

PROLOGUE

National Fishworkers' Forum started publishing the annual report since 1991. This initiative was intended to keep some record of major trends and events of Indian fisheries and activities of fisher peoples' organisations – as reflected in their organizational reports placed at the national conference every year. This is neither a calendar of events nor an exhaustive collection of documents. It is only a mirror of the glimpses of fisher people's endeavor to secure their rightful place in the society and to cope with the incessant sociopolitical, economic and environmental changes without doing away with their traditional way of life. This publication is expected to serve as a reference to the policy makers, administrators, political analysts, observers, researchers and scholars of social sciences. In spite of many inadequacies we were happy and encouraged indeed to know that many of the above mentioned disciplines found it useful. That gave us the impetus to publish it regularly, defying many odds, till 2004. But it is a matter of great regret that there had been a break in the regularity and we were not able to bring out the publication last year on time.

NFF had to pass through a period of horrendous twinge throughout the years 2005 and 2006 owing to a series of subversive activities of a caucus of unscrupulous and crooked moles. As a result the NFF Head Office had to be shifted from Trivandrum to Kolkata by the middle of 2005 and started functioning afresh from scratch. Most of the invaluable records of thirty years of the movement and all the equipments, accessories and assets of the organisation, that were there at the erstwhile Head Office have been plundered and stolen.

Attending to the unprecedented catastrophe of killer Tsunami and simultaneously tackling the conspiratorial & disruptive acts of the crooked caucus had been a very tuff task. Caught in such a predicament we were not able to do even the scheduled works duly and as such failed to publish the NFF reports 2004 on time. We apologize to our honorable members and readers for this failure. Backed by the trust of the fisher people and solid support of their determined leaders NFF is progressively sailing across the roughs. Things are falling in order and the organisation is steadily picking up its momentum as usual.

NFF General Body meets in Malvan, Sindhudurg, Maharashtra from 10th to 12th December 2006. Lot of crucial changes is taking place in the fisheries sector and in the coastal zone. The whole community is threatened by various undesirable interventions like Coastal Management Zone (CMZ), Special Economic Zone (SEZ), tourism & Marine Protected Area (MPA) etc. as consequences of globalization. The organisation is all set to plunge into action on these issues immediately. Fishing community is eagerly waiting for the outcome of the General Body meet.

On the eve of the General Body meet 2006 we are back to the track and happy to resume NFF Report publication. Because of constraint of resources we are publishing the reports of 2004 and 2005 under one cover. We hope to be back to our original schedule of regular annual publication from the next year. We request all concerned to continue to patronize this effort of NFF as ever.

Harekrishna Debnath
Chair person

N.D.Koli
General Secretary

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FISHERS' SUN SET IN PORBANDER

PREMJIBHAI PASSED AWAY

A veteran leader of fisher people of India Shri P. V. Khokari (Premji Bhai) has passed away today, the 19th October 2006 in Porbander. With a heavy heart we received the news of sad demise of Shri P.V. Khokari. National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF) has lost a leading light house, the most dependable anchor and a great human being.

He was the main cause to make Gajarat State fisher people an integral part of the NFF. During our struggle against foreign fishing vessels, Premjibhai brought the entire fishing community of Gujarat under the Action Committee. He led the historic Porbander fast. He backed the NFF to raise money for the founding of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) in Delhi in 1997. His fabulous commitment and amazing dedication for the services of the fishing community of India is very well known.

We recall how persistent he has been on the issue of 'fishworkers in jail'. Premji Bhai, though confronted by the stark and emotional issue of fishers from Gujarat landing up in the prisons of Pakistan, understood the need for breaking the barriers and speaking for the release of fishworkers from Pakistan in Indian jails within the framework of peace and mutuality. This issue has been close to his heart till the end of his life. It is a pity that the fishworkers in Gujarat are still victims of the human facelessness of geopolitical compulsions. We have to work on this matter in respect to the vision of the departed leader.

With great respect and humility we pay our homage and deep condolence for the departed soul. This year, with Diwali around the corner, we miss the Diwali Greetings he has unfailingly been sending us for so many years.

We affirm our oneness and solidarity to the family and the fishers of Gujarat in this hour of great grief. Let us all build up NFF as the shining memorial for remembrance of Premjibhai.

Harekrishna Debnath
Chairperson NFF

N.D.Koli
General Secretary NFF

Thomas Kocherry
Executive Member

Kolkata
19.10.2006

BHAI BANDARKAR AMAR RAHE

We are deeply shocked to know that our beloved leader Bhai Bandarkar has passed away. It is not just a demise but in fact the end of an era of great stewardship of the fishing community in the face of innumerable sociopolitical disadvantages.

Bhai Bandarkar's unparalleled, farsighted and unique leadership brought the fishing community of Maharashtra to the forefront of social action. His initiative in protecting the traditional rights of the fishing community over the coastal areas and the seas is legendary. His uncompromising fight against foreign fishing vessels endeared him to the entire fishing community of India and created history. We had the privilege of working with this illustrious leader in the National Fishworkers' Forum. The vacuum created by Bhai's departure can never be filled. Bhai lived among us as a symbol of success and inspiration. He will continue to remain a model for our future generations.

We pray for the peace of the departed soul and express our condolence and solidarity with the family and followers of Bhai Bandarkar.

Harekrishna Debnath
Chairperson

N.D.Koli
General Secretary

Thomas Kocherry
ExecutiveMember

**Kolkata
19.3.2006**

TRIBUTE TO TARUN PATTANAİK

We are deeply shocked by the sudden demise of Tarun Pattanaik. Death is an inevitable reality for all living being. Every life leaves a heavy burden of memory for the survivors to mourn. Some deaths are heavier than others. Taru Babu lived a life that will remain alive in the memory of his friends, colleagues and fellow co-travelers for a long time.

We had the opportunity to work with him on many issues and occasions. We always enjoyed the privilege of his unconditional support and stainless confidence on all issues of concern for the fisher folk. It is a huge loss for the community as well as its organisations.

His uncompromising struggle against foreign fishing vessels was a great example of patriotism and organizational skills. Many a times Taru Babu unjustly neglected himself while fighting for justice to others. Many believe that it caused the premature end to his great life. The vacuum created by his demise will never be filled up.

I, on behalf of National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF) and on my own behalf, extend my wholehearted condolence to the family, friends and colleagues of Tarun Pattanaik. Let us all work together to keep the high spirits of the departed soul ever alive among us for the service of the community and the nation. May him rest in peace and continue to inspire us with the ideals left behind.

In deepest condolence,

Harekrishna Debnath
Chairperson, NFF

06.01.2005

**To
The Secretary, OMFPA
Paradeep, Orissa.**

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NFF REPORT –2004

1. Introduction:

India witnessed another general election. Beyond anybody's calculation people voted for a changer with its own limitation. The verdict was clearly against globalisation and communalism. But the winners are continuing the globalisation policy. The situation is getting worse. During the last General body, we decided to vote against NDA Government and in fact NDA was defeated in the general election. Now we have no other choice but vote between NDA and UPA. A political alternative is a must. But the political problems are numerous.

In this political change we have been trying to exert our presence in different ways. Particularly participating in the making of Fisheries Policy. But we hear the Fisheries Policy is already announced without paying attention to us. Whether NDA or UPA rules, we have to mobilise and pressurise the ruling class to achieve our rights and demands. It is in this context, we are having this General Body in West Bengal. Let us look at ourselves with a sense of evaluation. During the last General Body we discussed whether the NFF should continue or not. We were given a year for self-introspection and self-evaluation. At this point we decided to contribute our mite to the running of the NFF. We also discussed about conflicts in the state organisations. All these need to be evaluated and take a new decision about the future of NFF. During these four days let us look at our organisations and ourselves. Let us look for leaders who are capable of making the NFF into a new force in the political arena of India.

2. Jambudwip

The struggle to protect the right of ten thousand fishermen to dry fish in Jambudwip continues. Through the fishermen expected a positive verdict from the Supreme Court so that they can go to Jambudwip to dry fish this year, one way the other the case is being delayed. In the final analysis the Supreme Court has given two months time for the MoEF to take a final stand concerning the proposal of 100 hectares to be given to the fishermen for drying fish.

It has been a long-standing struggle of 10000 fishermen and one-lakh dependents. Twelve fishermen lost their lives and thousands of fisher people have been in the misery of destitution. In their attempt to earn some living, they have been trying to fish here and there. During their search for some fishing grounds those who have had the monopoly of the fishing grounds attacked the Jambudwip fishermen and have taken away their nets and other fishing implements and some of them are seriously wounded.

3. Fisheries Policy

Towards the end of NDA Government, a draft Fisheries Policy was submitted before the Cabinet for approval. But this did not go through because of the early announcement of elections. When the UPA Government came to power, the NFF Committee met the Minister of Agriculture Mr. Sharad Pawar and had a discussion with him on the draft policy. He requested us to give our comments on the same. Accordingly, NFF Executive Committee was called in Thiruvananthapuram to have a discussion on the draft. With the help of Mr. Sebastian Mathew of the ICSF and Mr. V. Vivekanandan of SIFFS we prepared our comments and submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture. A copy of this is found in World Fisheries Day – 2004, souvenir.

4. Different meetings of the NFF Committees

During the last one year the NFF Committee appointed by the Ministry of agriculture, met three times and held discussions with Ministry of Agriculture on 42 demands. Again and again we raised the issue of subsidised kerosene. We also submitted the agreements of the former Prime Minister to the Ministry of Petroleum in supplying additional amount of subsidised Kerosene for the fishermen. Agriculture Minister has also written to the Minister of Petroleum concerning the same. Unfortunately, instead of increasing the supply of Kerosene, it is being reduced. Again and again we submitted list of Joint Venture vessels, which are in operation. But the ministry has declined saying that no such operation is taking place. We also hear that the Ministry of agriculture is in a process to allow more foreign fishing vessels under the guise of carrying Indian flag. It is a matter of serious intervention by us. We need to prepare ourselves to pressurise the Government in order to get all our demands met.

✓ 5. Turtle issue

The ban on turtle in Orissa has affected the traditional fisher people. We have raised this issue with the Prime Minister and with the Committee. This has created some interaction with the CEC

and the environmentalists. Some how we have been able to bring about some amicable settlement. But this is not enough and this is not the end of all. We need to continue our interaction.

6. Other important issues

We are facing so many issues, which need to be discussed, like Sethu Samudram Project, eviction of fishermen from islands in Ramnad district, Project Sea Bird in Karwar, Umbergaon International Port, ban on shark fishing, ban on shark fin export, oil explorations, sand mining, ship breaking etc.

7. ILO labour standard

At the initiative of ICSF, we have been involved in understanding the implications of ILO labour standard on traditional fishing communities like ours. It was for the first time ILO is opening up to the unorganised working class. Through a questionnaire circulated, the ILO came up with certain proposals on social security, minimum wage, hour of work, work agreement, health care, sea safety etc. Generally these are meant for industrial workers in the industrial fleet. However, sea safety and social security are applicable to us. Since ILO is opening up for the first time, it is important that we arrive at certain conclusions. NFF has taken up this seriously and held discussions among us as well as with central trade unions in India. It was important to notice that every body was looking up to the NFF.

8. Women in fisheries

Though we have worked out Women's Magna Carta in Mangalore, we have not worked out the follow up seriously in all the states. It is very important that we discuss this thoroughly and work out the follow up actions. The Women's Magna Carta is printed in the World fisheries Day souvenir.

9. WFFP

The General Assembly of the world Forum of Fisher Peoples took place in Kenya from 21st November to 27th November 2004. About 70 people from 24 countries participated in the General Assembly. The General secretary's report is included in the WFD souvenir. We have worked out a Global Fisheries Policy based on the draft Fisheries Policy published in the souvenir. The final Global Fisheries Policy document will be released by the end of March 2005. The General Assembly was a big success. A new Co-ordination Committee is designated on a consensus basis. NFF has been facilitating the World Forum since 1997. Now we have generously handed over this facilitation to NAFSO of Srilanka. Herman Kumara is the new General Secretary of WFFP. Our Trivandrum office will continue as a registered office of WFFP. But the WFFP Secretariat will be operated from Srilanka.

10. NAPM

The NFF has always been active with NAPM. NAPM has been supporting all our struggles particularly Medha Patkar and the team took the trouble in coming to Jambudwip, which gave a boost to our struggles. We must continue this collaboration for mutual benefit.

11. Peoples Political Front (PPF)

NAPM has been discussing on the creation of an alternative politics and alternative development of the majority of the workers belonging to the unorganised sector. Thomas Kocherry and Aruna Roy are playing important role in the making of PPF. But as an organisation, NFF cannot be party to it. Since we are an independent union and do not wish to belong to any political party. We need to discuss this point thoroughly.

12. NCL

It has been our effort along with other unorganised working class to form the National Centre for Labour (NCL). NCL is committed to the enactment of the umbrella legislation to cover the entire unorganised working class in India. UPA in their CMP has committed to guarantee 100 days' employment to all the workers in the unorganised sector. Together with NCL we should fight for the implementation of this. Together with CEC, New Trade Union Initiative and NCL we are committed to global week of action against WTO and Globalisation.

13. Organisational matters and election

During the last General Body it was raised as a point, where does the NFF stand as an organisation? There is no doubt that NFF has a lot of political clout in India today. We are member in the National Fisheries Advisory Board of India. We were member in the National

Coastal Zone Management Authority too. The Agriculture Ministry approached us as a committee to look into the implementation of 42 demands.

At the same time the NFF as an organisation has been facing conflicts in the organisation in many states. We failed in resolving these conflicts. The Government has taken a decision to go ahead with giving license to foreign vessels. We need to oppose this move by all means as we did in the '90s.

We need an open discussion on each state level organisation's strength and weakness in an open manner. This realistic discussion will help us to understand our state level organisations so that we can assess the strength and weakness of the NFF.

We need finance. We have succeeded in getting support from many state level organisations. But a few did not respond to this. Every state has to take the responsibility in this regard. The commitment to sell souvenirs has to be honoured, so that NFF will make some money for its day-to-day functioning.

We have to conduct the election and look for leadership, who will help us to carry the NFF to new political height. The General Body needs to look for this leadership on a consensus basis.

We wish you all success in all endeavours.

Thanking you all.

Harekrishna Debnath
(Chairperson)

N.D.Koli
(General Secretary)



FISHING BOAT WORKERS UNION VISAKHAPATNAM

Annual report-2004

1. After General Body meeting we started "Jalachaithanya Yathra" second survey, from 26th January to 17th February 2004. On 18th Feb.2004 we started YATHRA from Ruplipalam in Nellore district and concluded on 11th March 2004 at Ichapuram & Dunkuru village in Srikakulam district. During this 'Yathra' we covered 24 villages. Mr. Polanna of Pedajalaripetta, Visakhapatnam, designed a 'fibre thappa' for this yathra. The aim was to generate awareness and forge unity to build union in village, mandal, district and state level. Major issues highlighted during the yathra were (i) *cancellation of licenses of the foreign fishing trawlers*, (ii) *implementation of Murari Committee recommendations*, (iii) *provision of drinking water, electricity, road and school for fishing villages and so on.*
2. T.K. Rahiman, Polanna, Lakshmi, and Annapurna participated in the training programme on ILO labour standard in small scale fisheries organised jointly by NFF, ICSF and SIFFS at Christu Jayanti Animation Center at Kovalam in Tiruvanantapuram.
3. On 9th April 2004 in Painthorapetta village we arranged a meeting. In the meeting they decided to form a society to attend to their problems. Villagers decided to vote for such candidates in the coming general elections who are sympathise their problems. In Pedajalaripetta fishermen decided to form a welfare society. A union has been formed in Veda Narsapuram village. T.K. Rahiman and Lakshmi were present in these meetings.
4. A memorandum was submitted to the ward commissioner for providing road, water supply and electricity to Pedajalarapeta fishing hamlets. Two more memoranda were submitted in the month of June and September 2004 to the A. D. Office. On receipt of these, A. D. Officer and superintendent called the leaders of the union and asked how the problems could be solved. Leaders opined that higher authorities from State capital are to be called for discussions.
5. Boat Owners of Pedajalaripeta, Vasavanipalem, Jodigulla-Palem, Siva Ganesh Nagar were called for discussion on the issue of M. F. R. Act and adequate supply of diesel. The meeting decided to launch agitation for increase in the subsidy on diesel from 100 liters to 500 liters. On our demand, the Revenue Inspector conducted a survey on the widow pensions, old age pensions and housing loans. In these survey 20 persons from Siva ganesh nagar, 60 persons from Pada Jalari Peta, 12 persons from Jodigulla Palem were identified and selected for grant of pension. Same struggle was organised in the Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam districts. 'ALALU' the booklet on voyage (Jala Chaitanya Yatra) was released in 9 districts in Andhrapradesh and distributed to the villagers seeking financial help for bringing out this publication. The union decided to get this booklet printed in English.
6. During the 'World Fishers Day' celebrations the plight of fishfolk was projected in the District level and Mondal level to sensitize the administration for remedial action.
7. The Union demanded that the villages of Vajrapu Kothuru Nuvulu Ravu should be recognised by the Government. We decided that the fishermen associations of these villages should be affiliated to our union. 200 men from these villages attended the state level / central level meeting on 21st November and made the rally a grand success.
8. As per the decision taken in the executive committee meeting held on 1st October a rally was organised to highlight the implementation of Murari Committee recommendations. On World Fisheries Day meetings were also conducted in the villages of Santhabommali and Vajrapu Kothuru. The report of G. Shampu Rao of Manchi Neeli Peta village on the migrant fishermen's plight in Gujaarat and Maaharastra has been given publicity right from Srikakulam district to Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa states. Mr. M. Laxmunudu appraised the NFF General Body of these incidents. Sri Sampu Rao emphasized the need to take action on this report.
9. A memorandum was submitted by the fishermen to the District Collector of Srikakulam. On November 21st a rally was organised with 200 men from fishing harbour to Collector office and it was covered in the media. A memorandum was also submitted to the Hon'ble M. L. As, M Ps, Collector, Hon'ble Minister for fisheries and Hon'ble Chief Minister, requesting the implementation

of Murari Committee recommendation for fishermen community. On 22nd November a meeting was held in the villages of Tammayyapalam in Vizaya Nagaram district. Pedajaliripetta society meeting was also held in Sept. 2004 in which 100men participated.

