



## Institute for Ecology and Livelihood Action

### Press release

**For the first time, the tribal fishermen communities of the state raised the issue of protection of their reservoir, conservation of fisheries resources and rights of fishermen to the international level.**

**Program organized by fishermen community of Jaisamand on the occasion of World Wetlands Day.**

Udaipur, 4 February 2023.

On the occasion of World Wetlands Day, Institute for Ecology and Livelihood Action, Udaipur, National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers along with fishermen communities of Jaisamand Lake jointly organized and programme. The dialogue program was formally held on the banks of Jaisamand Lake. Society presidents, administrators and fishermen families of fish producer cooperative societies of villages adjacent to Jaisamand Lake participated in the programme.

Viren Lobo, Managing Trustee of the Institute of Ecology and Livelihood Action, said that there is a terrible man made crisis in relation to local water bodies all over the world affecting the livelihood of small fishermen. Fish producer cooperative societies are formed in 22 villages adjacent to Jaisamand Lake, and about 2500 fishermen families are associated with them, whose total population is more than 12000. These fish producer cooperatives were earlier managed by the Rajas Sangha and were benefited from various government schemes. Later they were put under the Directorate of Fisheries, after which the condition of these fishermen worsened due to departmental neglect and corruption. The directorate arbitrarily introduced seeds of selected species from other remote states in the lake, due to which the fish diversity of the lake got destroyed. Encroachments are being made on the islands inside and around Jaisamand Lake by the land mafia and influential people, the natural form and ecosystem of the lake are being badly damaged. Entangled in the cobwebs of the government system, these tribal fishermen are not given adequate subsistence allowance during the close season (when fishing is closed during the monsoon period) through the 'Savings cum Relief' scheme, as a result these poor fishermen are living in poverty. Most of the families are being denied subsistence allowance by dividing them into categories below and above the poverty line.

Dr. Sunil Dubey an Ecological Scientist and member of the IUCN World Commission, a subsidiary unit of the United Nations, said that by putting foreign invasive species 'Tilapia fish' in Jaisamand lake, the government department has not only sowed the seed of destruction of the local fish species of Jaisamand lake, but also the livelihood and livelihood of the local tribal fishermen communities laying the foundation for increasing crisis day by day. Today, the

existence of Jaisamand Lake, one of the biggest and important artificial lakes not only in India but also in the world, is facing a severe crisis due to human activities. The local tribal fishermen are the real custodians of this lake and Maharana Jaisingh had also built this lake for his tribal people, but today the fish diversity of the lake and the livelihood of the fishermen are in dire straits due to the poor system of the Directorate of Fisheries.

Mr. Govind Meena, administrator of local fisherman and fish producer cooperative society Minduda, explained the need to preserve the ecological functions and ecosystem services of Jaisamand lake in its pristine natural form and demanded from the circle that destructive tourism in the fish habitat and breeding areas of the lake, Pollution, construction, commercial activities should be stopped.

In the program, Keshulal, administrator of Maithudi and president Megaram of Fish Producer Cooperative Society, Shankarlal, administrator of Panikotada committee, Ratanlal, administrator of Patan committee, Daulatram of Chiboda committee, Ramlal, administrator of Toranmahudi committee, etc. also addressed the gathering and demanded that the government reinstate them Rajas Sangh so that they are saved from arbitrary decisions and neglect made by the Directorate of Fisheries. Among the committee members, Nathulal, Shankarlal, Motaram, Roolal, Dhuliram, Homaram, Devilal also demanded from the government that instead of importing fish seed from other states, they should produce fish seed at the local level and with mutual consent in the lake. Arrangements should be made to put fish seeds. Market places should be provided in Udaipur city and nearby towns for open sale of fish, For the training of fish processing and sale of fish products, capacity enhancement and financial support should be given to the fishermen women and youth, the fishermen should also be given loans by the bank for fish production and banks should stop asking for unnecessary guarantees. The way the government is giving rights to the forest dwellers who depend on forests, similarly, the tribal fishermen, who are dependent on fisheries resources for their livelihood and livelihood, should also be given rights for conservation, promotion and management of their water bodies and fisheries resources and cooperation should be provided by improving the government system.

Fishermen representatives and fishermen family members of Mathudi, Patan, Chiboda, Panikotda, Hirawat, Toranmahudi, Ghati, Siyarkotda, Bodla, Makadseema, Deodatalab, Payari participated in the programme.

This program has also been registered on the International website of World Wetland Day and through this the talk of fishermen of Jaisamand will be conveyed to the State Government, Government of India as well as the United Nations, World Food and Agriculture Organization, World Health Organization etc. .

For publication

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