Odisha News Articles Compilation

By ICSF
Odisha: After Mahanadi, Chhattisgarh is eyeing Odisha’s fish resources

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At a time when Odisha’s concerns over decline in water flow of Mahanadi River are yet to be addressed, its fish resources are being targeted by Chhattisgarh. Lakhanpur block under Jharsuguda district is house to the backwaters of Mahanadi water from Hirakud dam. However, it is reportedly under control of a fishing mafia from Chhattisgarh. Sources said that the mafia is not only using illegal fishing methods, but also camping on the river bed and every day truckloads of fish are transported to Chhattisgarh.

“As the river flowing through our area has dried up, we have moved here for fishing to earn a living,” admitted Laxmi, a fisherwomen from Chhattisgarh. Fishermen from Chhattisgarh are coming here for fishing and it has adversely affected our business, said Laxman Bagarti, a fisherman from Odisha. Jharsuguda collector, Bibhuti Bhusan Patnaik said that the administration recently came to know about the illegal fishing activities by Chhattisgarh fishermen in Odisha waters. “We will take strict action against those involved in any type of fishing activities in Odisha waters. We have already informed the police to conduct raids,” said Patnaik.

Odisha and Chhattisgarh: Riverside locals face double jeopardy


The Mahanadi is known as the lifeline of thousands of fishermen families of both Odisha and Chhattisgarh. But in recent years, due to constant fall in its water level since the onset of summer, the fishermen are reeling under livelihood crisis. This year, the situation has become very critical. Dryness is seen everywhere after the Chhattisgarh Government blocked the water of the Mahanadi and its branches through construction of a number of dams and barrages in the upstream. The shortage of water in the river and in the Hirakud reservoir has posed a great threat to the livelihood of the fishermen families. Due to scarcity of fish in the river, fish catch has fallen drastically and consequently maintaining families has become very difficult for the poor fisher folk nowadays. The fishermen reside in 106 villages, including 79 of Lakhanpur block of Jharsuguda district.

Six cooperative societies have been formed in six clusters of the district. There are 3,167 registered members of the societies out of which 2,360 are male and 307 female. That apart, the non-members are large in number, who maintain their households either by fishing or farming. The families with agricultural land before inception of the Hirakud project became displaced
with the project and left agriculture as source of income. Later, due to want of proper settlement by the district administration, the displaced families continued to maintain their household by fishing from the Hirakud dam and got included in the category of fisherman in due course of time. Many also started growing vegetables, paddy etc. along with fishing.

But, due to drying up of the Mahanadi river, both summer cultivation and fishing have been greatly affected. The situation has become worse when the fishermen cannot explore any other means to maintain their families. This has caused concern for the fishermen of not only Jharsuguda or Bargarh districts, but for those residing near bank of the Mahanadi river in the neighbouring Chhattisgarh State. “With the decreasing trend of water flow in the Mahanadi and Hirakud reservoir affecting fish catch, the cooperative societies are not able to pay the lease value to the State Government. In the coming days, the fishermen will be forced to go outside to seek jobs,” said District Fisheries Officer Labnidhar Behera. A negative effect is being experienced all around after water level in the Mahanadi and Hirakud reservoir has gone down, he added.

**Odisha: Despite Chhattisgarh dam spree, Odisha fish and power output up: Minister**


Power generation from hydro projects on Mahanadi has improved and fish production has gone up despite construction of dams and barrages by Chhattisgarh Government on the upper catchment of the river. The State Government admitted this in written replies to separate questions from Dilip Ray (BJP) in the Assembly on Friday. Minister of State for Energy Sushant Singh said Odisha has hydro power projects at Burla and Chiplima on Mahanadi river, at Balimela on Sileru river, at Rengali on Bramhani river, at Bareniput on Kolab river, at Mukhiguda on Indravati river and Ankadeli on Machhkund river. The Minister, however, said the affect on power generation due to construction of barrages and dams on the upper catchment of the rivers is yet to be assessed by the Government. However, from the statistics provided in the reply it has come to light that power generation from Hirakud dam project in 2013-14 was 7020.1 lakh units and decreased to 4570.9 lakh units in 2015-16.

But, power generation from Hirakud dam increased to 5358.8 lakh units in 2016-17 and 6142.9 lakh units in 2017-18. Power generation from Chiplima hydro project also showed similar trend. Generation declined from 3122.3 lakh units in 2013-14 to 2167.5 lakh units in 2015-16 but increased to 2192.3 lakh units in 2017-18. The Minister said power generation from seven hydro projects had declined from 72046.7 lakh units in 2013-14 to 45420.5 lakh units in 2015-16. But subsequently, it increased to 47742.1 lakh units in 2016-17 and 57308.9 lakh units in 2017-18. Power generation has increased in all the project except on Machhkund river, he said. Contrary to the claims at the official and non-official levels about decrease in fish production due to
construction of dams and barrages on Mahanadi river by Chhattisgarh, statistics given in a written reply by Fisheries Minister Pradip Maharathi to a separate question by Ray prove otherwise.