10. The said meeting was organised under the leadership of Sri Polanna. Sri Polanna emphasized the implication of legal provisions. After listening about the repercussions 59 persons dropped and 41 persons expressed their readiness to go a head with the plan.

11. After finalizing the modalities a society, by name, Traditional Fshermen aided Co-operative Society Limited is registered under Registration of Societies Act giving coverage to enter coastal areas

12. About three years constant struggle, housing scheme for 500 fishermen each costing Rs. 30,000was sanctioned by the Govt. of Andhrapradesh during the month of Dec. 2000. Pedajalapeta Ramana Mutyalammaveedi fishermen villages are benefited. Road and electrification of these villages is also sanctioned. Suggestion has been given that the above society is affiliated to A. D. Office. The Govt. will be able to help financially, whereas if it is affiliated to N. F. F. such support cannot be given.

13. On 1st of every month office staff meeting is to be held in which Sri Rahiman, Miss Lakshmi, Miss Annapurna, Kumari Shakeela and Eswar will be participating. The following is the schedule of the meeting: -

Monday: - *Govt. office work (to submit representation on village problem).*

Tuesday: - *Village level work.*

Wednesday: - *Revu polavaram, Pudimadakha & office work.*

Thursday: - *Chinna Naga Mayya Palem.*

Friday: - *Vizianageram at Tammayyapalem and Srikakulam.*

Saturday: - *Mahilla meets at village level.*

T. K. Rahiman
Secretary.



COASTAL KARNATAKA FISHERMEN ACTION COMMITTEE

(A confederation of 55 fishermen organisations of coastal Karnataka)

Annual Report – 2004

The coastal belt of Karnataka with its 3 districts of Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada have earned a niche for themselves in fishing map of India. The 300 km. coastal belt is having over 3 lakhs fishermen. They are engaged in mechanised and traditional fishing. The fishing communities are socially, economical and educationally backward. The Akila Karnataka Fishermen Parishad formed in 1956 is the only state level organisation, which takes up the issues of betterment of fishermen and the industry with both Central and State Governments. The earnest efforts made by the Parishad in the beginning of introduction of mechanized fishing was responsible for the smooth transition from traditional to mechanized fishing in Karnataka with least resistance unlike in other maritime states. Today Karnataka has the highest concentration of mechanized fishing boats per k.m. of coast. Parishad is mainly responsible for getting all the fishermen hamlets connected by fisheries feeder roads to the national highway for the easy transportation of fish catches from the landing centers. The Parishad is successful in getting recommendation of the state to include all the 36 fishing communities under ST. The State Government has declared the fishing community in the state as category 1 (backward tribe, Most Backward) among the backward classes making provision for reservation in educational institutions and for other benefits. There is no income limit to get the benefits under this category. The Parishad has organized 8 state level conferences in different areas of the state and made recommendations to the Government in the interest of the fishing community.

The pollution caused by the industries established along the coast and its effect on the marine life was one of the concerns of the Parishad. The death of tons of fish due to the pollution caused by effluent discharge of caustic soda factory in Binaga – Karwar and the Mangalore Fertilizer and chemicals gave the wake up call to the fishermen. The matter was taken up with State and Central Governments with right earnestness and the Parishad was successful in getting three effluent treatment plants installed in these factories. The demonstration and the protest rally organized in this connection on 2-4-1975 at Karwar was a historic one. Since then Parishad's relentless fight against industrial pollution of sea and rivers is continuing. The recent being the mammoth rally and the protest against the Mangalore Refineries and Petrochemical factory at Mangalore.

The Coastal Karnataka Fishermen Action Committee representing 56 organisations sponsored by the D.K. Mogaveera Mahajana Sangha and Parishad is mainly responsible for exemption of Sales Tax on 50,000 KL of diesel used by the fishermen from the year 1999 – 2000. This is costing the exchequer nearly Rs. 25 crores annually. It has come as a great relief to the fishermen in these days of increased operational costs. This is in addition to the excise duty remission of Rs. 1.50 per ltr. Announced by the Central Government recently due to the efforts of NFF. Improved landing centers, modern fish markets, storage facility, strengthening of fisheries co-operatives, diversification of fishing, modernization of fishing crafts are the areas wherein the action committee is concentrating now. The traditional fishermen who brave the sea in the stormy months of June, July and August are the lot who are hit by the meager monthly quota of Kerosene allotted to them at controlled rate. The action committee making all out efforts with the State Government to get the quota increased. The demand of the NFF to grant subsidy on Kerosene used by the traditional fishermen will go a long way in helping this most neglected section of the fishing community.

To fulfill the various demands of the fishermen the office bearers of the action committee have met the Chief Minister of the state and the Fisheries Minister and the authorities concerned from time to time. The action committee is closely associated with NFF in all its activities. A ten-member team from Karnataka participated in World Social Forum and NFF meet held at Mumbai from 22nd January to 25th January 2004.

The State Government is implementing various schemes for the socioeconomic development of fishermen and fisher women such as savings cum relief scheme, assistance for marketing fish, Matsya Vahini, managerial subsidy to fisheries co-operatives, investment in fisheries co-operatives and NCDC assisted integrated marine fisheries development project implemented through the fish marketing federations.

The self help groups organized by the fisher women at village level comprising around 20 members confined themselves to lending among the members using loans from banks. This has helped them to get equipped for entrepreneurship. The "Yashaswini" medical care scheme for members of fishermen / fisher women co-operatives societies, to get medical treatment free of cost for 1518 types of operations in recognized hospitals is a boon for the fishing community.

3 seminars were conducted on economical development of fisher women at Mangalore in collaboration with Fisheries College of Mangalore. Thirty women delegates attended each seminar from 2 coastal districts.

Centrally sponsored " Mathsya Ashraya" fishermen housing scheme is successfully implemented in the state. The reduction in budgetary allotment of funds to the fisheries sector in the state is a matter of great concern and much need to be done in this direction.

Vasudeva Bloor
General Secretary
04.12.2004.



KERALA SWATHANTHRA MATSYA THOZHILALY FEDERATION (KSMTF)

Annual Report – 2004

We are privileged to submit an activity Report of KSMTF for the year 2004 before the General Body Meeting of NFF held in Diamond Harbour in December 2004.

In the outset we pay our homage to the late Sr. P. V. Rose who expired on January 3rd 2004 in Trivandrum. Sr. P.V. Rose had been a close co-traveller with KSMTF. It is with prayerful memories of Sr. Rose that we present before you the major interventions made by KSMTF in the year 2004.

1. Major Activities

✓ **Agitation against Foreign Fishing Vessels:**

KSMTF took initiative to call upon other trade unions in Kerala to jointly discuss upon the Central Government's new move to issue license to foreign fishing vessels for fishing in Indian seas and to design a protest activity programme against this. The joint action committee formed in this regard organised a State level convention in YMCA Hall in Trivandrum on January 13, 2004. Kerala opposition leader Com. V. S. Achudhanandan inaugurated this convention. Conventions were organised on this issue in all coastal districts of Kerala from January 23-28, 2004. A coastal 'Bandh' was organised on February 3rd akin to this issue and all fishermen refrained from fishing on that day. Thousands of fishworkers marched to the Accountant General's office on this day to register their agony on and protest to this new venture of the Central Govt. This multifaceted protest activity paved the way for the coastal MPs to raise this issue for urgent consideration, favouring the fishworkers, at the floor of the parliament.

Trawl agitation:

The Govt. of Kerala every year makes a customary banning of trawling activities in Kerala marine sector just for 45 days only instead of the 90 days-trawl- ban demand raised by the fishworkers. And simultaneously, the Govt. of Kerala was conspiring with the mechanised trawl boat association members to do a way with all sorts of trawl ban this year. KSMTF managed to know of this secret arrangements of the Govt. and boat owners association, and proclaimed that if the Govt. retreats from banning trawling this year and if the trawl boats venture to trawl during the monsoon season, the fishworkers will dare to take in to custody all such trawl boats. This proclamation was announced at press conference timely convened by KSMTF. All KSMTF leaders camped in Kollam district and organised fish workers to be prepared for boat-catch even in any adverse situations. The boat owners declared that they will dare into trawling activities. The Govt. was alerted of this aggressive situation and was compelled to ban trawling during this year.

✓ **Kerosene issue:**

The continuous kerosene quota reduction by central Government as very adversely impacted upon the fishing activities and the fishing communities, even though the Govt of India had promised to avail kerosene quota assistance, sufficient kerosene for fishing at just prize the fishworkers, it had failed to keep its promise. The traditional fish workers under KSMTF staged a protest dharna on February 16,2004 in front of the Govt secretariat in Trivandrum.

✓ **Shark fishing Issue:**

The Central Govt. withdrew its shark-fishing ban due to fishermen's Agitation. But still the Karnataka Govt. issued a shark-fishing ban in Karnataka. This had very adversely affected hundreds of shark fish workers both in Kerala and Tamilnadu. At this stage Fisheries Action Forum was organized to safeguard the livelihood rights of the shark fish workers who engage in shark fishing from Tamilnadu to Gujarat. Under the leadership of Mr. Vincent Jain and T. Peter, submission were placed before the Karnataka, Kerala and Central Govt. to withdraw the Karnataka shark fishing on March 11,2004 a press conference was convened in Mangalore, in the state of Karnataka, to exhort the Govt. once again to withdraw the ban and proclaimed of fish workers organised agitation if the Govt. refuse to oblige. The Karnataka Govt. was compelled to lift the ban due to the continuous interventions of Fisheries Action Forum.

Welfare measures related issues:

Fisheries welfare fund Board of Kerala had suddenly 17 out of the existing 21 welfare relief programs of the Fish workers in Kerala. KSMTF immediately intervened protesting against this

and convened "Sathyagraha Struggle" at the secretariat and Govt. district head quarters. T. Peter, P. P. John, John J.P., M. Ambrose, K.V. Rapheal, Rajan Lazer, M.S. Sathyanathan etc had led the struggles. On account of the Fish workers agitation this issue was discussed at the Legislative Assembly and the related welfare schemes were reinstated.

Fish import agitation: ✓

Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh visited Thailand in 2004. To coax the Thailand people and earn cheap popularity he declared that India would import Fish from Thailand. Immediately KSMTF intervened. Alerted the people here about the adverse impacts of the fish import on fishing and the livelihood of Fish workers here in India. Organised a protest dharna before the Secretariat of Govt. of Kerala and registered our anger in the media too.

MPEDA march

An agitation march to the MPEDA (marine products export development authority) office was organised in Ernakulam with the following demands. Institute a Fisheries Ministry at the Centre. Ban totally all the licence issued to all foreign fishing vessels in Indian Sea. Raise the number of trawl-ban-days to 90 days in Kerala. T. Peter inaugurated the agitation march. P.P. John, Fr. Thomas Kochery, K.V. Rapheal, Ms. Sancu Jacob, P.V. Pavithran, Ms. Jiji Antony, V.D. Majeendran & others spoke at the agitation march.

Red tide issue: ✓

Sudden events of massive-fish-deaths were observed in Kollam and Trivandrum seacoast districts during the month of September 2004. The seawater had a reddish colour and toxic smell. The scientific community in Kerala did not have a one-window-opinion over this issue. The scientific community communicated self-contradicting and fear-emanating opinions to the public through the media. They scarred the people saying 'you will die if you eat those diseased and poisoned fishers' hence people were reluctant and even scarred, to buy and eat fish. This raised a livelihood threat to the fishworkers. KSMTF intervened urgently to respond to this issue. Organised a number of action programs to remove the people's fear and effectively respond to the scientific community the following are relative activities:

Publicly cooked such fisher in front of the secretariat and ate them with cooked tapioca. The policemen and some of the daring public joined fishworkers in eating and enjoying this fish and tapioca meal. All those who ate these didn't die nor did they have had any health issue. This was factually informed to the people through the media. T. Peter, John .J. P, Anto Elias, Valerian Issac, Elizabeth Antony, Freeska Kurisapan and Sr. Philomin Mary had given the leadership to this programs. A dharna was organised in front of CMFRI office at Vizhinjam since the Scientist who scared the people in eating such fishes. Fr. Thomas Kocherry inaugurated this dharna. T. Peter, John.J.P, A. Badusha had given the leadership to this program.

A public seminar was organised in Trivandrum on Red-Tide issue. Fisheries Minister Mr. Dominic Presentation inaugurated the seminar. Various Scientist from Scientific Institute, Fisheries Departments, Medical and Health Department, like Dr. A.P. Lipton (CMFRI), Dr. Ashok Kumar (CIFT), D. Sanjeev Ghosh and Raveendran Nair (Fisheries Department), Dr. K. Raj Mohan (Medical College TVPM) Shared their perspective and opinions over this issue. Mr. Julian Teelar, Fr. Thomas Kochery, T. Peter, Anto Elias, John.J.P, Dr. Thomas Varghese, Vincent Benedict, Freeska Kurishappan and Elizabeth Antony shared their conviction and opinions over the same issue taking sides with livelihood issues of the Fish workers. The seminar revelations were projected to the public through the media with much positive responses from the general public. People restarted the normal fish purchase and its consumption.

Release of Kerala Fishworkers: ✓

Five months ago six Kerala Fish workers were jailed by Pakistan accusing them of illegal entry into Pakistan Sea border limit. These Fish workers had gone for fishing to Muscat (Sultanate of Oman). On their way, their boat engine stopped functioning due to some mechanical problem. With their dead engine they floated over the sea and sea currents and wind flow brought them to the Pakistan water border and forced their entry into the border. The Pakistan Coast Guards arrested and put them into their jail.

The family members of these fish workers placed many petitions before the state and Central Govt. here in India to release their family members. The Govt did not respond to these petitions. Hence KSMTF took up the issue. A long the family members of the jailed fish workers federation commenced an agitation of Sathyagraha before the secretariat. This compelled the Govt to positively respond to the issue. The state Govt. agreed to take up the responsibility and financial

costs of the jail-release process of these unfortunate fish workers. The state Minister of Fisheries came down to the Sathyagraha shed (Pandal) and conveyed to us the Govt. decision. In this background, we withdraw the continuation of Sathyagraha activities. The Govt. process this regard is in progress now.

Study and training activities

A number of programs were undertaken and executed in this regard. Some of them are enlisted below:

Media camp

A media camp was organized for 35 selected members from different districts of Kerala from 2004 June 3rd to 5th at MJM Centre Mavelikara, with a view of equipping the participants with media competency and using their media talents for furthering the fish workers' cause in future.

Dr.M.J.Joseph , the Chief editor of "Varthamanam" monthly , inaugurated the camp sessions Prof. Vijayan Nair ,R.Radhakrishnan Prof.Madhu Eravankara, Dr.Mathew Erthayil ,Chunakara Janardhanan Nair, Prof. V.C.John, Sivaraman Cherianad ,Vincent Benedict etc facilitated and lead the training processes.

Inland fisheries camp

An inland fisheries camp with selected 32 participants, was convened at MJM, Mavelikara in 2004 September 16 -18. M.Morali MLA inaugurated the camp. D.S.Ghosh did inland fisheries sector analysis. Raveendran Nair dealt the topic of fish farming and fish workers. Vincent Benedict took up the subject "Common Water of Fish Resource". T.Peter and P.P.John lead camp process.

Camp for General council members

During November 5-7 a study camp was organized for General council members of KSMTF. T.Peter inaugurated the camp. The different topics dealt with in the camp were -

- New trend in fisheries sector -V. Vivekanandan , SIFFS.*
- Fisheries sector and information technology - Satheesh Babu , INAP.*
- Indian societal analysis -Dr. Varghese George, Marthoma College.*
- Marine eco system and fish workers - Vincent Benedict, MJM.*
- Value based organization and activities -Fr. Thomas Kochery,NFF.*
- Human right issue -Mr.Joseph Bernad ,ISI.*

2004 Parliament election and fishing community interventions:

Three regional press conferences were convened in Calicut , Ernakulam, Trivandrum highlighting the national fisheries and fish workers issues . All parliament candidates in Kerala were contacted and lists of political demands of fish workers were submitted to them for serious positive considerations.

Three political candidates from three political fronts were brought together on a common platform in Trivandrum to initiate a public debate over issues related to fisheries and livelihood issues of fish workers. This program was convened with the collaboration of SIFFS, Trivandrum Mr.Vivekanadan, SIFFS chief executive presented a position paper on the above stated issues. O.Raja Gopal (BJP), V.S. Siva Kumar (Congress), P.K.Vasudevan Nair (CPI) were the candidates who participated in the open discussion.

