to SSF. Implementation, however, is poor. Apart from this, there are no specific rights over any fishing grounds. In fact there is conflict in many places due to restrictions imposed by the government.

In Andamans there are places where fishing is allowed and places where after the creation of Marine protected areas (MPAs) it is restricted. Earlier fishers used to fish within these areas as well. Fishers testify to having been arrested for just stopping inside the MPAs despite having a right of navigation. Things are being streamlined now.

In Odisha there has been a conflict between fishers and the forest department because of turtle conservation efforts.

- 2) **What government legislation and policies are relevant to small-scale fisheries in your country (e.g. both inland and marine)? Are they developed in consultation with fishing communities? Is there an official definition of small-scale fisheries?**

Fisheries is a subject governed by both centre and state. The central government issues policies which are implemented by states—who do so by passing laws. Some of these are listed below.

- \* Central laws & policies:
- \* Draft Indian Marine Fisheries Bill, 2021
- \* The National Policy on Fisheries 2020

Each state has a State Marine fishing regulation act, along with rules. In most cases, these are not developed in consultation with communities.

- 3) **Have you heard of the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (SSF Guidelines)? If yes, how can the SSF Guidelines improve your well-being?**

I haven't seen the SSF guidelines being discussed or considered by state or central governments in India. Both regional and central policies, overlook the wellbeing of SSF and vulnerable groups. If taken into consideration before formulating and implementing policy, the guidelines can help improve the sustainability of fishery resources and also the wellbeing of SSF people.

## Gender Equality and Equity

- 1) **What are the major challenges faced by women in fisheries in terms of access to resources, markets and participation in fisher and fishworker organizations in your country?**

Fisher women representation in social protection plans, development planning and coastal governance regimes is insufficient. Fisherwomen's knowledge, labour and cultural capital is unfairly assessed as inferior, inefficient or unproductive in state and local governance regimes. In fishing villages, women face the burden of looking after the family when men migrate to other cities and coasts for work. There are not enough facilities like toilets, safety measures or vending places for them to carry out their work smoothly.

**2) Are there laws or policies that benefit or protect the rights of women in fisheries?**

None that I know of. Though some policies mention women's issues and support post-harvest activities, I am not sure of any law that protect women's rights in fisheries.

**3) What are the major programmes, policies, initiatives or organizations that help to improve the visibility and participation of women in the fisheries sector?**

NFF has committed to creating a women's wing to tackle and highlight women's issues. ICSF has also written a lot on women's issues in the past. Samudram in Ganjam, Odisha collectivized and empowered women fishworkers.

Dakshin has periodically highlighted the condition of women in fisheries, in our research and outreach (<https://www.dakshin.org/documentariesaudio-visual-material/>). In 2018-2019, they executed three projects that provided empirical insights into women's marginalization in development, representation in governance and social protection provisions. Our collaborative project with the TATA Trust in Andhra Pradesh generated a Development Needs Assessment Framework for fishers, linking community well-being with environmental resource health and management.

In 2019, Dakshin was the India partner on the Illuminating Hidden Harvests study conducted by FAO, WorldFish and Duke University. Our analysis of India's datasets on fisheries revealed abysmal data on well-being of women in fisheries.

An action research project on the Blue Economy model and its implications across 5 countries by Dakshin, SNEHA and other partners found that development planning processes consistently ignore or displace fishers and fisheries. Listed below is some of the work I have recently been involved in, regarding women in fisheries.

<https://www.dakshin.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Scoping-Study-Odisha-Health-Environment-Programme.pdf>

[https://www.dakshin.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Scoping-study-report\\_South-Andaman.pdf](https://www.dakshin.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Scoping-study-report_South-Andaman.pdf)

<https://www.dakshin.org/a-life-full-of-uncertainties/>

<https://www.dakshin.org/rethinking-community-wellbeing-in-coastal-odisha/>

Mondal, M. August, 2020. [On the Road: Unravelling the legacy of migration from fishing villages amidst Covid 19](#). The Bastion

### **Food Security and Nutrition**

- 1) Is there any legislation or policy recognizing food security and nutrition as a human right in your country (e.g. right to food act, nutritional guidelines)?**

The National Food Security Act 2013 is the guiding policy for food security in the country.

- 2) How do small-scale fisheries contribute to local food security and nutrition?**

In India SSF contributes to local food security and nutrition in coastal states and islands in a big way. In places like Andaman and Nicobar and the Lakshadweep islands, fish is the major source of protein and food.

- 3) Are there similarities between fishing and farming communities in your country (e.g. in terms of challenges, opportunities, culture, social organization)?**

Yes, to some extent. In the current scenario, SSF face similar challenges to what small-scale farmers faced with the advent of industrial scale agriculture during the Green Revolution. Input costs are rising and profits are enjoyed by capitalists and middlemen. There is marginalization of the both communities. In India, the Kisan Credit Card scheme can be utilized by fishers too.