Fish production in the State increased from 11,108 tonne in 2010-11 to 27,594 tonne in 2016-17. The State Government had said in the Assembly that Chhattisgarh Government has already constructed 2268 dams and barrages in the upper catchment of Mahanadi river while 443 more projects are under implementation.

**India: Chhattisgarh With Higher Limits Of Fiscal GSDP: Eco Survey**


Chhattisgarh is among six States mainly Odisha, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Bihar having higher limits of 3.5 per cent of GSDP because they have strong overall fiscal positions, as deemed by the 14th Finance Commission’s (FFC’s) criteria, the India Economic Survey (Volume II) of the Union Ministry of Finance released recently has informed. States are ranked by the extent of fiscal space. The fiscal limit for most states is 3 percent of GSDP. Comparing limits with the BE estimates for 2017-18, only seven States have fiscal space exceeding 0.5 per cent of GSDP. The States with the most space in rupee terms are Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. In relative terms, Jharkhand also has considerable space, amounting to 0.7 percent of GSDP. States with no additional deficit capacity include Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha. An analysis of the State level Budgets for 2014-15 and 2015-16 (RE) shows that the increase in share of social services varied widely across States.

While the increase in social sector spending was in the range of 15 to 20 per cent in West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, the increase was more than 45 per cent in the poorer States like Bihar 46 per cent Chhattisgarh 49 per cent and Jharkhand 53 per cent. Notably, the “Economic Survey 2016-17” report of Chhattisgarh Government was placed on the Table of the Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly by Chief Minister Raman Singh in March this year. As per advance estimate, the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) (market price) at constant price is likely to grow at 7.14 per cent over the previous year 2015-16, it informed. The Growth in Gross State Value Added (basic prices), Agriculture sector (Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry and Fishing), Industry sector (Mining and Quarrying, Construction, Manufacturing and Electricity, Gas & Water supply) and Service sector are expected to be 7.40 per cent, 5.87 per cent, 6.11 per cent and 9.90 per cent respectively, over the previous year.

The GSDP at current price (market price) is likely to increase to Rs 2,90,140 crore in the year 2016-17 from Rs 2,60,776 crore as estimated for the year 2015-16 with 11.26 per cent increase compared to the previous year. The Gross State Value Added (basic prices) is expected to
increase from Rs 2,46,993 crore to Rs 2,75,655 crore. Contribution from Agriculture sector (Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry and Fishing) increase to Rs 48,522 crore from Rs 43,419 crore; from Industry sector (Mining and Quarrying, Construction, Manufacturing and Electricity, Gas & Water supply) it increased to Rs 1,27,389 crore from Rs 1,16,589 crore and that from Service sector raised from Rs 86,985 crore to Rs 99,744 crore. Per cent increase compared to the previous year are 11.60 per cent, 11.75 per cent, 9.26 per cent and 14.67 per cent respectively. Chhattisgarh is among 13 States which had been mentioned in the Economic Survey report 2015-16 as a success story on use of drip irrigation by farmers on their lands.

The results from an impact evaluation of National Mission on Micro Irrigation of the Union Ministry of Agriculture conducted in 64 districts of 13 States mainly — Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand — are revealing on the benefits of drip irrigation, according to the survey report. There were substantial reductions in irrigation costs and savings on electricity and fertilisers. This is because water is efficiently supplied and hence pumps are used for a limited time. Moreover, water soluble fertilisers are supplied directly to the root of the plant and hence there is less wastage, it stated. Yields of crops also went upto 45 per cent in wheat, 20 per cent in gram and 40 per cent in soybean, the report stated.

**Chhattisgarh: Chhattisgarh continues to block Mahanadi water at Kalma Barrage**

Neighbouring Chhattisgarh has continued to block Mahanadi water to Odisha through the Kalma barrage severely affecting the water flow into the Hirakud reservoir. According to sources, over the past one and a half month, out of the 67 gates of the barrage, water is being released through one gate only in a bid to stock water at the upper catchment of the barrage. Sources reported that by blocking of water at the gates of the barrage has noticeably reduced the water flow in the lower catchment of the barrage and into the Hirakud reservoir in Odisha. Locals from Bargaon village near the barrage have alleged that they are not getting enough water for farming and the fishermen’s livelihood is also in danger. “Most of the water is being used by industries. We get no water to sustain our livelihood,” said a local fisherman.

The ruling-BJD in Odisha has come down heavily on the Centre and the Chhattisgarh government for such blocking of Mahanadi water. Moreover, the State government has also raised questions before both the governments on such tactics. While BJD has said that it will move the court in this regard, the Odisha BJP pledged its support for the interests of the people of the State. “If anyone is trying to dry out the Mahanadi River, then it is the BJP government in Chhattisgarh and the Odisha BJP is indirectly supporting it. If they do not take our complaint seriously then the State government will be forced to consider other alternatives including moving the court,” said BJD spokesperson, Rabi Narayan Nanda. “This is a tussle between two governments. Hence the BJD should not do politics over it. But the Odisha BJP will try and
ensure that the interests of the State is not harmed,” said BJP’s chief spokesperson, Sajjan Sharma.