International Women's day

- ❖ International women's day (March 8th) had been celebrated by four seminars in three coastal districts of Kerala by the Women's wing of KSMTF.
- ❖ 'Women and self employment' inaugurated by Mrs. Maglin Peter, state committee member, KSMTF in Trivandrum.
- ❖ 'Coastal Health and women' inaugurated by Ms. Lissy Jose, member women's Commission in Trivandrum.
- ❖ 'Women's legislation, inaugurated by Ms.Sheela Antony, member, KSMTF in Kollam.
- ❖ 'Women in fisheries sector' inaugurated by Ms.P.Valsala, the poetess in kozhikode.

World Fisheries Day

November 21, the World fisheries day had been celebrated with great enthusiasm by flag hoisting in every district. A study seminar and rally too were convened at Chirayinkeezhu, TVM, on this day. Sr.Philo Varghese inaugurated the seminar.

Participation in NFF Activities and Concerns

11 members participated in the General Body meeting of NFF held in Mumbai in January 22-25-2004. 4 members (T. Peter, Tom, Sr. Philomin Mary, Vincent Benadict) of KSMTF had actively participated in the 2day national consultation program arranged by NFF at Animation Center in Kerala, TVM, District from April 2nd & 3rd, 2004.

NFF organized a national workshop on National Fisheries Policy at Animation Centre in Kovalam, TVM, on 2004 July 14,16,&17 respectively. Four members-T.Peter, Jiji Antony, Fr. Thomas Kocherry, and Sr. Philomin Mary participated in it. Under the auspicious of NFF an active team of NFF members stayed in Delhi from 17th to 21st august 2004. This team had submitted a memorandum on fisheries concerns to the Central Govt. and had done liaison work and lobbying with MPs, Bureaucrats and Central ministers to positively take up the fisheries concerns expressed in the said memorandum. T.Peter and Fr.Thomas Kochery represented KSMTF in this lobbying team.

Media Concerns

Alakal :KSMTF has a regular fortnightly publication called 'Alakal'. This is a main mouthpiece publication of KSMTF. Local, regional, national and international fishery- related concerns and events are published in this fortnightly in English. It has a website: www.alakal.net.

KSMTF website:KSMTF had very recently opened a website with an objective of communicating and debating with a wider- world on fishing, fishery and livelihood issues and concerns of traditional fishworkers. The website of KSMTF is www.keralafishworkers.org. This website was declared open by former Kerala chief minister Mr.A.K.Antony on 27th October, 2004.

NAPM: ►KSMTF had participated in most of the meetings organized by NAPM. T.Peter of KSMTF had been elected as one of the conveners of NAPM in Kerala. ►In a solidarity action plan demanding the closure of Plachimada Coco-Cola factory , there was a mass march towards Kerala Assembly on 2004 February 6th, KSMTF actively participated in the march. On 2004 November 1st KSMTF had co-operated in a march against the constitution of Express Highway in Kerala. Its constitution world massively displaces people from the living habitat and destroys the means of livelihood of ordinary people as well as upset the ecological equilibrium of Kerala too.

Other activities

There is an organized activity o "Sramasakthi", a sister concern of KSMTF, to generate new jobs and impact technical and Scientific training to youngsters. Sramasakthi activities have a beneficial role to play in KSMTF . SHG programs are promoted through Sramasakthi .

An inland fish workers co-operative is functioning at Parumala, Pathanamthitta under the leadership of P.P.John .It has a Fish landing centre at Parumala . The middlemen and money lenders, who consistently exploited the fish workers, were/are systematically being eliminated through this co-operative enterprise and a just price is availed to the fishes caught and sold.

Mavelikara municipal fish market is now totally under the control and administration of our "Market fish workers co-operative".This is the first instance in Kerala that a market has come under a fish workers co-operative. Moneylenders and market gundas are very efficiently controlled and eliminated by this market co-operative. Municipality is compelled to avail the basic conveniences of fresh water, drainage and toilet. Alapuzha, inland fish workers union of KSMTF gave leadership to this market fish workers co-operative enterprise. Under matsyafed, an apex body of Govt. fish workers co-operatives, our fish workers do control and administer three co-operatives.

1. At Chellanam, Cochin, where K.V.Rapheal also Ernakulam district union president of KSMTF is also the president of this co-operative.
2. At Valiaveli, Trivandrum, where Anto elias, the Trivandrum union district secretary to KSMTF also is the President to Valiaveli fish workers co-operative too.
3. At Pathanamthitta vanitha co-operative society, Ms. Mary John, President and member of Pathanamthitta fish workers union of KSMTF.

There was a mass movement to cleanse the Parvathy Puthanar Lake that polluted through sewage drainage. This lake became breeding place of new pests. People were impacted with new sicknesses through this polluted lake. Hence, KSMTF along with other organizations took an active role in the mass movement to cleanse this lake.

A new educational program is initiated to link the traditional and scientific fisheries knowledge. Fish workers and members of scientific community meet once in a month for a one-day-program to exchange their knowledge and enrich each other. SIFFS has initiated this program. KSMTF leaders are participating these educational programs. It is one year since this program commenced and it continues still.

Some other programs where KSMTF made its presence felt are listed below:

- ❖ Participation in World social forum meeting held in Mumbai in January 2004. Ten KSMTF members participated in it.
- ❖ Participation in the one-day workshop arranged by institute for environmental research and social education (IERSE) on migrant labour in food processing industries Vincent Benedict (KSMTF) participated at this workshop that took place in Cochin on February 2004.
- ❖ T. Peter, the president, KSMTF, participated in the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) General Assembly held in Kenya representing NFF.

Memoranda Submissions

Timely memoranda submissions made to the State and Central Govts. On different topics of concern are enlisted below:

1. Kerosene distribution to be made on a just price.
2. Health and fishery departments were exhausted and alerted urgent intervention in when Malaria spread across the coastal belts in Kerala.
- ✓ 3. Submission against light fishing in the sea.
- ✓ 4. Submission against fishworkers displacement in the background of commercial harbour construction at Vizhinjam.
5. Submission to kerala Govt. exhorting to avail rope, twine, float and hook for fishing.
6. Submission to distribute urgently the pension and educational lump sum grant arrears.
7. Trawl ban period be increased to 90 days.
8. Subsidy and customs duty exclusion on out-board motors.
9. Submission against the exclusion of Pathanamthitta district from Matsyafed list.
10. Commence urgently the construction of mini fishing harbour at Chellanam.
- ✓ 11. Against fish import.
- ✓ 12. Need to renew the fish markets with modern basic conveniences.
- ✓ 13. Issue pattah to fishworkers.
- ✓ 14. Anti sand-mining submission.

Future concerns

- (a) Future committed leadership for value based organisational activities. There is a need for leaders with clear and relevant socio-political perspective and vision for future. We need leaders with commitment and capability, who can be realistic other than being more idealistic and we need mass-based leaders who foster collective values and participatory democratic practice. Hence rigorous leadership and capability trainings are to be urgently designed and realized.
- (b) **Study and research:** Each and every leader of ours should know in depth more and more about less and less issues that make fisheries sector and the livelihood of fishing communities more complex. This would enable and equip our leaders and our people to be on the right track to address and solve the complexities of our sector and our community in the present socio-political situation. Hence study and research need to be taken up in this line.
- (c) **Economic efficiency building-up:** In order to realise the above stated future agenda we need to have economic efficiency to do away with an ever-dependent economic practice. Hence sufficient fund raising action programmes are to be planned and executed with caution.
- (d) **Availability and working pattern of a central team:** To be more realistic and effective, for the future of NFF and the regional fishworkers trade unions, we hope and exhort to have a central team of NFF to come down and cooperate with each states team committed to this concerns. With thanks and sincere greetings we submit this report for your consideration and creative comment.

T.PETER
President.

P.P.JOHN.
General Secretary

Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti

Annual Report - 2004

We are happy to present the annual report of the Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti (MMKS) for the year 2004 to the Annual General Body meeting of the NFF held at Diamond Harbor, West Bengal from 4th -7th December, 2004

Annual General Body Meeting of NFF- January 2004

As you all know, our State unit was privileged to host the Annual General Body meeting of NFF at the beautiful fishing village Arnala, in January 2004. This was a great opportunity for all of us to greet the colleagues and look after their comforts.

This meeting proved to be politically significant and organisationally very important for more than one reason. Firstly, on the first day, a media news came announcing various soaps by the NDA Government on the eve of the general election to the Lok Sabha. But the Kerosene assistance as promised by the Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was ignored. This infuriated the delegates from all the State unions. The meeting, as a result, started off with the discussion on this issue and a political decision was taken unanimously to oppose all the NDA candidates in the forth-coming general elections to the Lok Sabha. In this meeting a serious self-reflection about the running of the NFF vis a vis the financial constraints was done by Shri Thomas Kocherry. A serious effort was also made to resolve the on going conflict between the Satpadi and Vasai groups of fishermen with regard to the fishing grounds.

The Arnala Fishermens Sarvodaya Sahakari Society Ltd, with its enthusiastic band of workers played a leading role in organizing the general body meeting. Other fisheries societies namely Arnala Dariya Sarang, Vasai Khochivade, Uttan, Vasai Sagari Koli societies collaborated in making the general body meeting a great success. The delegates were all praise for the stay and food arrangements. On the last day, ie. 25th January 2004, a large rally with the brass bands in the front was taken to the venue of the public meeting where fishers' leaders from different State unions spoke. At this public meeting NFF leaders declared in the presence of the then Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Mr. Ram Naik that the fisher people throughout the country will oppose the NDA candidates in the coming general election, as decided in the General Body Meeting.

Depletion of fish resources ✓

Depletion of fish resources is the major concern and a worrying situation that is faced by the fishermen in Maharashtra. Indeed this has been the scenario in Maharashtra coastal belt since 1998. A number of reasons contribute to this unfortunate situation, chief amongst them are pollution of sea water caused by effluents of industries, indiscriminate destruction of mangroves, intensive aquaculture activities on the wetlands, dumping of sewage in sea waters, ship breaking activities, oil exploration by ONGC etc. The Govt. of Maharashtra is, however, not taking any notice of this grave situation in spite of our several requests. The depletion of fish resources has resulted in a number of fishing boats being kept idle. The fishermen have not been able to repay their loan amounts. The increases in fuel prices effected by the government from time to time has only aggravated the situation. Similar is the case with the prices of fishing gears and materials.

The MMKS has been requesting the State Govt to announce '**fish famine**' and grant relief to the affected fishermen. The State Govt has however, refused to do so claiming that the statistical data regarding fish catch does not justify the demand. Now, however on being convinced about the genuineness of the demand, the Govt of Maharashtra announced a package for fishermen from Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri and Raigad district. The package provided for payment of ex-gratia amount, Rs 1000/- per fishermen doing fish drying activities, Rs 2000/- per fish-vending women for purchase of icebox, Rs 4000/- per 1-3 cylinder boat and Rs 11,000/- per 4-6 cylinders boat. The Kriti Samiti efforts is to extend the package also to other districts, viz, Thane and Mumbai, have borne fruit and the Govt has announced a similar package for these districts also. Efforts to get the amount released are on.

Oil exploration and surveys by ONGC ✓

The oil exploration operations and surveys by the ONGC has been playing havoc with the life and livelihood of fishermen, especially from Thane and Mumbai Districts. Besides polluting seawaters these operations have resulted into fishermen in the areas loosing their fishing grounds. In view of the scrapping of old oil wells and commissioning of the new ones, it has become extremely

difficult for the fishermen to survive. The Kriti Samiti has been opposing these activities of the ONGC. Kriti Samiti organized a mammoth rally of fishermen to ONGC Head Quarters in Mumbai last year. This forced the ONGC authorities to appoint a co-ordination committee with the intervention of the former Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Shri. Ram Naik. This committee is entrusted with the task of co-ordinating the oil exploration and survey activities between the ONGC authorities and the local fishermen. This Committee, which included some prominent fishermen leaders from Thane and Mumbai districts met several times to sort out, the problems faced by fishermen. On the whole, the effort has been to ensure that the fishing activities do not suffer on account of the operations executed by the contractors appointed by the ONGC. In case, damage is caused to crafts, gears and nets, efforts are made to ensure that the losses caused to the concerned fishermen are adequately compensated on the basis of the complaints lodged with the Fisheries, Customs and ONGC authorities.

Conflict between the groups of fishermen from Vasai and Satpadi

It is unfortunate that the conflict between the two groups of fishermen from Vasai and Satpadi areas remained unresolved. It may be recalled that with a view to resolving the conflict, Shri Thomas Kocherry had detailed discussion with both the groups in a meeting held in Mumbai on 6th November 2003. Since no solution came forth, a Peace Committee was formed as advised by Shri Thomas Kocherry. The Peace Committee conducted meetings with the leaders from both the sides and strives hard to iron out the differences and find out a mutually acceptable solution.

The efforts made by the Peace Committee, however, did not bear any fruit. This was very unfortunate. The Peace Committee, however, continued its efforts by engaging in informal discussions. This serious matter naturally came up for deliberation in the Annual General Body meeting of the NFF held at Arnala fishing village. Brainstorming sessions were arranged during the course of the General Body meeting to find out amicable solution. Encouraged by this approach and as advised by the General Body, Sarvashri, Thomas Kocherry, Harekrishna Debnath, N.D. Koli, R.K. Patil, Ms. Purnima Meher met the leaders of both the sides in Satpadi and Bassein fisheries societies after the General Body meeting. The discussions, the efforts of these leaders, unfortunately did not meet with success. The NFF leaders, however, indicated their willingness to mediate again in this matter, if invited by both the groups.

The Vasai group took the matter to the High Court of Mumbai. We are anxiously watching the developments consequent on the judgment given by the High Court. We hope that the very serious situation facing both the groups with regard to use of fishing grounds will force them to see reason and find a solution to this intricate and complex problem in the near future. We are constantly watching the situation.

Implementation of NFF charter of 42 demands

Shri. R.K. Patil, and Shri Rajan Meher of the MMKS are inter alia appointed on the committee formed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (Fisheries Division) to consider the 42-point charter of demands of the NFF. They attended the meetings of this committee held at Delhi along with Shri Harekrishna Debnath, Shri Thomas Kocherry and Shri N.D. Koli. Shri Narendra Patil & Freedom fighter Shri J. S. Tambe, were specially associated with the first meeting of this committee. The committee members also called on the Minister of Agriculture Mr. Sharad Pawar on 30-6-2004 and placed before him the demands of the NFF, particularly relating to kerosene, foreign fishing vessels, savings-cum-relief scheme, insurance, credit card, diesel, highway development cess etc.

✓ Harassment of fishers of Bhati fishing village

The owner of the 3 star 'Retreat' hotel run in the vicinity of the coastal area of the Bhati fishing village has been adopting intimidation tactics to drive out the fishers from their customary places used for fish drying activities. The hotel owner and the residents in the buildings nearby are complaining that the odour that emanates from the drying of fish causes pollution. In the case of the hotel, it also, they say affects their business. The hotel owner has, with the help of the anti social elements gone to the extent of burning the nets of fishermen worth Rs. 5 lakhs. They are also harassing the fishermen drying the fish by letting out biting dogs to harm them physically. The fisher people in the area have been protesting against these harassments. The hotel owner has now gone to High Court Mumbai. The fisher people from Bhati fishing village are fighting in the court through a lawyer.

On the eve of the World Fisheries Day, Ms Medha Patkar, Coordinator of National Alliance of Peoples Movements visited the site along with the leaders of MMKS on 18th November 2004,

prior to the public meeting held in the fishing village on the same day. She supported the cause of the fisher people and later met the state Home Minister Shri. R. R. Patil, along with fishermen leaders and made an appeal to him to look into this matter and nab the culprits.

People's Movements Encounter (PME II):

The World Forum of Fisher Peoples and the National Fishworkers Forum were a part of the Peoples Movements Encounter (PME II), organized in Mumbai simultaneously with the World Social Forum (WSF), from 16 - 21st January 2004. The MMKS actively participated in the process and programs of the PME and WSF. Our leaders Shri Thomas Kocherry and Shri Harekrishna Debnath made very powerful presentations before different fora of WSF and PME-II focusing how the fisher people all around the world are being displaced by imperialist globalisation. Participation of fishermen from Maharashtra and other states was note-worthy.

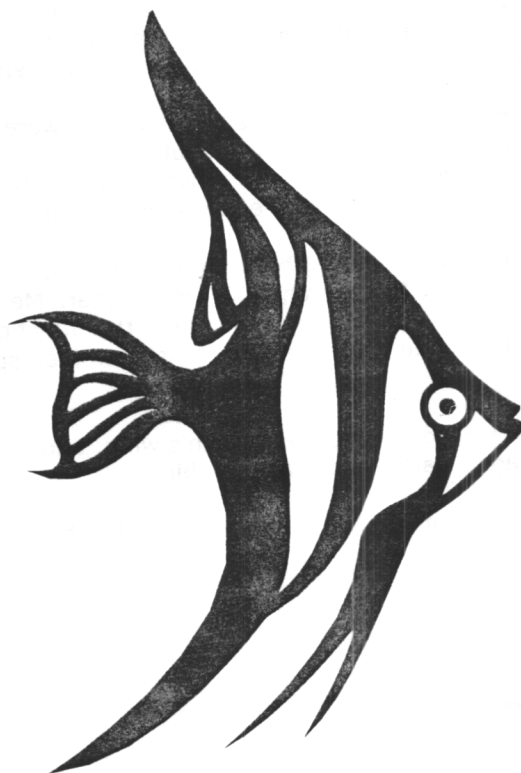
World Fisheries Day, November 21st, 2004

In the meeting of the NAPM held at Wardha in July 2004, it was decided to organize the Birth Centenary Function of the late socialist leader and freedom fighter com. S.M. Joshi in Mumbai on 21st November 2004. When it was pointed out the 21st November is also the World Fisheries Day, it was decided to celebrate the same together with Birth Centenary Function. Accordingly, in one of the pandals erected at the spacious Shivaji Park Ground in Mumbai, Sarvashri, N.D. Koli, Prabakar Chaudhari and R.K. Patil made presentations concerning the issues causing displacement of fisherpeople. Cultural troupes from Kelve -Mahim headed by Shri Ramkrishna Tandel and from Versova fishing village led by Shri Motiram Bhave presented Koli dances and songs wearing traditional costumes. The participants belonging to various Peoples Movements applauded the troupe performances at the pandal. These groups also made presentations on various issues causing their displacement. The fisher people were present in a large number on the occasion. Also they were there in numbers in the function for celebration of the Birth Centenary of Com. S.M Joshi.

