



FEMINIST MOVEMENT of WOMEN FISHER-FOLK COMMUNITIES for CLIMATE JUSTICE

Jaymoni is a village in the Sundarbans, on the banks of the Bay of Bengal and Pashur River, on the last border of Mongla Upazila in the southwestern part of Bangladesh, where all men and women are fisherfolks.

According to the Government Watershed Management Policy 2009, 'A person who makes a living mainly by catching and selling fish from natural sources will be considered as a real fisherman'.

"This association is giving us hopes"

*Halima Begum, President,
Jaymoni Women Fisherfolk Association.*

**"Here we fight with the river,
the water, the cyclone, the
pirates, the local exploiters
and hustlers, as well as with
the wild animals of Sundar-
bans"**

**- Sabita Roy
General Secretary.**

**"We are 1100 fisherfolk women
in number but only 45 among
us have the fisherfolk card"**

**-Begum
Executive Member,
Jaymoni Women Fisherfolk Association**



In fact, the lives and livelihoods of these women in Jayamoni depend on fishing in small canals flowing between the Pashur River and the Sundarbans and selling those fish to Dadan traders at fixed prices. But whether women will be considered as real fisherfolk is a matter of debate from a patriarchal point of view. Are women the main breadwinners? Does the family depend on their income?

These women are deprived of the Fisherman's Card - many are single mothers, widows, have no contact with their husbands, separated or divorced. They have been fishing for ages. Indigenous women in one sense. Their livelihood is dependent on fishing using natural methods. Will they get support from the social security program as fishermen? Will they be able to form a women fishermen's association? Aren't they acknowledging gender discrimination?

A tourism company will build hotels in the area, so women are fearful of being evicted from their homes. There is no way but to wait for the tide of the river because of the scarcity of drinking water. Even then the water is too salty to drink. Climate change - salinity, disasters, new industries, tourism, commercial fishing, etc. have put their lives at risk.

At the beginning of the year, they take a loan from the moneylender and repay the loan with fish at a fixed rate predetermined by the moneylenders throughout the year. As a result, there is no opportunity to sell fish at the market price or at a higher price.

Badabon Sangho has been mobilizing them since 2019. Women leaders were repeatedly visited the Upazila cooperative office, fisheries office, forest department office, coast-guard office with their demands. However, they failed to put the agendas on table. Then, women leaders took decision to form an association. It was started its journey as- Jaymoni Fisherfolk Women's Association. But they faced gender discrimination in case of association's legal registration. The cooperative dept informed that women-led dedicated fisher-folk association is not allowed.



"We have been fighting for food since birth, but now we know, we also have to fight to survive in the society"

*-Farida Khatun; Member,
Jaymoni Women Fisherfolk Association.*

But they were not stopped, they continued to raise their voices:

Allocate homestead land in the name of women fisher-folk at the bank of river on state land. It would give them tenure security.

Allow us to receive social safety-net schemes.

Register women's fisher-folk dedicated association with Dept of Cooperative Development.

Access to open state water-bodies (rivers) for fishing.

Access to saline-free safe water for drinking.

Badabon Sangho is working with women fisher-folk communities since 2019 to highlight the struggle of lives due to discrimination and deprivation.