

Effect of Sand Mining on fishing communities - Subarnarekha and Kangsabati Rivers

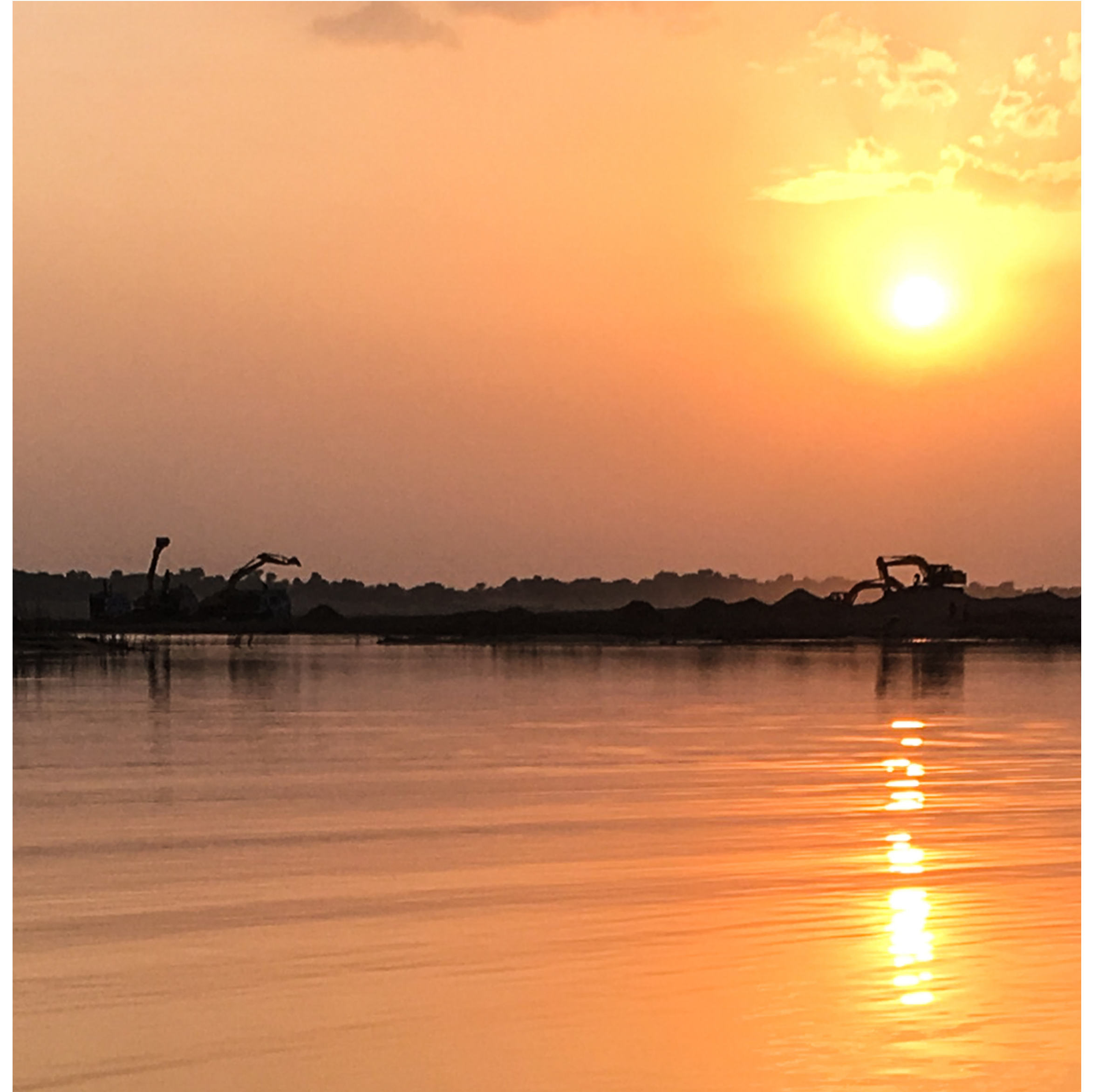
Jharna Acharya / **ঝর্ণা আচার্য**

Assistant Secretary, Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum

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The paradox

- We are otherwise being asked to conserve rainwater and not extract groundwater from extreme depths. Because we understand the problem it creates.
- But in case of sand mining - today machines are being used to dig up sand from deep underground. When will we realise this folly?



Local Situation

- Machines are extracting from the river bed, creating pits upto 50-60 feet deep.
- This indiscriminate mining is creating large pools in the river.
- This is also making the river shift rapidly, affecting the adjacent areas.
- The river's capacity to hold water is also drastically reducing.



Effect on fisherfolk

- All over the region, fisherfolk who would otherwise completely rely on the river for their sustenance find themselves helpless today.



Effect on fisherfolk

- 20 years ago, these fisherfolk would have enough to survive
- now they have had to turn to all kinds of labour to survive.
- The river's character has changed by a lot.



Effect on fisherfolk

- When sand mining first started as a business here, many of the fisherfolk became the default labour.
- But once machines came in, that job was lost.



Effect on fisherfolk

- Now with both the river gone and the job of sand labour gone, the fisherfolk have instead started other labour work or are collecting gravel from the river.



Effect on fisherfolk

- The boats that were once used for fishing, are now being used to collect gravel and sand.
- They recently defended their right to collect gravel when the larger contractors stepped in.



Present Situation

- The fisherfolk still spend time by the river, but there are no more fish left.
- There are small scale efforts by organisations like DMF & DISHA to cultivate fishes in the reservoirs created by the large scale sand mining.