R.K. Patil
President

Narendra R. Patil
General Sectary

Ramkrishna Tandel
Joint secretary



Maharashtra Macchimar Kriti Samiti

Woman's Wing – Report for 2004

I am happy to present this report for 2004 about the activities of the women's wing within the fold of the Maharashtra Macchimar Kriti Samiti, at the Annual General Body meeting of N.F.F. being held at Diamond Harbour, West Bengal.

Problems faced by fisherwomen

A meeting of fisherwomen's leaders from Palghar & Dahanu Talukas in Thane District was held in Palghar on 15th Sept. 2004 to deliberate on the following problems faced by fisherwomen.

1. The fish vending women in fish markets find it extremely difficult to run their business because of lack of basic amenities like, provision of toilets, suitable places for storing & keeping fish, drinking water, storing places for ice etc. Besides, the concerned local authorities do not pay enough attention to keep the market places clean & tidy. All this adversely affects their business. It was decided that the concerned authorities should be contacted to impress on them the need for providing these basic facilities at the market places.

✓ 2. **Fish vending women carrying fish loads in the railway compartments:** A proposal is being pursued by the N.F.F. with the Union Railway Minister & the Western Railway authorities in Mumbai to reserve a separate luggage compartment for fisherwomen to carry fish loads in the Western Suburban & mail trains running between some railway stations in Gujarat & Mumbai, during specified periods. There has, however, been no response to this demand so far. It was decided that some action programme should be undertaken in consultation with the leaders of MMKS.

3. **Fisherwomen working on local bodies:** It was decided to prepare a list of fishermen who have been elected on the local bodies viz., Panchayats Panchayat Samities & Zilla Parishad & strive to extend through them the benefits of Govt. schemes, such as, water, housing & financial assistance etc. to the coastal community. It was further decided that an action plan should be worked out to ensure compliance with the above programme.

4. **Women's Magna Carta of N.F.F:** The women's Magna Carta worked out by the N.F.F. at the consultation meeting of fisherwomen from all over India held in Manglore on 13th & 14th July 2003 was explained to leaders of fisherwomen in Maharashtra. It was decided that the Magna Carta should first be translated into Marathi and circulated & explained to fisherwomen. It was also decided to address the concerns reflected in the Magna Carta with their help.

5. **Mobilisation of fisherwomen:** Informal meetings and discussions were held from time to time in fishing villages at Mahim & Colaba to sensitise them about the issues faced by fishworkers in Maharashtra & other states and to mobilise them for actively participating in the agitations & struggles launched by the MMKS & N.F.F. for resolving the problems faced by the fisher people.

6. **Women's Day Celebration on 8th March 2004:** Shramik Mahila Sahakari Credit Society, Palghar, observed the women's day on 8th March 2004 in Palghar. Members of the society, fishvending women, shell pickers, net-makers etc attended the function organised on this occasion. Ms. Purnima Meher & other leaders of fishermen & fisherwomen spoke on the occasion.

7. Future Plans

- (i) To organize training camps for strengthening the women's wing; and
- (ii) To implement the women's Magna Carta, as far as possible.

With the active support of the leaders of the MMKS, it is hoped that the women's wing could be strengthened further.

Thanking you,

PURNIMA MEHER

Women's Wing

Maharashtra Macchimar Kriti Samiti

MALVAN TALUKA SHRAMIK MACHIMAR SANGH

Malvan, Sindhudurg, Maharashtra

Annual report – 2004

We have great pleasure in presenting this report for 2004 to the NFF General Body 2004 held in Diamond Harbour, West Bengal. We have conducted four quarterly meetings and the Annual General Meeting of the Sangh since the last NFF General Body held in Arnala, Maharashtra in January 2004. We have sent the proceedings of these meetings to relevant government departments. We tried persistently to sensitise the authorities about the impractical ban on catching pomfrets less than 450 gm and lobsters weighing less than 250 gm.

The Sangh strongly opposed the use of the Vijayadurg as a fish-landing centre by the purse-seine net operators. The Sangh worked for and facilitated financial assistance of Rs. 500/ per person under the Mahila-Balvikash scheme for the fish workers engaged in fish curing. One of our fellow fishermen named Kocharekar from Kochara village died of sea-snake bite. Sangh helped his bereaved family by obtaining Rs.50,000/ from the State Government through vigorous persuasion. Similarly, the family of the late Kandalgaoonkar, who died at the creek while fishing, was helped by the union to obtain Rs. 50,000/ from the State Government and Rs.5000/ from Bhai Bandarkar Trust. Like wise, when the house of a local fisherman Shri Khobrekar was gutted with fire, the Sangh collected Rs. 60,000/ from among the members and the local gentry and helped him rebuild an abode.

The proposed gas pipeline of the Reliance Industries runs through very rich farmlands along Bandra – Sawantawadi and fourteen other villages from Vasco to Hyderabad. Sangha participated in the 10 days hunger strike and a number of protest meetings organised by the action committee against gas pipeline.

Fishing families living- for generations- on the land owned by the Rameswar Mandir Sanstha at Achara, Malvan, were forced to vacate the place for constructing a "Resource Centre". Sangh launched a struggle against this eviction. Sangh carried a sustained campaign in support of uniform ban on monsoon trawl ordered by the government as an outcome of the long-standing demand and agitation of NFF.

World Fisheries Day was celebrated at Anandwadi (Deogad) on 21st November 2004. A convention was organised on this occasion. It was presided over by the veteran leader Sri Dnyanesh Deulkarji. Sri N.D. Koli, R.K.Patil and leaders from Mumbai and Thane came down to participate in this event. Memoranda were sent to the Central and State Governments and particularly to the Chief Minister on various burning issues faced by the fishing community. During their stay in Malvan Sri N.D.Koli, R.K.Patil, Narendra Patil, Philip Mastan, Ashoke Naike, Ramkrishna Tandel gave valuable guidance to the effected fisher folk and called on the Tahashildar along with the local leaders. The fisher folk were also alerted about the ongoing struggle to protect the traditional and customary right of the fisher people in the face of the onslaught of Globalisation. World Fisheries Day celebrations received wide coverage in the printed and electronic media.

About 300 fishermen, engaged in salting, drying and curing of fishes in hutment at Dandi-Malvan, for more than 30 years have been served with notices of eviction by the Tahashildar apparently for using the land without prior permission of the port Authority. The Sangh engaged in a struggle against this eviction drives. The struggle continues.

Sangh President Sri Ramesh R. Dhuri was involved in various other struggles at the national level particularly relating to NAPM, NBA, Rastra Seva Dal and Maharashtra Machimar Kriti Samiti apart from the activities of the Sangh during the whole year.

Ramesh R. Dhuri
President.

Orissa Traditional Fish Workers' Union (OTFWU)

Annual Report-2004

Prologue:

Orissa state has a coastline of 482 Kms and there are six maritime districts namely Baleswar, Bhadrak, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, & Ganjam. The traditional fish workers of Orissa are basically poor, backward though Orissa has mammoth marine resources. Around 3.5 Lakh fisher people who live across the coastline because of their numerical minority could not able to make their voices heard. Realizing the fact some fisher youths organized a Jala Yatra along the coastline and organized mass campaign to generate awareness and organize traditional fisher people in all the coastal villages during the year 1989. Net outcome of this campaign was the birth of "Nikhila Utkal Matsyajibi Sangha (NUMS)". During the period it has representation from 3 coastal districts. NUMS was active upto the year 1992 when the leaders of NUMS came to know that there are weak fishworkers organisations were also working sporadically in other parts of the coastal villages. They tried to bring all the groups under one umbrella to increase their strength and make their voice heard impulsively. Untiring efforts on this regards yield result and in the year 1995 'Orissa Traditional Fishworkers Union (OTFU)' took birth with the representation from all 6 districts. For better coordination and effective functioning OTFU has formed district level unions and tied up with Samudram the federation of women fishworkers which was active for the welfare of fisher women and children since 1992 in the districts of Ganjam and Puri. Since then the union in association with National Fishworkers Forum is active along the coast of Orissa and act as a pressure group to mobilize government resources for the benefit of traditional fishers.

Vision:

Foster harmony, fraternity and brotherhood among traditional fishworkers, preserve cultural heritage and support needy fellows to lead a dignified life with self-reliance along other communities in Orissa.

Mission:

Mobilizing traditional fishworkers to assert their rights and discharge their responsibilities. Enabling the marginalized traditional fisher community to lead a decent life by improving their economic status through gainful employment and improved living conditions. Protecting marine environment for sustenance of marine resources. Lobbying and advocacy with Government for formulating pro-fisher policies and implementing appropriate welfare measures for development of the community and marine resources.

Objective:

- ❖ Mobilizing all traditional fishworkers and bring them to the fold of OTFU.
- ❖ Promoting unity among traditional fishworkers from grassroots level to state level.
- ❖ Strengthening affiliated district unions to exert pressure on district administration and Panchyati Raj Institutions.
- ❖ Generate awareness among traditional fishers on education, health and environment.
- ❖ Developing capacity of districts and State union leaders to identify common issues and strategize campaign technique to thrash out micro and macro issues that affect life and living of fishers.
- ❖ Liaison and network with other like minded groups and movements to fight for common cause.

Initiative and Achievements of OTFU during the year 2004:

1. Strengthening district unions:

- 1.1 A 60-member team of OTFU, which includes members from Samudram, had participated in the World social Forum in Mumbai. The members depicted their issues in the venue and around Mumbai through cultural program, organized rally and mass meeting, distributed leaflets and tried to educate other participants on the issues of traditional fishers not only in Orissa but entire East Coast. This gave a unique experience and elevated moral courage of most of our district union leaders and members that we are not struggling alone, there is thousand and one communities around the World struggling for establishing their rights and protecting their livelihood. This spirited the members to carry forward out struggle with all vigor.

1.2 Union Representatives came to know about the ruthless practices of the traders and agents of the lessee in Huma dry fish market- the biggest weekly dry fish market in Orissa- Union has encouraged Ganjam and Puri unit of Samudram and their affiliates to raise their voice against the brutal practice and the torture they are encountering in Huma market. Samudram being encouraged by Union organized a mass rally in the district headquarter and submitted a memorandum to districts authority to take immediate action for developing a better environment in Huma dry fish market and provide basic amenities and security to women dry fish vendors inside the market. They organized a public meeting in the district headquarter to mobilize people opinion on the inhuman dealings of managers of Huma dry fish market. When the administration put a deaf-ear to the memorandum of Samudram and its affiliates then it was decided to stop marketing in the weekly market. To avoid loss of hundreds petty traders, market their product in Huma the members of Samudram along with Union distributed leaflets mentioning the decision to stop marketing in Huma market and appeal other fellow traders not to come for selling their product. Realizing the need for boycott, all the petty traders join their voice along with Union and Samudram. Now the district administration woke up and invited Samudram and others for discussion. In the meeting representatives expressed their demand and their decision. There was an whole hearted support from all quarters to the initiative and call for *Bandh* saw a total closer of marketing on that week end. The representatives of district administration along with police protection rushed to the site and tried to negotiate with the representatives. They accepted the demands as genuine and assured the fish workers to workout 5 items out of 8 immediately and other 3 in future. For some weeks everything went on well but the scenario returned back to its original position. The struggle for developing a better environment in Huma market is going on.

1.3 As proposed in the executive board meeting of OTFWU the district units of the organized mass meeting in village and regional levels to educate fellow fishers and bring unity among them in presence of the state level representatives. With the request of Union, leaders of NFF and other State unions had joined to build opinion among the traditional fishers to strengthen the initiatives of OTFWU at grassroots level.

1.4 To bring unsullied young blood to add vigor in the initiative of the union this year OTFWU with the supports of its district affiliates has identified and trained new generation of volunteers to foster the agenda of OTFWU further. 36 youths both female and male are being trained by the Union with the supports of United Artists' Association who are now act as grassroots catalyst for all district affiliates.

2. Protection of livelihoods of traditional fishers in Orissa: ✓

2.1 Department of forests and wildlife wing of Government has declared 170 kms of coastline as restricted area for fishing from November to May to protect sea turtles. This restriction has made the sole livelihood option of traditional fishers in 4 districts out of 6 in Orissa wretched. During the visit of Central Empowerment committee to review the restriction process and protection and NFF submitted their grievance of traditional fishers with alternative suggestions for implementing Governments plan. To exert pressure and influence recommendation of CEC, OTFWU highlighted the problems of fisher people in both electronic and print media. However one systematic media interface was organised in the month of February where the union leaders along with Chairperson of NFF, Mr. Harekrishna Debnath addressed the media representative in Bhubaneswar. Both local and national newspapers and TV channels covered the problems of fisher people and suggested their views to protect livelihood of traditional fishers. Apart from this with the appeal of OTFWU, international collective in support of Fishworkers (ICSF) organised an electronic discussion group to discuss on issues borne out of conservation of sea turtle and livelihood traditional fishers in Orissa coast. A number of activists both individual and institutional members shared their views on the subject which impressed the Central Empowered Committee of the Supreme Court. In their report CEC gave adequate importance to the involvement of OTFWU in all conservation measures of Government and their pro-nature views/steps vis-à-vis protection of livelihood of traditional marine fisher people.

2.2 During the period Orissa Traditional Fish Workers Union (OTFWU) was able to motivate 100 members to get themselves enrolled under Janasree Bima Yojana and renewed insurance of 73 old members families of 4 deceased persons were restored their normal life as they have received death compensation from L.I.C of India at the tune of Rs 20,000/- each.

✓ **2.3** Fishers of other villages based on trading experience with Samudram have demanded better price from their traditional fish merchants and got sale proceeds immediately, which they never experienced before. Fishers of 8 villages got maximum benefit from the outside traders. The traders were bound to pay high as Samudram started procuring raw fish/ prawn directly from the producers. The price of the low priced fishers raised from Rs.10/ kg to Rs.13/kg as compared to the pomfret (Chandi), Bhetki, Hilsa, etc. increased at the tune of Rs. 10 per Kg as compared to the price before community market intervention. The producers got the real profit during our intervention and within three days they got their price as compared to uncertain price for their inter product in past. The raw fish was sold at Kolkata, West Bengal and dry fish at Godavari Khani of Andhra Pradesh. The community is liaising with Wholesale Traders in Chennai and Mumbai as some of the species has high value in those cities. Now the fishers were able to store their fish and prawn thirty-six and seventy two hours respectively before sending them to market. During low market absolute period the elderly head load women fish vendors were able to get during morning hour, which brought them good price. Local consumers accepted ice packed local fish without much resistance, which was myth among the local fishers, that local consumer will not accept ice packed fish. District Fisheries Department approached Samudram to support marketing of the products of the Primary Fisher Women Cooperative Societies (PFWCS). Promoted by them under STEP program.

2.4 Development of a cadre of youth volunteers for strengthening village/Regional Units:

- ❖ Reached cut to all the traditional fisher folk settlements throughout the Orissa coast.
- ❖ Organized them in village level organizations, district union and under one banner of OTFWU at the State Level
- ❖ Lobby with the Government and other agencies at District, State and National levels on the issues of the people and to demand actions of the Government on them.
- ❖ Interface with media on the issues of the marine fisher people and Government action/inaction.
- ❖ Organized children's convention on the occasion of Children's Day with the support of Samudram where in students of 41 Govt. and Non-Government schools have participated.

2.5 Lobbying and advocacy:

- ❖ After a rigorous lobbying in district and state level the Coast guard is active to protect territorial water from trawler intrusion.
- ❖ The fisheries department issued notice to all field offices to be vigilant and report immediately if any trawler menace is taking place. Director of fisheries issued a show cause notice to the Asst. Director of Fisheries (M), Ganjam as he failed to comply information of trawler intrusion immediately to state authorities.
- ❖ District officials were now very active to protect Chilika water from unauthorized fish and prawn culture.
- ❖ Steps had been taken by excise department to control sell of illicit liquor in fishing villages.
- ❖ The field officials of District mission shakti were coming to village after the status of SHGs were brought to the notice of district officials.
- ❖ Bankers now coming forward to explore possibilities to support fisher people in different district and are supporting SGHs directly in Ganjam and Puri district through women cooperatives.
- ❖ Distribution of BPL rice and PDS commodities are streamlined in many of the villages.
- ❖ Membership collection drive has taken momentum after the volunteers have taken lead role in organizing people to create awareness.
- ❖ Some of the EGS centers in villages are now functioning properly.
- ❖ Fisheries officials are frequently visiting villages enroll people under various schemes.
- ❖ Samudram drew the attention of local Member of Parliament (MP) about the problems of fishers in transporting their catch to Kolkata who in his turn drew the attention of Central Railway Minister and endorsed a copy of his letter to Samudram.
- ❖ Submitted memorandum to President and Prime Minister of India to enact immediately on cancellation of licenses given to joint venture & imported fishing vessels & other Demands of fisher people.
- ❖ Send appeals to all quarters including Chief justice of Supreme Court to bring status co for the transient fishers of Jambu Dwip.
- ❖ Expressed solidarity with NFF and mobilized members to organized Rail Rpkp agitation on 20th February in Bhubanswar Railway station. However this was stopped at the last minute as NFF called of the agitation.