Chhattisgarh: Villagers protest against Chhattisgarh irrigation project


Villagers have come out in protest against the Gagar irrigation project in Chhattisgarh’s Balrampur district. The project on Gagar River would be built with an estimated cost of Rs 35 crore and would have potential to irrigate 3500 hectare additional land in the Lundra development block of Sarguja division. About five villagers housing a population of 10,000 would be affected. U D Ramtake, the Executive Engineer of the water resources department, said they had deposited Rs 17 crore with the district administration for land acquisition. Before the process of land acquisition could start, villagers had come out on street to lodge protest against the plan. The villagers said the special gram sabha convened for the project in different villages had refused the plan. Despite the protest, the district administration is allegedly planning to forcefully acquire the land for the project.

Under the banner of Chhattisgarh Kisan Sabha and Adivasi Ekta Mahasabha, the villagers marched out a rally in Ambikapur, the divisional headquarters of Sarguja. A memorandum was given to the district authorities. The officials however did not comment on the development. C P Shukla, Chhattisgarh’s Kisan Sabha’s secretary, said the officials were trying to forcefully take over the land for the project despite the gram sabha passing resolution to oppose it. The district administration had served notices to the villagers asking to evict the place, he said. Sarguja is fifth scheduled area and the administration cannot ignore the gram sabha’s proceedings for land acquisition, he added. The villagers protest would intensify if the administration tried to forcefully acquire the land, Shukla said.

Chhattisgarh: ‘Chhattisgarh farmers should be number one in seed production’


Farmers of Chhattisgarh are needed to be made number one in production of seeds as acreage of oilseeds is comparatively less in the state and 45 percent oil is imported. Seeds are everything in agriculture and if quality seeds are supplied in right time then agriculture production can be increased by ten to fifteen percent, said Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh in his address at the IGKV convocation ceremony on Monday. Chhattisgarh is full of natural and human resources and in this state, variety of crops are grown in the area from Koriya to Konta,
lending a beautiful example of crop diversity. In the northern hills, litchi is a cash crop and there are great possibilities of floriculture in Jashpur, Koriya and Ambikapur districts. Profit is comparatively more from these crops and it is challenge to make market of these crops available to the farmers, the union minister said. Governor and Chancellor Balramji Dass Tandon said that such a road map needs to be made for agriculture development in which bio-farming is used and maximum benefit is gained from per unit cost. Women farmers need to be encouraged for making bio-farm.

Despite increase in agricultural production, the country is lagging behind when compared with the demand of pulses and oilseeds. Edible oil has to be imported. One more revolution is needed for pulses, oilseeds and horticulture. In comparison to the 52 percent population of the country, it is 65 percent population of Chhattisgarh that is dependent on agriculture, but partnership in the Gross Domestic Product is continuously declining. Along with horticulture crops, animal husbandry and fisheries needs to be encouraged in integrated way. There is no dearth of land and water in the state, but efforts needs to be made so that farmers two and three crops agriculture in place of one crop so that the farmers get work round the year. For rapid progress of the state, it is necessary that the state at least equalize with the national average in agricultural production.

Chief Minister Dr Raman Singh and State Agriculture Minister Brijmohan Agrawal highlighted the steps being taken by the state government for progress in agriculture education and agriculture. Dr Raman Singh said that irrigation capacity reached up to 23 percent in six decades in the state, but in the past one decade, this capacity has been increased to 34 percent. The union minister reviewed the major agriculture development programmes of Chhattisgarh. Tourism and Culture Minister of the state Dayaldas Baghel was also present. The union minister praised the implementation of the agriculture programmes after noticing progress of the state in food grains, pulses and oilseeds production in the period from 2003-04 and 2013-14.

Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) asks Ministry of Forest and Environment (MoEF) for full status report on Polavaram

http://odishatv.in/odisha/body-slider/ngt-asks-moef-for-full-status-report-on-polavaram-163185/

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) today issued an order to the Ministry of Forest and Environment (MoEF) to submit a complete status report on the controversial Polavaram project. The tribunal directed the authorities of the ministry to appear before it in person. Sources said the next hearing for the case is scheduled for September 5. Earlier this month, the NGT had ordered a joint inspection of the Polavaram dam construction site by the Andhra Pradesh Government, State Pollution control Board and Polavaram Project Authority following a complaint about dumping of mud in the West Godavari district. Notably, both Odisha and Chhattisgarh are objecting to the project. But that has not stopped the Andhra Pradesh government from going ahead with work on the project, which has been accorded the status of a national project.