

“Bring in scheme for women fish workers”

- Special Correspondent



Better facilities:National Fishworkers’ Forum leader M. Ilango addressing women fish workers at the State conference in Ramanathapuram on Tuesday.

Fisherwomen also urge government to set up marketing, cold storage facilities

The State-level Women Fish Workers’ Conference, held here on Tuesday, has urged the State Government to bring in a scheme to benefit women fish workers, who were engaged in selling seafood items, and provide them with modern cold storage facilities.

The conference, addressed by M. Ilango, leader of National Fishworkers’ Forum (NFF), adopted a resolution, urging the State government to establish modern and hygienic marketing facilities to benefit women fish workers and ensure quality seafood for consumers.

After involving the women fish workers in 'Clean Coastal Programmes', the government should introduce a training programme for fisherwomen in collecting seaweed.

The government should also provide transport facilities to women fish sellers who carried fish loads on their heads, the conference urged.

Pointing out that Tamil Nadu had a 1,000-km-long coastline with nearly one per cent of the total population engaged in fishing, A. Palsamy, president of Ramanathapuram Fish Workers' Union, said the government had not drawn a policy to protect the interests of the fisherfolk, said.

During the lean season, the fishing community faced livelihood problems in the absence of a fisheries policy. Nearly 75 per cent of the total catch by the fishermen was marketed by women fish workers but they were not covered under any welfare schemes, Mr. Palsamy pointed out.

Referring to increasing encroachments on the coastline for establishing entertainment clubs, industries and industrial corridors, Mr. Ilango said to protest against this, the NFF would take out a rally in New Delhi on November 21 as part of the struggle launched by World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP). Fish workers from 11 coastal districts of Tamil Nadu would take part in the rally, he said.

S. Noorjahan Beevi, Additional Director of Fisheries, Commissionerate of Fisheries, Isack Rangarajan, Deputy Director of Fisheries, and Kaliasammal, Coordinator of National Women Fish Workers' Federation, were among the others who addressed the conference.

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