✓ **2.6 Developing disaster coping capacity of marine fishers:**

Disaster preparedness plan has been prepared by the community with the initiative of Samudram and trained youths to act upon quickly without waiting outside support soon after any disaster strike.

3. Participation in capacity development programs:

- ❖ The representative were send to participate in the training programs or International Collective in Support in Fisher people (ICSF), South Indian Fishermen Societies (SIFFS) in Trivandrum, Kerala in collaboration with NFF in the month of February and May. 5 representatives from 4 districts participated in these programs. Participated in livelihood promotion and protection training program organized by Indian School of Livelihood Promotion (ISLP), Ranchi.
- ❖ The General Secretary participated in the turtle fisheries international and livelihood traditional fishers being invited by FAO in Bangkok. The OTFWU is thankful to NFF for their recommendation.

4. Management:

- ❖ During the year the General body of OTFWU met twice. The GB elected new office bearers and core team members for smooth functioning of the union.
 - ❖ The executive body met 4 times to plan, review and implement the involvement of union for realization of its objective.
5. Thanks for your patient listening to our initiatives and achievement. We want to take this opportunity to raise some of the issues that need support of you all along with NFF.

- ❖ We need active support of NFF to influence CEC to reconsider its restrictions and initiate Community based conservation process not only for protection of turtle but also other endangered species.
- ❖ We appeal to the office bearers of NFF to visit and join different state unions in their effort to strengthen their organization and pressurize Government.
- ❖ We request NFF to lobby with the Ministry of Defense for providing compensation to the fishers who are prevented from fishing for military training. For example the fishers of Golabandha and other peripheral villages surrounding guided missiles training collage (GMTC), situated near Golabandha, are prevented from fishing for not less then 75 days in a year.
- ❖ NFF should gear up its lobby with Govt. of India to declare 'Nolia' sub-Caste as Scheduled Caste. ✓
- ❖ NFF should advocate for daily patrolling of coast guard in the east coast at least from Haldia in West Bengal to Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh to prevent violation of marine fishing regulation acts by trawlers and ships and protect us from the traffickers and black marketers. ✓
- ❖ We have not yet received any subsidy on diesel and kerosene. This may be the situation in other states. So we request NFF to intervene and sensitize the Ministry.
- ❖ NFF should lobby to change policy of NCDC to provide loan and assistance to primary fishers cooperatives without guarantee of respective State Government. ✓
- ❖ Oil and natural gas exploration by Reliance Industry and conversion of Dhamara Harbour to regular port by TATA group and other corporate house are going to affect traditional fishers. This was being highlighted by different quarters. We appeal NFF to conduct a study on the matter and take appropriate action to protect livelihoods of traditional fishers and conserve marine environment.
- ❖ Fellow fishers from Orissa now engage as crewmembers in the vessels of other state. The vessel owners are not bothered about their welfare and interest. The employers harassed them. Some time they are denied of their due wages and health care. So our appeal to all the State Unions to take necessary measures to protect our fellow beings from the exploitation by our own members. This will help not only OTFWU but also other Unions from where the fishers migrate to protect the interest of their fellow members and strengthen affiliations with NFF.
- ❖ To develop capacity of State union leaders on effective management, NFF should regularly sponsor training, arrange exposure visits and ensure regular visit of its key personal to different state.
- ❖ We appeal NFF to initiate measure to make the affiliated state unions self-sufficient.

NARAYAN HALDER
President

K.ALEYA
Secretary

RAMNAD DISTRICT FISHWORKERS' UNION

ANNUAL REPORT -2004

Ramnad District Fish Worker's Union was started in 1999. This union takes care of the traditional fish workers of Ramnad district in all aspects. The aim of the union is to protect the fisher people and sea resource there are 123 fishing villages in Ramnad district. In all these villages we have union branches functioning right now. We have 12,500 members in our union. We also have four federations in this district.

Important events in 2004

1. General Body and Executive Meetings of the Union:

On the 5th of every month, the executive meeting is held in the union office. Last year we had 13 executive meetings and one General Body meeting. In these meetings, important problems of the fisher people were discussed and appropriate resolutions were taken.

2. Road Blockade Agitation

In our District, particularly in Thondi, 'dynamite fishing' is going on for many years. We have made repeated representation to the Deputy Superintendent of Police and Tehsildar. Since no action was taken, our union declared road blockade agitation on June 27th 2004. Immediately the government officials called for a dialogue with the union. After the dialogue 13 members were arrested and case was registered against them. All the people were arrested under Gunda's act.

3. Fisher Womens' Co-operative Societies

In order to get the benefit of saving cum relief scheme, the women members of the union needs to be members of Government Co-operative Societies. Many of our women members were not member of the Government Co-operative Societies and hence were treated disqualified for the relief cum saving scheme. So we started agitation in front of the collectorate on 22.03.04 and Rail Roko on 25.06.04 at Ramnad railway station. After the agitations the District administration assured to start Government women Co-operative Societies in our area. Now we are promoting 9 women Co-operative Societies. Lot of women members has enrolled themselves as members of the society.

4. Issues

Issues the fisher people face in the District.

- ✓ 1. Pair Trawling and Purse-seine Trawling
- ✓ 2. Implementation of Marine Fishing Regulation Act in Ramnad
- ✓ 3. To obtain the right of the fisher people to fish around the islands in the Gulf of Mannar.
- ✓ 4. To stop Sethu Samudram Shipping Cannel Project.

5. Programmes

In collaboration with Coastal Action Net work we have been organizing people and lobbying with MLA's, MP's and all political leaders.

We organised public hearings at Ramnad regarding SSCP on 16.09.04 and 19.11.04. About 2000 peoples attended that public hearing.

We organised two seminars for all 123 fishing village leaders in collaboration with Coastal Action Network on 14.09.04 and 15.09.04.

6. Strengthening the Union

To strengthen the union we had the following programmes in this District.

In 123 villages we have enrolled 12,5000 members in the Union. 12 public meeting were conducted and the union's programme and ideology were explained.

7. World Fisheries Day

World Fisheries Day was celebrated on November 21st, 2004. On this day we had picketing at Ramanathapuram, Rameswaram and Thondi. Our demands submitted to the government officials. The union leaders and other speakers highlighted the issues emphasizing that we should

be allowed to fish freely and the fisher people of Ramnad should not be obstructed from fishing in the Gulf of Mannar. More the 2000 people participated in this agitation.

8. 5th annual conference

Ramnad District Fish Workers Trade Union conducted fifth annual conference on 1st May 2004 in Ramnad. District leaders and Coastal Action Network members participated in this conference. We are very happy to have Ms. Jesurathinam and Mr. Jeeva participated in this conference. More than 2000 fish workers participated in this conference.

9. NFF Executive and General Body Meetings

Our Union leaders participated in two NFF General Body Meetings on 22nd January to 25th January 2004 at Arnala Koliwada, Mumbai and 4th December 2004 to 7th December 2004 at Diamond Harbour, West Bengal.

Our union leaders participated in the Executive meeting of NFF during 15th July 2004 to 17th July 2004 at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

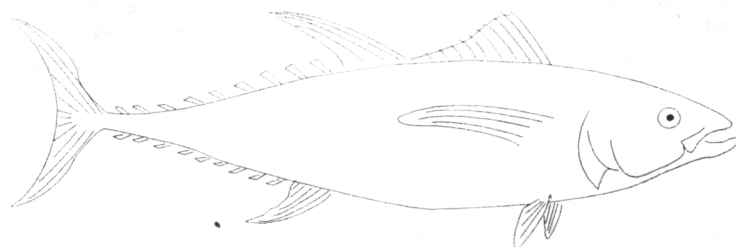
10. Cultural Yathra

Educating the fisher people regarding the need to protect sea resources we put up cultural yathra in 25 coastal villages on 26th July 2004 to 31st July 2004. It was a real success.

11. Conclusion

Our union has struggled very hard to establish its place in this district. The Government has recognized the role of the union in the district. The fisher people have a face in the society now. The collector always calls the union before deciding anything concerning the fisher people of the district. We are determined to take this progress to new heights.

Mr. Karuppasamy,
Secretary,
RFTU,
Ramanathapuram.



DAKSHINBANGA MATSYAJIBI FORUM (DMF)

Annual Report – 2004

It had been a year of serious tension and agony for the beach based traditional fishers of West Bengal. We were engaged in struggle against the eviction of 10,000 fishers from Jambudwip and against threat of displacement from Kadirabad Chawk, Gopalpur and some other fish landing centres by the Forest department. In spite of public assurances from the highest authority of the state, in spite of favourable recommendations of the parliament Standing Committee the forest department evicted the Jambudwip fishers at the instance of the Central Empowered Committee. We had no other option but to approach the Supreme Court for justice. The strong stand of the State Fisheries department upholding the traditional and customary rights of the fishermen has been systematically subverted by the State Forest Department by submitting contradictory affidavits to the apex court and by sending flawed proposal for regularization of 100 hectares of land in Jambudwip. It has been an extremely frustrating experience for the fisher folk.

A total of 18 marine fishermen's cooperative societies, including 2 women's cooperatives, have been registered in East Midnapore District this year. For the first time NCDC projects have been introduced for artisanal and small-scale fisheries sector in the state. There has been great enthusiasm among the fishers regarding this new initiative. But with in a very short time it transpired that these dispensations are very susceptible to malpractice and it is very difficult to build up any strong cooperative movement in the present framework. Instead of being an opportunity of gaining strength this has become a matter of serious concern for the union.

Programmes conducted:

As per the decision of NFF General Body, DMF organized agitation on 16th February 2004 for realization of our demand for supply of diesel and Kerosene at subsidized rates. More than 2000 fishers rallied in Contai town and had a public meeting in front of the main post office. DMF Chairman Shri Netai Jana, Srikrishna Das, Ratna Majhi and other leaders addressed the meeting. Memoranda to the Prime minister, Minister of Environment and Forest and Minister of Agriculture were submitted through the Sub divisional Officer, Contai.

DMF interacted with all candidates for the Loksabha elections since March 2004 and demanded inclusion of fisher people's issues in their election manifesto.

DMF leaders Gopinath Das, Srikanta Das, activists Biswajit Das and Rina Roy participated in the NFF-ICSF-SIFFS workshop on ILO convention on work in fishing sector in Kollam in Kerala in June 2004.

Contai Mahakuma Khoti Matsyajibi Unnayan Samiti organized a dharna and deputation to the Project manager of the NCDC projects on 20th August and demanded adequate consultation with the cooperatives before implementing any scheme and also requested the concerned authorities to refrain from imposing their schemes on the cooperatives. The deputation was lead by Anil Mandal, Birendra Nath shyamal, Srikrishna Das, Rashid Ali, Sukdev Ranjit, Shaikh Zaharat Ali and others. There were two more interactions with the Project Manager on 5th and 28th October 2004.

World Fisheries Day was observed on 21st November with due grandeurs and festivity like each year. The main congregation of fisher people was organized in Contai. Thousands of fishers from remote fishing villages paraded the town in a colorful rally. There was a huge public meeting at the end of the rally. The Shri Samaresh Das, Sri Sailaja Das, Smt. Kalyani Kamila, Srikrishna Das and Natal Jana addressed. The speakers emphasized the need for more and more independent peoples social movements like the DMF and NFF in the country. They highlighted the impending dangers of Globalisation and WTO dictated policy reforms on the working class and particularly workers of the unorganized sector. The only way of survival is relentless and determined struggle.

Major issues:

- ✓ ❖ Retention of traditional and customary rights of the fisher folk in Jambudwip and all other coastal area.
- ✓ ❖ Supply of Kerosene for fishers at PDS rates.
- ✓ ❖ Old age pension for Fishworkers above 60 years of age.
- ✓ ❖ Removal of restriction on inclusion of manually operated boat owners in the BPL list.

- ❖ Providing for medical facilities at all traditional fish landing centers by appointing Para medical staff. ✓
- ❖ Extension of Kishan Credit Cards for the fishermen. ✓
- ❖ Providing toilets and water at all fish markets and fish landing centers. ✓
- ❖ Strict implementation of Marine Fishing Regulation Act. ✓
- ❖ Strict regulation of mesh size and enforcement of closed season. ✓
- ❖ Ban Mosquito nets and monofilament nets. ✓

Future plan:

- ❖ To organize at least two leadership training camps in 2005.
- ❖ To conduct agitation for monsoon trawl ban.
- ❖ To build up women SHG and women's cooperative societies in all fishing centers.

Conclusion:

Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum had always been in the forefront of NFF struggle and established itself as the true representative of the fisher folk of West Bengal - particularly marine fisheries sector- through sustained, independent and militant struggles since inception. But it is a matter of great concern that the union suffered two major setbacks in recent times.

The eviction of 10,000 traditional, beach based fishers of Jambudwip and subsequent disintegration of the affected community has substantially dwindled the base of the union in the coastal area of South 24- Parganas district. Atrocious steps taken by powers to be to curb the growth of independent initiatives of social movement have further aggravated this trend.

DMF remained the sole and solid union of the traditional fishworkers in East Midnapore – the only other coastal district of the state. But the active and pioneering role of the union in forming cooperatives, with a pious wish to improve the economic conditions of the fishers, has ultimately turned up to be counter-productive. The very structure of these cooperatives, rules governing them, nature of the various schemes aimed at them and the vicious circle around these schemes/projects are the major hurdles in the way of any positive outcome from these bodies. It has taken its toll and the union is suffering the casualty. It is no wonder that 90% of the cooperatives in the country are non-functioning or defunct. We learnt this harsh lesson but at a very heavy cost. DMF remained substantially entangled in this vicious circle and failed to maintain our well-known militant role in furthering the struggle of the fishers.

But we are not giving up. We are determined to take necessary and appropriate steps to clean up the garbage and correct the wrongs in the light of the experience gained through this painful process.

Netai Jana
Chairman

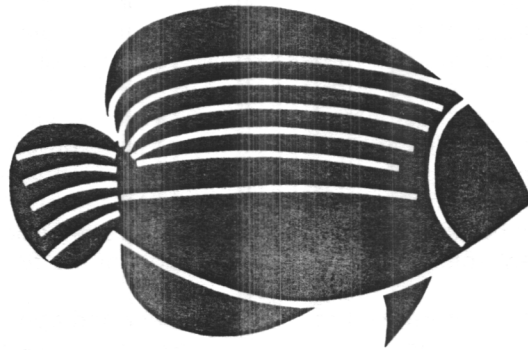
Tajendra Lal Das
Secretary

Umbergaon Taluka Bunder Hatao Sangharsh Samiti

(The report was presented by Chandrashekhhar Sagar and transcribed by Shri Thomas Kocherry)

Activities, Achievements, Issues and Plans:

- ❖ The struggle to stop construction of a commercial Harbour by an MNC witnessed the death of a great leader Col. Pratap Sabe. The case against this is still pending in the High Court, Ahmedabad.
- ✓❖ Plantation of mangrove.
- ✓❖ Fight against pollution of water.
- ✓❖ Erosion of land on seashore and the construction of the well.
- ✓❖ Planning to fight against construction of harbour at Maroli-Fhansa.
- ✓❖ Cultural programme planned on 26/12/2004, Fr. Thomas Kocherry and Harekrishna Debnath are invited.
- ✓❖ General Meeting planned on 14/1/2005 with national leaders.
- ❖ Trans-border problem with Pakistan.
- ❖ 49 pucca houses constructed.
- ❖ Fish market under construction.



Gujarat Fishermen Forum

(Presented by Madhubhai in the NFF GB)

Shri Madhubhai M. Somri from Porbandar presented the report and Harekrishna Debnath translated the same in English. The main contention of the report was the capture of Gujarat fishing boats and imprisonment of fishermen by Pakistan authority.

It is true that there is a serious depletion of resources in the sea. Constrained by this resource crunch fishermen desperately try to find newer fishing grounds and some times may inadvertently go too far. As there is no recognisable sign to demarcate the maritime boundaries between India and Pakistan there is a lot of confusion over the maritime limits. It is not possible for the fishers to ascertain the exact geographical position unless they are provided with GPS and training for use of the same. ✓ Over capacity and over fishing is certainly the main cause of desperation. ✓ The state Government has put restriction on construction of new boats.

At the moment there were about 700 fishermen and 146 fishing boats in Pakistan custody. They are helpless and NFF should help them.

NFF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(2005 –2007)

NFF General Body Meeting held in Diamond Harbour, West Bengal unanimously elected the following Executive Committee on 07.12.2004 for a term of three years.

Chairperson: Harekrishna Debnath

General Secretary: N. D. Koli

Secretaries: T. Peter, Philomin Marie, Vasudev Bolloor.

ExecutiveMembers: Thomas Kocherry, R.K.Patil (Maharastra), Premjibhai Khokari (Gujarat), Matanhy Saldanha (Goa), Purnima Meher (Maharastra), Ramesh R. Dhuri (Maharastra), Ratna Majhi (West Bengal), T. K. Rahiman (Andhra Pradesh), Paul Swamy (Tamilnadu), K.Alleya (Orissa), Mariamma John (Kerala), Peter Dhas (Tamilnadu), Chandrashekhar Sagar(Gujarat), BulliDei (Orissa),GopinathDas(WestBengal),NarendraPatil(Maharastra), PhilipMastan(Maharastra),VincentJain(Tamilnadu),Ramalingam (Andhra Pradesh), Sukhlal Das(West Bengal).