### **Resilience**

- 1) What kind of changes did the COVID-19 pandemic cause in small-scale fisheries in your country? How did fishers and fish workers respond to these changes? Did they receive any support from the government or other organizations during the pandemic?**

Dakshin conducted a Covid-19 impact assessment study in Ganjam, Odisha and South Andaman. There was almost no government support for fishers in Andamans and Odisha. Dakshin worked relentlessly with partner organizations and networks to provide relief and repatriation for migrant fish workers across the country.

- 2) What are the major threats fishers and fish workers face and what are their impacts? These may include environmental threats (e.g. cyclones, typhoons, coastal erosion and degradation) and other threats (e.g. eviction, aquaculture development, sand mining, river diversion, land reclamation, infrastructure development, industrial activities, pollution).**

Fishers face multiple threats in the current environment. Government policies of Blue economy based growth plans to grow fisheries industry into a capitalistic venture. Small-scale fishers will end up as labourers. Aquaculture development will impact resource sustainability. Fishers face eviction due to coastal development and lose traditional lands and livelihoods. Coastal erosion because of port development and

dredging is rampant. Pollution has caused large scale degradation of coastal and marine ecosystems. In addition, unsustainable fishing practices and overfishing have become common now.

**3) How are fishers and fish workers adapting to or responding to the above threats (e.g. through advocacy, impact assessments, early warning systems, life-saving equipment, insurance schemes)?**

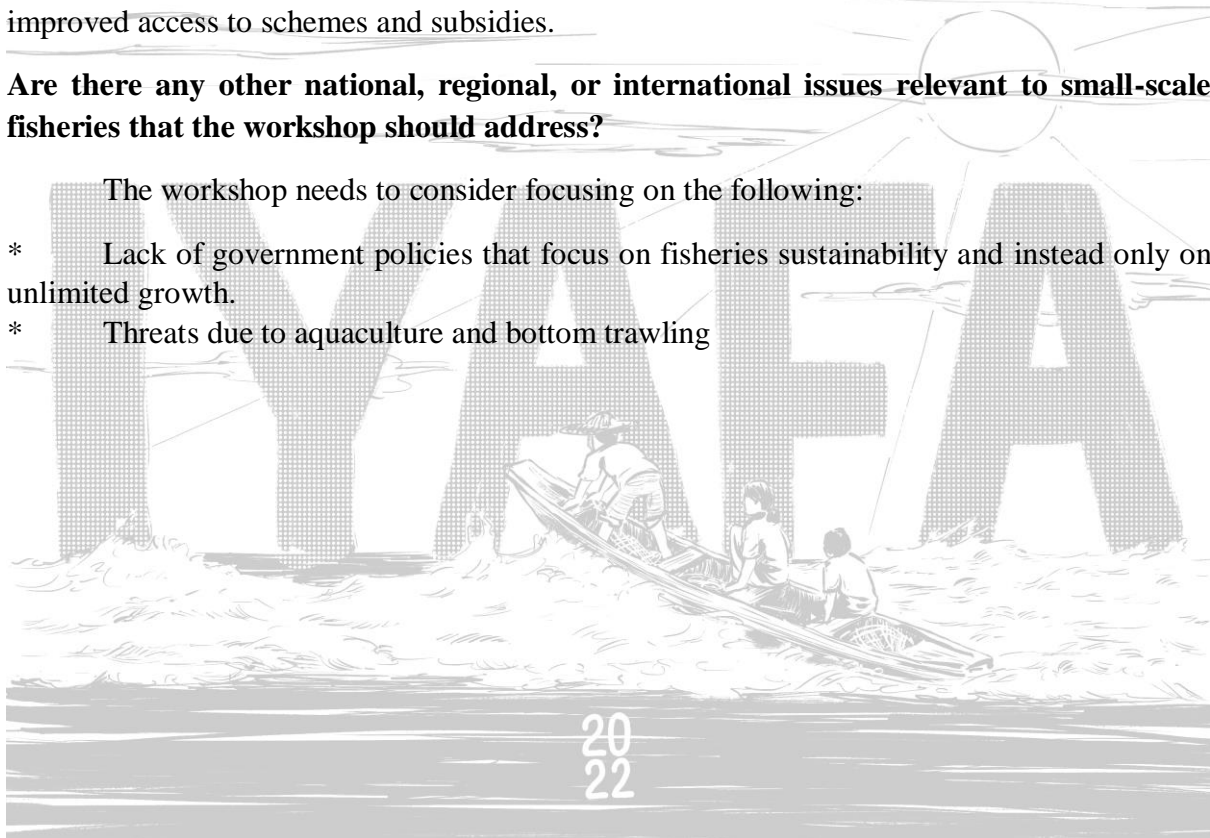
In the coastal district of Ganjam, Odisha, there has been large scale migration to large ports on the western coast. Post lockdown there have been incidents where migrant fish workers have collectivized into unions demanding improvement in conditions.

In Andamans there have been multiple instances where Telugu fishers have resisted mechanized fishing and bottom trawling by mainlanders. They have been advocating for improved access to schemes and subsidies.

**Are there any other national, regional, or international issues relevant to small-scale fisheries that the workshop should address?**

The workshop needs to consider focusing on the following:

- \* Lack of government policies that focus on fisheries sustainability and instead only on unlimited growth.
- \* Threats due to aquaculture and bottom trawling



20  
22