

# Fisherfolk concerned over industrial pollution along coast

**Our Bureau**

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Fishermen from the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh and Yanam have complained that their vocation is in grave danger due to various factors, mainly pollution caused by industries in the coastal environs, and urged the Government to take immediate steps to arrest the trend.

They voiced the complaint at the 'Trans-boundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) Consultation Workshop' for fishermen from Andhra Pradesh and Yanam, organised by the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project (BOBLME) here on Thursday.

They said the Government was permitting the establishment of industries in the fragile coastal zones, and the consequent ecological harm was pushing their occupation and existence to the brink. They wanted the Government to reverse the policies.

## **BAN ON FISHING**

They also expressed concern over the ban on fishing for 45 days from April 15. This conservation period, observed annually, was aimed at the replenishment of fish stock. But it was observed strictly only by fishermen in India.

Their counterparts in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Maldives were not adhering to the rule, due to which the purpose of the ban was being defeated. They wanted enforcement of ban in those countries too.

The Commissioner of the AP Fisheries Department, Mr Manmohan Singh, said the concerns of the fishermen would be addressed. The objective of the BOBLME was to protect the environment and maintain the ecological balance of the Bay of Bengal.

He said a long-term plan was designed and being implemented by eight maritime nations on the coast of the Bay of Bengal. Referring to the ban on fishing, Dr Singh said it would be implemented from April 15 to May 31 and the Government had made alternative arrangements for the livelihood of the fishermen.

## **ECOLOGICAL BALANCE**

The National Coordinator of the BOBLME, Mr Vijayakumaran, stressed the need for maintaining ecological balance in the Bay of Bengal.

He said BOBLME was conducting similar workshops in different States to promote awareness among fishermen about trans-boundary issues.