Invitee: Prasanna Behera (Orissa), Ramkrishna Tandel (Maharastra), Vincent Benedict (Kerala), Moreshwar Vaity (Maharastra), Pappu Bhai (Gujarat), Debashish Shyamal & Rina Ray (West Bengal).

Annexure

NATIONAL FISHWORKERS' FORUM (NFF)

(A Federation of State Level Trade Unions in India)

Reg.No: 487/85

Most important and urgent

05.07.2005

Subject: Circular for information of all members, affiliates, leaders, functionaries, friends and supporters of National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF).

Dear colleagues and friends,

In the light of increasing workload and expanding activities of NFF, the following administrative decisions have been made for smooth functioning of the organisation, after consultation with and by consensus of the Secretaries Shri T.Peter, Vasudev Bollur, Sister Philomin Mary and senior leaders Shri Thomas Kocherry, R. K. Patil, Premjibhai Khokari, Ramesh Dhuri, Purnima Meher, Gopinath Das, K, Alleya, T.K Rahaman, P. Ramalingam, Paul Samy, Peter Dass, Narendra Patil, Phillip Mastan, Chandra Sekhar Sagar, Ratna Majhi, Vincent Benedict et al. These will come into force with immediate effect:

1. The Head Office of the NFF will be shifted to Kolkata with immediate effect. The address of the NFF Head Office from now onward is:

National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF).

20/4 Sil Lane

Kolkata – 700 015

INDIA.

Tel+Fax: (91)- 33 – 23283989

Email: nff@vsnl.com and nffcal@cal3.vsnl.net.in

Chairperson: Tel+fax: (91)-3216-221769

Mobile: 09434039599

Henceforth all communications and correspondence concerning NFF will go from Kolkata office. All leaders, members, functionaries, affiliates, friends and supporters of NFF are therefore requested and required to direct their correspondence with NFF to the Head Office at the above address.

2. The registered office of NFF will remain as it is:

National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF)

Cheruresmi Centre, Velankany Junction,

Valiathura-PO. Thiruvananthapuram-695 008

Kerala, INDIA.

Tel+Fax: (91)- 471-2501376.

3. The Delhi contact Office address will remain same, i.e.

Delhi Forum

F10/12 Malviya Nagar

New Delhi – 110 017

INDIA.

Tel: 91-11- 26680883 / 26680914

Fax: 91-11- 26687724

Email: delforum@vsnl.net

We request you all to kindly make appropriate changes in your address books so that we may remain in constant and continuous touch as ever. An acknowledgement of this mail will be highly appreciated.

With warm greetings and thanks.

Yours in solidarity and struggle,

Harekrishna Debnath
Chairperson, NFF

N. D. Koli
General Secretary, NFF

National Fishworkers' Forum

Annual Report - 2005

NFF Report – 2005

Introduction:

Year 2005 has been one of the most remarkable periods of the history of Indian fisheries and also for the National Fishworkers' Forum. Soon after the General Body meet 2004 in Diamond Harbour, West Bengal, India and the world witnessed the most devastating natural calamity in the form of Tsunami – that virtually rendered a vast area of India, Srilanka, Thailand, Malayasia and some East African countries' coastline into graveyards. Thousands of people died within a few minuets. Lakhs of families became destitute. About half of the coastline of the country bore the brunt of the killer tsunami waves. Life has become totally different for the survivors. We remember our lost kins with great grief and express our condolence and solidarity with the bereaved families.

This year witnessed the boasting of the Union Government for the introduction of the so-called Comprehensive Marine Fisheries Policy -expressedly first time since independence. But it remains a matter of great regret that in spite of our persistent effort the Ministry of Agriculture preferred to ignore the suggestions of NFF and introduced a policy without adequate debate and discussion with the fishing community.

We also witnessed the abstention of the GOI from voting in the ILO for the proposed convention on works in the fisheries sector. And the proposed convention was defeated in the ILO general body by one vote only! The largest democracy of the world chose not to caste her vote that could protect the labour rights of the fishworkers!

As we meet in the General Body 2005, atmosphere at the international political levels remains charged and full of suspense. The WTO Ministerial is going to take place in Hong Kong from 13th to 18th December and fishery is one of the major items for Non Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) negotiations. We are at a critical cross road of history. The greed of the profiteers is taking advantage of the helplessness of the vast majority of toiling masses in the name of Globalisation and liberalization. Might of the greedy is mercilessly eating into the right of the needy. We have to overcome our individual ignorance through collective wisdom to keep the society a livable place for the future generation.

Tsunami and the aftermath:

The unprecedented death and destruction caused by the killer tsunami Of 26th December 2004 brought life to a halt over a stretch of more that 4000 kilometers of Indian coastline including Andamans and Nicobar. A calamity of an unimaginable magnitude confronted us. Apart from the huge loss of lives and property, the fishing community in the affected areas lost their courage and trust on the sea that fed and nurtured them from time immemorial. No body had a readymade solution to handle the situation. Destruction of this scale cannot be attended to by solo effort of the Government. But death and destruction gave new meaning to life and creation. The entire world came together. India as a nation did not take any outside assistance but there was no dearth of resources from non-governmental agencies. One of the main impediments for the NGOs was lack of adequate understanding of the people and problems of the fisheries sector. Initial Chaos and anomaly was quite natural. But all efforts were substantially streamlined and disciplined with in a short time. There are still many inadequacies in the rehabilitation of the victims but the first phase of rescue and relief has overcome the initial haphazard handling quite successfully.

NFF being an action-oriented peoples' organisation was never equipped for handling relief or rehabilitation efforts in a large scale. More over as a Trade Union NFF does not have the legal sanction for receiving any foreign contribution, needed to enter into relief operation of this magnitude. The immediate response of the NFF was to go and meet the victims and be present at the time of their distress, console and comfort them, sensitise Government and NGOs and facilitate relief and rehabilitation as far as possible. As a first step we sensitised the Civil Society Organizations in Delhi on 26th December itself resulting into a meeting of all major Central trade unions and Delhi based NGOs. They got the basic idea about the scale of destruction, requirements, contact persons in the affected areas and the desirable ways of addressing the situation mainly from us. A central Committee was formed with the CEC and ISI Delhi taking responsibility of handling the collection of donations for relief.

All the affected state organisations of NFF were contacted and activated right from the 26th December '04. A team of volunteers was sent to Nagapattinam under the leadership of K. Alleya. They did some good job but for any outsider language was a big hurdle. Hence the idea of

sending volunteers was dropped. The respective state leaders were advised to concentrate in their own state pulling volunteers from the local people. Sri Thomas Kocherry, T.K Rahiman, P. Ramalingam, Paul Samy, Karuppa Samy, Peter Dhas, Vincent Jain, Magline, T.Peter, P.P.John got involved in the relief and rehab efforts in collaboration with various organisations.

Looking at the scale and magnitude of the problem it was found inadvisable for NFF to go for collecting funds for relief or rehabilitation. But there were constant query from different leaders and friends willing to contribute for the victims. Under this circumstance " NFF Tsunami Relief Fund" was opened in Mumbai by the initiative of the stalwarts of NAPM and Maharashtra Machimar Kruti Samiti. The entire collection in this account was given to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund. A separate note on this fund is included in this report.

Some of our leaders and friends sent their contribution directly to the NFF account. The total deposit o this count is about one lakh seventy thousand rupees only.

NFF Chairperson visited affected areas in Chennai and Kanchipuram with Dr. Ruth Manorama on 7th and 8th January 2005, Nagapattinam on 9th and also went to Ramnad, Nellore and Prakasham in the same trip. Again the NFF Chairperson visited Nagapattinam on 18th and 19th January 2005. Chairperson and General Secretary jointly visited Alappad and Quilon on 22nd January: Kolachel and Thutoor on 23rd January.

By this time the Government of India relaxed the FCRA restrictions for receiving foreign donations for Tsunami. The NFF Secretariat comprising of the Chairperson, General Secretary, Sr. Philomin Merry, Sri Vasudev Bolor and Sri T. Peter met in the NFF Office in Valiathura, Trivandrum on 21 January and reaffirmed that NFF will not collect foreign fund for tsunami. It was decided that NFF should work for policy intervention in the process of relief and rehabilitation. It was decided to organise a convention in Chennai on 3rd - 4th February 2005 On an urgent basis to workout our position on the matter.

The convention was organised at ICSA in Chennai on 3rd - 4th February jointly by NFF, ICSF and SIFFS. Prof. John Kurien, Ms. Chandrika Sharma, M/s V.Vivekanandan, Thomas Kocherry, Sebastian Mathew and Satish Babu were the resource persons and moderators of the convention. Our recommendations for a National Disaster Management Authority and our approach to tsunami rehabilitation process were worked out in this convection. We sent our recommendations to the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu from this convention. We thank ICSF and SIFFS for this valuable collaboration.

NFF Chairperson visited Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Kerala several times in the months of February and March 2005. He took part in the campaign in Nellore - Prakasham and Nizampatnam, in the cultural campaign to address tsunami trauma in Ramanad district, meetings of the affected people in Alappad and Quilon. Sri Thomas Kocherry led coastal campaign from Vedaranyam to Chennai under the aegis of NAPM.

World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) granted 73,000 euro for the tsunami victims of India through DISHA and advised them to disburse the funds in collaboration with NFF. NFF Executive Committee decided to recommend beneficiaries from the three affected states selected through NFF affiliated organisation(s) of the respective state. A total number of 753 persons are expected to get the benefit of this fund. Already 587 persons received bank drafts in their accounts @ Rs. 5000/ each. Remaining 166 is yet to be disbursed. We like to complete the work without any further delay. DISHA needs to send the audited accounts of this fund to the WFFP at the earliest.

NFF Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation Fund

Following the tsunami disaster on 26th December 2004, an urgent meeting of the representatives of NFF, NAPM and Maharashtra Machhimar Kritti Samiti was held on 30-12.2004 at the NAPM office in Mumbai.It was decided in the meeting to form NFF Tsunami Relief 7 Rehabilitation Committee for mobilisation of funds. An appeal was accordingly issued to different organisations and well wishers associated with the NAPM. A temporary trust was created in Mmbai under the Bombay Public Trust Act 1950 to ensure credibility with regard to utilisation of the funds collected. The authorisation granted by the Charity Commissioner, Mumbai specially required that the funds collected should be paid through the Govt. machinery. A bank A/c was opened in the Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank Ltd, Mahim, Mumbai in the names of Sarvashri R.K.Patil, N.D.Koli and R.K.Naik on 07-01-2005.

Total amount of Rs. 86,570.00 contributed by the well-wishers was deposited in the Bank A/c. This amount together with the interest accrued thereon (Rs. 86,570.00 + interest Rs. 851.00 = Rs. 87,421.00) was deposited into the State Bank of India towards contribution to Prime Minister's National Relief Fund on 14th June 2005. The accounts were duly audited. Regular receipt book was printed and receipts issued to the individual donors.

The Charity Commissioner was informed of the above position by letter, dated 22nd July 2005. The Commissioner was also informed that the said committee would collect no further funds henceforth and that the matter should be treated as closed.

New Fisheries Policy:

NFF thoroughly discussed the draft fisheries policy and submitted proposal and recommendations to the Government of India. But the Ministry of Agriculture hardly made any significant change to the draft. Our suggestions are not reflected in the "Comprehensive Marine Fisheries Policy" introduced by the Government of India in November 2004. The main thrust of the policy is directed to the 'need' for harvesting the "estimated untapped" deep-sea resources, particularly Tuna and Tuna-like species. Thereby the policy originates at the sea and comes to the shore. NFF always asked for shore to sea approach but it was not heeded. Ministry did not take the trouble of wider debate and discussion on the draft policy.

The most important matter of concern is the decision of the Government of India to allow import of deep-sea fishing vessels in our EEZ. This is a negation of the Murari Committee recommendations. We discussed and studied various aspects of the policy in our Chennai workshop in August 2005. In the mean time the GOI has issued notification for acquisition/introduction of deep-sea vessels. There is some shift from the earlier Joint Venture Policy in this notification. We need to reflect and respond to this move of the GOI in an appropriate manner.

Global week of action: 10th to 16th April 2005.

In response to the call of the National Planning Committee organised by the Centre for Education and Communication at New Delhi on 30th November 2004, NFF decided to observe Global Week of Action (GWA) from 10th to 16th April 2005 in all the coastal states. Accordingly instructions were issued through circular (dated 1st April 2005) to all the state level affiliates of NFF.

GWA was observed in all coastal states except Goa. Apart from the issues relating to unjust trade agreements, indiscriminate privatisation and liberalisation and people's right to food, livelihood, water, health and education, issues affecting the fisher people were the focus of campaign and agitation during the GWA.

Workshop in Chennai: 20th – 22nd August 2005.

A three days' workshop was organised in Chennai from 20th to 22nd August 2005 in collaboration with the South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies (SIFFS) and the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF). The workshop focussed on 5 major issues, viz, (i) Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act 2005. (ii) M.S Swaminathan Committee Report on CRZ. (iii). Comprehensive Marine Fishing Policy (Nov.2004) of GOI. (iv) ILO convention on workers in the fisheries sector. (v). Globalisation: WTO Ministerial in Hongkong and NAMA negotiations. Ms. Chandrika Sharma, Mr. V. Vivekanandan, Mr. J. John and Mr. Sebastian Mathew and Fr. Thomas Kocherry were the resource persons. Fisher Union leaders from the states of West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra participated in the programme. Participants thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and unanimously recommended that similar camps should be organised regularly for better formation and effective orientation of the community leaders with a view to build capacity to cope with the changing socio- economic scenario of the fisheries sector – particularly in the context of Globalisation and WTO regime.

The participants decided that at least one training programme in the similar lines will be organised in all the states with in 30th October 2005. It was also decided that all the states would go for massive mobilisation of fishworkers on 21st November – to observe World Fisheries Day as **Protest Day** - highlighting the burning issues viz, import of fish and fishing vessels, Amendment of the Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act to ban intensive aquaculture completely, expedite Tsunami rehabilitation work, implementation of CRZ notification of 1991 without dilution etc.

We thank each one of the resource persons of the Chennai workshop and training programme. We like to record our thanks and gratitude to SIFFS, ICSF and CEC for their valuable

collaboration in organising the Chennai events. We hope this collaboration will continue to grow in future too.

A statement on the decisions of the state leaders assembled in Chennai for this workshop was released to the media on 22nd August announcing Fisher peoples protest day on 21st November 2005.

Follow up workshops at the state level:

We are very happy to report that the decision of the Chennai gathering, to organise state level workshop and training programme was meticulously followed up by the affiliates.

1. Samudratheera Matsya Karmikula Union (AP) organised 2 days' training programme in Ongole on September 2005. NFF Chairperson conducted the proceedings of the event.

2. Orissa Traditional Fishworkers Union conducted a 3 days' training programme and workshop from 1st to 3rd October 2005 at Nolia Nuagaon in Ganjam, Orissa. NFF Chairperson, EC member Smt. Purnima Meher and Smt. Mary were among the resource persons in this programme.

Orissa Union had a second workshop on the same issues in Bhubaneswar on 10th November 2005. NFF Chairperson conducted the event.

3. Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti organised two workshops in Ratnagiri and Vasai on the 2nd and 8th October respectively. NFF Chairperson and General secretary were the resource persons in the Vasai workshop along with Sri R.K.Patil, Narendra Patil, Purnima Meher and other leaders.

4. Traditional Fishworkers Union organised training programme and workshop in Vishakhapatnam for 3 days from 21st October to 23rd October 2005. NFF Chairperson, General Secretary and EC member Sri Narendra Patil were the resource persons along with the Assistant Director of Fisheries and Other Senior Government Officials.

5. Kerala Swathanthra Matsya Tozhilali Federation (KSMTF) organised the State level convention on 27th October 2005 at the Press Club auditorium in Trivandrum. NFF Chairperson inaugurated the convention while General Secretary and EC member Sri Narendra Patil addressed the gathering. Mr. Sebastian Mathew of the ICSF made the keynote presentation.

6. Coastal Action Network organised a one-day workshop at ICSA in Chennai on September 28, 2005. NFF Chairperson inaugurated the event. The main issue was the Sethu Samudram Ship Canal Project. Eminent scientists and experts presented papers and views on the project. The workshop recommended widespread mass action against this ecologically destructive project – particularly to protect the livelihood of lakhs of marine fisherfolk. It was decided to have big mobilization in Nagapattinam, Ramnad, Tuticorine and other places in Tamilnadu on the 21st November with main focus on this issue. A sustained campaign has to be extended up to the national capital too.

7. Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum (DMF) organised two workshops in Contai on 29th September and 9th November 2005. NFF Chairperson gave the main inputs in both of the occasions.

8. Samudratheera Matsya Karmikula Union (AP) organised mass meetings and rally against WTO and NAMA on 26th November in Nellore and Ongole. NFF EC member Sri K. Alleya was the chief speaker in both of these meetings.

All the above programmes were very well organised and enormously successful. State Organisations will naturally deal with these events in their annual reports. Hence we just made brief mention of them without going to the details.

Delhi Agitation: April 25th – 28th

The NFF Executive Committee, In its meeting held at the NFF office in Valiathura, Trivandrum decided to organize indefinite *dharna* in Delhi during the budget session of the parliament to press for our long standing demands viz,

1. Supply Kerosene to the fishermen at subsidised rates.
2. Restore fishermen's rights in Jambudwip Island in West Bengal.
3. Release fishermen from Pak prisons.

