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Human Rights of the Deep Sea Fishermen at Malpe Fishing Port

Vidya Vinutha D'Souza & Mohan A K*

Abstract: *With one of the longest coastlines in the world (8129 km approx), 3202 villages solely dependent on fishing as a livelihood; with a population of 3.5 million as the human component of marine fishers and of these 0.9 million are active fishers population - the place of the fishing industry is by no means unimportant. Fishermen in India and their livelihood are today under siege. Fishermen, at all times, live very dangerous and risky lives where their human right is not given importance by the concerned authorities. Without the coverage of necessary human rights interventions, they are being vulnerable in terms of their life, income and safety.*

Malpe Fishing Port is the largest fishing port in terms of its area and number of occupants of various forms of fishing in coastal Karnataka. It consists of 599 boats above 140 HP working under deep sea waters each occupying minimum of 8 fishing workers. Researcher in her exploratory study, analyses the life risk involved in the life of 2 fishermen each, in 30% of the universe, i.e. 180 boats which accumulates to sample size of 360. The Convenient Sampling Method will be used to select the boats available in the port during data collection and Judgemental Sampling Method will be used to select the respondents depending on their designation in the boat, i.e. captain of the boat and the co-captain.

Study identifies the presence of risk in their occupational life and absence of preventive measures by their immediate supervisor or the state. The absence of basic conditions of work is seen in the occupation of deep sea workers. The irony of Deep Sea Fishermen, their plight for human rights along with the necessary suggestions for the implementation of safe working conditions as depicted in the 23rd Article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is highlighted in the research study.

Key Words: fishing, fishermen, Deep Sea, Port, Mangalore, Human Rights

Introduction: Human Rights are as old as humanity itself. They have been present in various forms since ancient period. Both are absolute and cannot be separated. Human needs are explained by various authors in different ways and consolidating those will mean it as a medium for human beings to fulfil their basic necessities. The Oxford Power Dictionary (1993) defines human rights as the 'basic freedom that all people should have'.

The use and significance of Human Rights have increased considerably only in the recent past especially after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) in 1948. On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in which due consideration to the wellbeing of the working population was given and their rights that were mostly neglected till then were adopted as the duty of the government and right of the worker.

Right to work as Highlighted in Article 23 : This is one of the articles highlighted by UDHR which tries to give labour a status. This is an act which makes labour one of the important segments in the society as similar to any other human associations. This article mentions about right to work, free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Keeping in mind the Fisheries sector, deep sea fisheries in particular, researcher would like to highlight on the applicability of this act and its consequences on the life of deep sea fishers.

Coastal Karnataka, a region that lies on latitude 13°N and longitude 74°E on the west coast of India that is exposed to the Arabian Sea. Marine Fisheries is one of the major industries on this belt of land. Deep Sea Fishing is one of the types of fishing activity beyond 12 nautical miles from the shore. The government of India has constantly attempted since the 1950's for the development of deep sea fishing in the country in the form of providing assistance to the import of trawlers for the exploitation of deep sea resources by private shipping companies. The Emphasis was also given in all the Five Year Plans for the development of deep sea fishing in India.

*Research Scholar, DOS in Social Work, University of Mysore, Manasagangothri, Mysuru