4. Stop Sethu Samudram Ship Canal Project ✓
5. Stop import of fish. ✓
6. Remove unjust restriction on traditional fishing in Orissa. ✓
7. Provide compensation to fishermen for losses due to ONGC operations. ✓

State level organisations were advised to approach their MPs for raising the above issues in the parliament.

Agitation began in Delhi on 25th April 2005. Hundreds of fishermen and women sat in indefinite dharna at Jantar Mantar for four successive days. "**We are the most endangered species today – please let us live!**" – was the appeal. MPs and leaders belonging to different political parties visited the agitating fishers at Jantar Mantar and lent their support to the demands. Prominent among them were the late Com. P.K Vasudevan Naire, Sri Omen Chandy, Sri Janardhan Reddy, Com. Basudeb Acharya, Smt. Manorama Madhavraj, Sri Sadananda Gawda, Sri Abani Roy, Sri Manoj Bhattacharya, Col. Sudhir Savant, Sri Basudev Barman, Kendrapara and Puri MPs.

A delegation of NFF met the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and the Chairperson of the UPA and NAC Smt. Sonia Gandhi on 27th April at the Parliament House. Both the leaders assured the delegation that the demands of the fisher people would be considered positively. NFF delegations met the Minister for Environment and Forests Sri A. Raja and Minister of State for Commerce Sri E.V.K.S. Elagovan regarding the issues pertaining to their respective Ministry. We thank Sri Janardhan Reddy, Col. Sudhir Sawant and Com. Basudeb Acharya for facilitating these meetings. In the context of the assurances given by the Prime Minister, The Chairperson of the NAC and the respective Ministers, the NFF Executive committee decided to call off the agitation from 29th April 2005.

During the Delhi agitation, the GOI Committee to look into the NFF Charter of Demands had a meeting on 27th April 2005 at the Krishi Bhavan. NFF leaders attended this meeting. Several outstanding issues were discussed in this meeting. The action taken report forwarded to NFF is discussed separately.

NFF CHARTER OF DEMANDS

The Government of India in the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (Fisheries Division) had appointed a Committee to look into the NFF 42 point Charter of Demands, consisting of the representatives of NFF, viz Harekrishna Debnath, N.D. Koli, Thomas Kocherry, R.K. Patil, and Rajendra Meher and the nominees of the Government of India in the above Ministry Vide the Government of India order, dated 24th December 2003. In all, three meetings of the committee were held from time to time. The Government of India in the above Ministry has forwarded to the NFF a copy of the "Action taken report" of this committee, with its letter, dated 15th September 2005. The cryptic and evasive remarks given in respect of the majority of NFF demands by way action taken thereon do not make a happy reading at all. Some of the major demands are dealt with below in the light of these remarks.

Implementation of recommendations of Murari Committee

The statement made by the Ministry of Agriculture that the follow up action has been taken in almost all the recommendations, which have been approved by the Union Cabinet, does not reflect the correct position. As regards the operation of Joint Venture Fishing Vessels, in spite of several reminders the Ministry has not apprised the NFF of the action taken against the concerned Joint Venture Companies for violations of terms and conditions included in the licenses issued to them.

The Comprehensive Marine Fishing Policy announced by the Ministry of Agriculture, which incidentally, does not incorporate the recommendations made by the NFF in this regard, gives open invitation to the foreign fishing vessels under the guise of the Indian ownership for harvesting deep sea fishing vide public notice dated 17th May 2005 issued by that Ministry. This is in blatant violation of the recommendation of the Murari Committee, which have the approval of the Union Cabinet. The NFF has, vide, its letter dated 11th November 2005, requested the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to revamp the said fishing policy after extensive consultation with the fishing community and also to ensure that the rights and welfare of fishermen is taken due care of.

Supply of PDS Kerosene to small and traditional fishermen

This is one of the major long-standing demands of the traditional and small fishermen. This demand is also supported by the recommendations of the Murari Committee. Even though, the erstwhile NDA Government approved this demand at the level of the Prime Minister in July 2002, no step to implement the decision was taken during the NDA government tenure. Nor has any

action been taken to implement it by the present UPA government in spite of assurances given to the NFF delegation by the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and chairperson of National Advisory Council, Smt. Sonia Gandhi, during the personal interview at the time of NFF National agitation in New Delhi in April 2004. The main constraint for acceding to this demand posed by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas in that Ministry's guidelines restrict supply of kerosene (SKO) for PDS only to cooking and illumination and that there is no separate SKO allocation for the fisheries sector. NFF has requested the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to revise the said guidelines so as to accommodate the demand of the small and traditional fishermen.

Savings cum relief scheme

Because of the persistent efforts of the NFF the fisher women and inland fishers have been included in the savings - cum-relief scheme component of the National Scheme of welfare of fishermen.

✓ NFF has requested the Ministry of Agriculture that the financial assistance in the form of the Central share should be suitably raised both in marine and inland sectors, to really serve the purpose of the scheme. There has, however, been no response from the Ministry. In fact both the Central and State shares have been reduced! The matter is being followed up.

Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act 2005

Fishing community opposed the Coastal Aquaculture Authority Bill as it bypassed the Supreme Court judgement of 11th December 1996, which upheld the rights and aspirations of fishworkers and other coastal communities and the CRZ Notification of 1991. This landmark judgement ordered demolition of all aquaculture farms in the coastal zone except traditional and improved traditional ones. The judgement had for this basis the studies done by the independent agencies and experts viz, National Environment Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) and Dr. Alagaswamy. In the context of the national agitation of fish workers, the then Agriculture Minister agreed to "ensure that the Supreme Court judgement is adhered to"

The Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act 2005 has been passed by the Parliament after obtaining the assent of the President of India thus subverting the said Supreme Court Judgement. The Act completely negates the rights and aspirations of the fishworkers and other coastal communities by condoning the Aquaculture farms in coastal areas and sanctifying serious violations of the CRZ Notification of 1991, The Government of India, through the Act, has only given protection to the vested interests of the Aquaculture Industrialists.

The NFF has requested the Prime Minister to amend the act with a view to upholding the S.C Judgement.

Implementation of the Coastal Regulation Notification - 1991

The Govt of India in the Ministry of Environment of Forests constituted an expert committee to carry out a quick but comprehensive review of the CRZ Notification, 1991, vide order No.15 (8)/204 I A -III, dated 19th July 2004. The report of this committee is out. The fishing community cannot but be outraged at the recommendations contained in the report. These recommendations seek replacement of the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) with the Coastal Management Zone (CRZ), the jurisdiction of which extends unto the limit of territorial waters (12 nautical miles). This is a radical departure from the existing CRZ Notification. Such a decision will have serious implications on the livelihood of the fishing community, which is a primary stakeholder in the coastal region. The fishing community was not consulted before finalising this report NFF has requested the Prime Minister to ensure adequate consultation with the fishing community and its representative organization particularly the NFF before considering the proposals of the Committee.

Creation of an independent Fisheries Ministry at the Centre

The NFF has been consistently demanding the creation of an independent Fisheries Ministry at the Centre as recommended by the Murari Committee. The recommendations are yet to be implemented. The NFF has sent a letter to the Prime Minister, in this regard on 9th November 2005 urging him to accord his personal attention to this important demand of the fisher people.

Implementation of the recommendations of the Mondal Commission about inclusion of fishing communities in the lists of Scheduled Castes / Scheduled tribes ✓

This is one of the important demands of the NFF. The NFF has been pursuing this demand with the concerned Ministries at the Centre Viz Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and

Ministry of Tribal Affairs, on a consistent basis. We had also send a memorandum in this regard to the Prime Minister, on 17th November 2004 requesting him to accord sympathetic consideration to the demand and implement the same. The NFF has sent a reminder letter to the Prime Minister on 23rd November 2005. The Ministry of Agriculture is also being requested from time to time to support this demand of the NFF in the interest of the socially and economically backward fishing community.

Release of fishermen from jails of different countries

The NFF has been pursuing this matter with the Ministry of Agriculture demanding that a permanent regional mechanism to avoid the arrest of fishermen and boats crossing the maritime boundaries, since their reciprocal exchange would serve as a short-term measure. The NFF has suggested, to the Ministry of Agriculture that the fishermen fishing in the border areas should be given identity cards signed jointly by the authorities of the neighbouring countries for sharing fish resources. The matter is being perused. The NFF was informed a couple of years back that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sri Lanka was under process for resolution of the issue. The present position in this regard is being ascertained.

Protection of fishing and marketing rights of the tribal fishermen from Tawa Reservoir, Kesala Dist, Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh

The NFF has been supporting the cause of the tribal fishermen of Tawa reservoir by taking up their issues especially with regard to their displacement and harassment by bureaucrats and contractors, with the nodal Ministry of Agriculture, for more than four years now. As a result of the persistent efforts of the NFF the Ministry of Agriculture has now taken the cognizance of the issue and sought clarifications on the points raised by the NFF from the Government of Madhya Pradesh. The matter will be pursued by the NFF till justice is done to the tribal fishermen.

ILO comprehensive standards on work in fisheries sector:

The proposed convention on work in fishing sector came up for adoption at the 93rd session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) held at Geneva on 15th June 2005. Shri Harekrishna Debnath, Chairperson, NFF and Shri Sebastian Mathew, Program Advisor, ICSF participated in this conference. The proposed Convention could not, however, be adopted at the Conference for want of a single vote. The Government of India representative abstained from voting the proposed convention. That influenced the defeat of the convention and in the process, the fishworkers in India as also the developing countries lost the opportunity to defend their labour rights.

The proposed convention will now come up again for voting at the next ILC in 2007. NFF has sent a letter to the Labour Minister of Government of India expressing the above sentiments and requesting him to undertake legislation, meanwhile, incorporating the provisions of the proposed convention, particularly regarding social security and occupational safety of fishworkers.

Sethu Samudram Shipping Canal Project:

The Sethu Samudram Shipping Canal Project has been cleared by the Ministry of Environment and Forest in a hurried manner without proper Impact Assessment Studies and without adequate public hearing. Lakhs of fishers, traditionally dependant on the resources of the Polk Bay and the Gulf of Manar apprehend large scale displacement from their livelihood. Scientists are warning against the possible adverse affect of this project on the living biological resources and the marine ecology. People's resistance against this project is steadily building up. Coastal Action Network and Ramnad District Fishworkers Union are sphere heading the struggle in collaboration with other stakeholders and coastal communities of Tamilnadu and Kerala. NFF decided to support this struggle in the General Body 2004. NFF represented the cause and raised the issue with the GOI. There was a big mobilisation of fisherpeople in Rameswaram on December 01, 2005 against Sethu Samudram Project. It was organised by RFTU, CAN, SIRD and several other organisations. NFF Chairperson inaugurated the prohramme in Rameswaram while MS. Magline Peter addressed the dharna in front of Rameswaram Post Office.

NCL and National Legislation:

NFF as part of the National Center for Labour (NCL) has been demanding for a comprehensive legislation for unorganized sector workers since long. NCL on its part pursued the matter meticulously and prepared a draft bill in this regard. Also our demand for social security act for the unorganized sector is showing signs of success. The Central Government has appointed a commission to recommend a model bill in this line. The commission has drafted a bill, which was discussed at length among the constituents of NCL. NFF was part of the workshop organized in Delhi on this issue. NFF found the draft inadequate for sectors like fisheries, which depend mainly

on natural resources. We want a complete and comprehensive legislation to take care of the Social Security issues of all sectors of unorganized labour. In this backdrop the NCL, in consultation and in collaboration with experts and groups has prepared a draft bill on social security and submitted it to the GOI and to the Chairperson of NAC. We have to continue to keep our pressure to see that the desired legislation comes into existence.

NAPM

NFF as part of NAPM has taken part in many agitations in many states so far. Maharashtra and Kerala did participate in NAPM agitation against slum demolition and against Coca Cola (Plachimada) in a big way. NFF affiliates in all other states are taking part in the NAPM process, which needs to be further intensified to bring about the agenda of 'alternatives' to the forefront.

Shifting the Head Quarters:

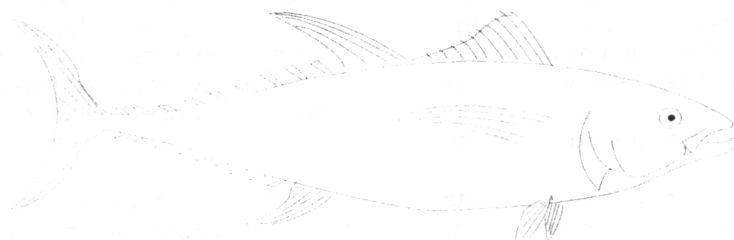
In the context of a very inhospitable working atmosphere in the Valiathura campus the NFF Head Office has been shifted to Kolkata since 5th July 2005. The registered address of NFF remains in Valiathura and the Delhi office continues to be in Delhi Forum at 10/12 Malviyanagar, New Delhi - 110017. We have not yet succeeded to recover our documents and accessories from the illegal and forcible possession of Ceceily Plathottam. The Head Office had to be started in Kolkata from the scratch. We need to recover all the valuable documents, which are in fact a golden treasure of history of struggle of the fishing community of India. We cannot afford to loose them. We need to recover the two computers, printers, fax machine, TV, innumerable audiovisual documents, furniture etc. that were procured bit by bit over decades of untiring efforts. These are the assets of the NFF and thereby of the fisher people. We earnestly seek help, cooperation and initiative of the Paripalana Trust and the KSMTF for recovery of the NFF assets at the earliest.

Conclusion:

The country is passing through a testing time. There is an all out efforts for liberalization and globalization in all government decisions and action. The peripheral and marginal people are on the first line of fire. Fisher people are being victimized rampantly. There had never been a more serious crisis for the people before. United resistance is the only logical way forward. This is the moment for greatest and strongest unity of the people. There is no scope of any complacency or lethargy at this hour of catastrophic invasion of the forces of globalization. This is the time for test of the character of the organisation and the leaders. The calamity that occurred to NFF in the current year, for no fault of ours, has come as a serious insult to the injury from enemies within and without. We fervently call upon the General body, the affiliates and to friends and well-wishers to rise up to the occasion to salvage the organisation through correct diagnosis of the ailments and help us take appropriate, prompt and if needed drastic steps to protect and honour the trust of the fisher people bestowed on NFF.

Harekrishna Debnath
Chairperson
06.12.2005

N.D.Koli
General Secretary



A.P. TRADITIONAL FISHERWORKERS' UNION

ANNUAL REPORT-2005

NFF General Body meeting 2000 was held on December 6th to 7th at Umargoan in Gujarat. Two leaders of mechanized boat workers - Lateef and T.K Rahiman - based at Visakhapatnam attended the meeting and sought to join NFF. At that time it was advised to register a non-mechanized fishing boat workers union in Andhra Pradesh.

As per the above advise Non- Mechanized Fishing Boat Workers Union was registered in the year-2001. Representatives from Srikakulam, Vizianagaram Visakhapatnam districts were taken as executive members in the union.

When the leaders went to the villages in the above-mentioned districts, in the name of the registered union, there was no encouragement from the traditional fishermen. So in the name of NFF we started working for the traditional fishermen.

But there was not much change in the attitude of the traditional fishermen towards this effort. Later Shri T.K. Rahiman has taken the charge and started working with the traditional fishermen community in the above districts. Shri. T. K. Rahiman & his team campaigned in the villages in the above districts and brought awareness among the traditional fishermen regarding the NFF within a year. To develop NFF organisation there was not much encouragement from the committee members from Peda Jalaripeta village. Nearly 100 families have encouraged NFF and supported it. Since 2002 Shri T.K Rahiman is contributing his full time for the welfare of fishermen community.

In 2001 January on the name of NFF relay Hunger strike was organized was for fishermen identity card's & saving cum relief schemes leader's from Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram & Srikakulam districts participated in the above relay-Hunger strike & high lighted the NFF at the A.P. Govt. level & Central Govt. level due to the above relay hunger strike in November-2001 fishermen identity cards; saving cum relief scheme with arrears was provided to the traditional fishermen.

In 2002 July 25th we have organised Dharna in Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam in front of the collect orates in support of the 42 point demands of the NFF.

Representatives from the above three districts have participated in the Delhi dharna organised by NFF.

In the general body meeting of the fishing boat workers union on 27-10 2003 a decision has been taken to change name of the union as Traditional Fishermen Workers Union.

From 20-02-2004 to unit & development of the traditional Fishermen we have taken Jala Chaitanya Yatra from Nellore to Srikakulam district & covered 975 K.M. we have brought awareness regarding foreign fishing trawlers, marine fishing regulation act among the fishermen. Regarding the Jala Chaitany Yatra we have printed book on this & distributed among the fishermen covering many districts. Due to the above-programmed fishermen from the four districts started joining in our union.

We had to change the name of our union (Traditional Fishermen Workers Union) in the General Body on 23-1-2005. The labor Commissioner also registered the above union in the month of September 2005.

After the Kolkata General Body meeting on December 6, 7, & 8, 2004 we have organized a rally at the collectorate demanding ration card, drinking water, pucca house, & electricity etc. For Pedajalaripeta after tsunami we organized the women who were selling fish in the market & lost everything in the tsunami wave. Representing their grievances we submitted applications for financial assistance to the ADF, the local M.L.A. & District Collector etc. But none of the authorities did come forward to help the poor lot.

In January the Union members collected Tsunami relief fund, rice & cloths to send it to Andaman. On 22nd January we organized rally & dharna in front of the collectorate demanding compensation for the losses caused by the killer tsunami. More than 500 fishermen participated.

After more than three months work, we registered the society, which started in 1st January 2005.

On February 10th a dharna was staged in front of the Vizianagaram collectorate by more than 400 fishermen demanding electricity, drinking water, road transportation & pucca houses. These fishermen belong to Thamayapalam, Arripeta & Puligaddapeta. On 19th of February we have got a phone call threatening to kill us, if we go to the village. We lodged a complaint with the police and they enquired without any result. Toured E. Godavery, Srikakulam etc. for making units of the union.

In the month of March we again staged dharna in front of the collectorate & the collector ordered the project Director to do the needful in this matter. More than 250 members participated.

In April (from 10th to 16th) we observed global week of action in E. Godavari, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam District Collectorate and sent the fisher folk's grievances to them demanding assistance. On 25th of April gone to Delhi to stage dharna in front of Jantar Mantar, where all the coastal state & Union Territories participated.

There after, in May, we visited all the villages to give publicity of the Delhi dharna. Visited the entire fisherman villages of Vizianagaram for membership & about 100 new members were inducted in to the union. Worked very hard to change the name of the union & changed it accordingly to "Traditional Fish Workers Union".

July, we attend the Dharna & secretariat March in Thiruvananthapuram against Coca-Cola & Pepsi, worked for the meeting in August in Visakhapatnam. From August 9 to 12 meets were organized in East Goodavari, Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam & Vizianagaram, which were attended by Fr. Thomas Kochery & the fisherman's demands were sent to Govt. Mr. Rahaman participated in the N.F.F Workshop held in Chennai on August 22nd. During this time a cyclone hit the AP coast & fisherman suffered huge lost. We have visited East Goodavari Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam & Vizianagaram fishing villages for relief works. So many houses have been damaged, fishing crafts & nets were lost. In the cyclone a boat capsized in Visakhapatnam. Eight fishermen died in the incident.

In October, started to work for the meeting & workshop scheduled for 22, 23 & 24th October. Old age & widow pensions were distributed in our office for 15 & 3 persons respectively at the rate of Rs 100/- per month. We demanded old age pensions for fishermen to be raised to Rs. 300/- per month like Karnataka and West Bengal.

K.Lakshmi
Secretary
Traditional Fishworkers' Union.



SAMUDRA TEERA MATSYA KARMIKULA UNION

ANNUAL REPORT 2004-2005 PRAKASAM AND NELLORE DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH.

Month wise progress:

December 2004: After Tsunami from 27.12 2005 STMKU members visited Prakasam and Nellore Dist. Each and every tsunami effected villages and assessed losses and prepared proposals and submitted to the District officials.

Human Losses: 30 Died by Tsunami.

January 2005:

In January 2005 our Executive Body members and General Secretary Mr. Ramlingam visited Prakasam and Nellore District and conducted Mandal wise meeting to enroll the membership to strengthen the Union. Responsibility has been given to village secretaries to collect the membership and deposit.

- ❖ Conducted training programme to Task Force groups.
- ❖ To strengthen the union and membership.
- ❖ Total union members approximately 15000 members.
- ❖ Total amount of membership fee deposited Rs. 1,00,740.00
- ❖ Rs. 50000 fixed deposit in the bank.

February 2005:

- ❖ Issues after Tsunami before collectorate and submitted memorandum to the collector. In February 2005 STMKU members have done District wise Dharna regarding village problems and
- ❖ STMKU members visited Hyderabad to discuss fishermen's problems and met with C.M. and Central Minister and given memorandum.
- ❖ Discussion regarding 50% subsidy in all activities.
- ❖ Enhancement of budget allotment for fishermen.

March 2005:

In all 175 fishermen villages in Prakasam & Nellore Districts visited by our executive body members & General Secretary. Conducted village & Mandal level meetings. About 8000 people participated in these meetings and trainings.

- ❖ Our main focus is:
- ❖ Problem identification.
- ❖ Grass root level planning.
- ❖ Govt. resource mobilization.
- ❖ Task force trainings.
- ❖ Village level resolutions made.
- ❖ From January to march 2005, we mobilized from Govt. & distributed each and every family (tsunami effected) 50 Kgs. rice & cash Rs. 100.

April 2005:

In April 6th to 15th 2005, we organised & got involved in Caravan Yatra from Srikakulam to Tada 9 districts of A.P.

- 1) Samudram Maa Jeevanam - Teeram Maa Hakku
- 2) We cannot shift our villages from Seashore up to 500 miters.

- Issues:-
- Damages/issues
 - Govt. support.
 - People's need
 - Village meetings

Submitted memorandum to the C.M. & fisheries Department. In this regard we did not get answer from Govt., so again we visited Delhi on 25th to 30th April 2005 with 9 Coastal district representatives and conducted Dharna in Delhi and met with prime Minister & U.P.A. Chair

person Mrs. Sonia Gandhi submitted memorandum regarding Setusamudram Mega Project and Jambudwip issue.

May 2005:

- ❖ In the month of May 2005, Accounts opened in all the fishermen villages with N.G.O. support. In Andhra Pradesh the Velugu project is looking and maintaining SHG Groups & supporting them in livelihood activities. Our union has formed Gramaikya Sangam and opened bank account. If Govt. supports 10% can be allotted for this Gramaikya Sangham for the village Development.
- ❖ In this month we surveyed fish landing but after Tsunami the fishes are very less and there is less and less catch day to day.

June- July 2005:

- ❖ In these two months our executive body members and General Secretary conducted mandal level meeting and elections has been completed at village level & Mandal level.
- ❖ Selected tsunami victim widows at village level for grant (to conduct livelihood activities) of Rs.5000/- each, which will be facilitated by NFF and opened bank accounts. The list has been submitted to the NFF.

August 2005:

In this month attended 3 meetings held at Chennai.

September-2005:

On 9th Harekrishna Debnath & K. Alleya conducted union meeting at Ongole & discussed the following:

1. World Fisheries Day.
2. WTO Agreement. ✓
3. Import of Foreign Fishing vessels. ✓
4. Import of fish. ✓
5. Signature campaign. ✓

October-2005:

STMKU members & General Secretary visited 175 villages & conducted village/mandal level meetings & discussed about 21st November World Fisheries Day celebration and signatures taken on protest letters.

November- 2005:

- ❖ Nonember 20th informed all the Mandal Secretaries for 21st celebration.
- ❖ On 21st November 2005 the fisher people observed World Fisheries Day. In all 175 villages in Prakasam & Nellore district there was one or another programme.
- ❖ Flag hoisting and Meeting in Mandal level has been organized. On that day informed the fisher people of the following issues:
 1. WTO Honk Kong Ministerial from 13th to 18th December.
 2. Import of Foreign fishing vessels.
 3. Import of fish
 4. NAMA Negotiations
 5. Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act 2005.
 6. Implementation of CRZ.
 7. Increasing the PDS kerosene allotment to small and traditional fishermen.
 8. Sethu Samudram ship canal Project.

We distributed Rs.6,50,000/- through D.D.'s to widows. We submitted memorandum to the collector and fisheries department.

On 25th we organised Caravan Yatra from Tada Nellore district to Krishna district Machalipatnam.

On 26th conducted district level meeting & given press note.

December 2005:

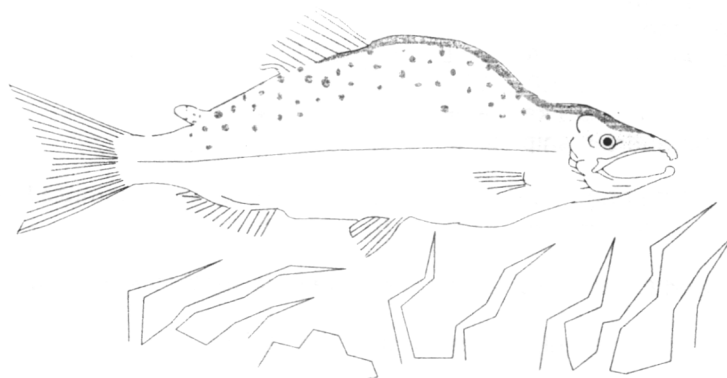
On 5th of this month 4 members went to Hyderabad to attend the Rally and Dharna regarding fisherman problems & the above issues. And to submit signature which were taken on world fisheries day.

This is overall Annual Report of Praksam & Nellore District

Future Plan:

1. To elect new Executive Body by December 21st 2005.
2. We have to get Rs.35000 for 7 widows.
3. To enroll 10000 members in 2006.

P. Ramalingam
STMKU



COASTAL KARNATAKA FISHERMEN ACTION COMMITTEE

Annual Report 2004 –2005

I am happy to place the Annual Report (2004-05) of Karnataka unit before the General Body meeting of NFF.

Karnataka with a coastal belt of about 300 km comprising of three coastal districts of Dakshin Kannada, Udupi and Uttar Kannada is one of the important maritime states of the country. It contributes about 1.81 lakh MT of marine fish annually to the total marine landing of the nation. The fishing industry of the state plays an important role in the economy, particularly of the three coastal districts and earns valuable foreign exchange as well. The contribution of government, private and cooperative sectors are responsible for the all round development of fisheries in the state.

The Coastal Karnataka Fishermen Action Committee representing 57 fishermen organisations of both mechanized and traditional sectors is the supreme state level body of the fishermen, which takes up their problems with the state and central government for redress. One of the main achievements of the action committee in this year of report is of getting additional quota of 5000 KL of diesel under sales tax exemption. The state Govt. has increased the S.T exempted diesel from 50,000KL to 55,000 KL to the mechanized fishermen this year which costs the exchequer about 27 crores annually. This is in addition to the excise duty remission of Rs. 1.50 per liter sanctioned by the Central Govt. Due to the efforts of the Action Committee monthly Kerosene quota allotted to traditional fishermen has also been increased to 200 liters per month.

Delegation of the Action Committee met the Chief Minister of Karnataka to press for the immediate implementation of various schemes and also to sanction loan to the fishermen at 6% interest for their marketing activity. The Action Committee has also prepared a detailed Master Plan for the development of all the landing centers of the state, which will be submitted to the Chief Minister shortly. The State Government in implementing various schemes for the socio economic development of fishermen both marine and inland, of which fishery feeder roads, assistance for improvement of fish markets, assistance to individual and groups of fishermen for purchase of vehicles for quick transportation of fish, subsidy for purchase of insulated fish boxes, fishermen housing scheme, fishermen relief fund and assistance to fisheries cooperative societies are important.

The Karnataka unit has participated in all the programme of NFF. Our delegates attended and we organized the following conferences and seminars during the year.

1. Eight members including six women participated the General Body meeting at Arnala, Maharastra from 22.1.2004 to 24.1.2004.
2. Four members attended the seminar at Trivandrum on fisheries policy in India.
3. Fifteen members from Karnataka attended the Delhi Dharna from 25.4.2005.
4. The NAPM organized a workshop at Mangalore, which was inaugurated by Shri Vasudev Bloor, General Secretary of Coastal Karnataka Fishermen Action Committee. Shrimati Medha Patkar was one of the resource persons.
5. Workshop on CRZ was organized at Karavar, Udupi and Mangalore districts with the cooperation of Action Committee. Vasudev Bloor presided the functions at Mangalore and Suratkal.
6. Workshop on use of LPG gas kit as fuel for out board engines of small sea going fishing crafts has been arranged throughout the coastal area of Karnataka with the collaboration of the Action Committee.
7. World Fisheries Day was celebrated at Mangalore, Karvar, Kumta etc.

Vasudev Bloor
General Secretary.

KERALA SWATHANTHRA MATSYA THOZILALY FEDERATION

Activity Report – 2005

Introduction:

We present this report paying homage to the late Mr. K. V. Raphel, who was the President of Ernakulam District union and the state Vice President of KSMTF.

1. MajorActivities:

(a) Tsunami based activities

KSMTF Took initiative in convening an urgent meeting of many social organizations and individuals to effectively respond to the Tsunami situation and avail justice to the victims.

Organized collective activities to gather clothes, food and medicine and distributed to the affected people.

Federation has cooperated with the efforts of democratic organizations under the banner "voices from the margins" to organize a People's Tribunal. Tsunami affected persons from Kerala, Tamilnadu and Pondichery narrated their experience at this Tribunal. Justice H.Suresh, Dr. V. Mohini Giri, Justice D. Sreedevi, Dr. Gopalguru were present as jury at the proceedings. The findings of the People's Tribunal have been published.

The federation is acknowledging the visit of Shri Harekrishna Debnath, Chairperson NFF and Shri N. D. Koli, General Secretary NFF, at the Tsunami affected areas of Kerala proudly.

Formed a people's forum of the Tsunami victims. Under its banner agitations, lobbying and networking were done to pressurize the Government to assure proper housing, sanitary conveniences, and livelihood assets as crafts & gears. In collaboration with SIFFS we organized state-level awareness programs.

As per the directions of NFF we prepared a list of Tsunami victims in Kerala and a financial support was availed to the enlisted ones.

(b) Other activities

Struggles organized in Kerala & in Delhi against fish-import and foreign fishing vessels. These struggles were organized by KSMTF itself and also in collaboration with other trade unions.

When trawl-boat owners ventured to bring out a statement to go against trawl-ban KSMTF took a firm stand to counter this move and the trawl-boat owners associations were compelled to withdraw from their venture.

Struggles were organized to pressurize the central and state Government to increase kerosene quota to fish workers and against the move of the Central Government to cancel the kerosene quota at a subsidized rate.

Struggles were organized to release the Kerala fish workers jailed in Pakistan. Met the Prime Minister on this issue and managed to release them from the jail. Later financial assistance in the form of grants and loans were organized for them from the Government.

A struggle was organized in the state capital -Thiruvananthapuram as per the direction of NFF in the context of Global Week of Action against WTO. Fish import and foreign fishing vessels issues too were raised in this struggle.

KSMTF actively participated in the struggles organized by NFF in Delhi addressing demands and issues of fish workers.

World Fisheries Day (November - 21st), a massive rally was organized. It marched to the AG's office in Thiruvananthapuram.

KSMTF participated in the Chennai conference on ILO convention, fisheries policy and coastal protection organized by NFF. KSMTF conducted a seminar in Thiruvananthapuram on the same line as a follow up of Chennai conference.

Women's Day Celebration: Theeradesa Mahila Vedi- the women's wing of KSMTF - marched towards the Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram.

Hiroshima day was meaningfully recalled in collaboration with many other organizations. Shri Cherian Philip, R. V. G. Menon and T. Peter addressed the meeting. "America-America" directed by K. P. Sasi was also displayed at the press club hall.

Federation also has participated in the blockade demonstration before the Cochin Port Trust demanding withdrawal of fish imports, cancellation of fishing license of foreign vessels. Active participation of the federation members was noticed at the AG'S office picketing on the same issue in Thiruvananthapuram.

Federation has organized a strike in Thiruvananthapuram against the move to displace the fisherwomen vendors from the wayside markets and the plan to assign the wayside markets and other markets to Walmart Co. The strike conducted by fisherwomen with fish baskets on head had attracted the public very much. Govt. has temporarily withdrawn the move to displace the fisherwomen from wayside markets.

Seminars were organized on "fisheries management and protection of fish resource" at Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, Pathanamthitta and one at state level in association with SIFFS.

A state level seminar has been organized on "Traditional knowledge on fisheries sector" in cooperation with Indian Social Institute.

A workshop was organized for the fishermen on computer training so as to make use of Information Technological advances in the fisheries sector and to establish Fisheries Information Centers in the fishing villages.

Discussion had been arranged incorporating selected members from Scheduled Tribe- Dalith- Fishing communities in association with Indian Social Institute. An action plan has been formulated for the combined activities in future. Decision has been taken to formulate an action plan for the environment protection and to regain the integrity and culture of the three communities by ensuring rights of the communities on the resources. Adequate representation in the governance should also be ensured.

KSMTF actively participated in the Plachimada anti-coco cola struggle organized by NAPM in front of secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram.

ALAKAL

"Alakal" the fortnightly of KSMTF is being regularly printed and published incorporating the current developments in the fisheries sector. Alakal has already been included in the Govt. media list so that the advertisements from Govt. are received for publication. The English version of Alakal is available on the website. <http://www.alakal.net>

CityOffice

The city office of the federation started functioning on 11th April 2006 near the secretariat at Statue, Thiruvananthapuram. This helped to strengthen the relationship with Govt. institutions and other organizations. Fishermen from other districts coming to Thiruvananthapuram to contact Govt. offices are also utilizing this facility.

OrganizationalMatter

Federation is spending much time to correct the framework of the organization instead of the discussions and interactions on the issues in the fisheries sector. This is perhaps because of the financial interventions by some leaders ignoring the framework of the federation.

The state committee has taken certain decisions in this regard. The committee has decided that the leaders would not involve in such activities without knowledge and consent of the state/district office bearers of the federation so that the constitution of the organization is respected by all means.

T. Peter
President, KSMTF

P. P. John
General Secretary, KSMTF

MAHARASTRA MACHHIMAR KRUTI SAMITEE

ANNUAL REPORT --2005

We are happy to present the annual report of the Maharashtra Machhimar Kruti Samitee (MMKS) for the 2005 to the Annual General Body Meeting of the NFF being at Mangalore, Karnataka from 6 to 8 December.

Depletion of fish is the major concern and worrying situation that is faced by the Fisherman in Maharashtra. This has been the scenario in Maharashtra Coastal belt since last seven years. Last year there was strictly implementation of Monsoon fishing ban all over the Maharashtra Coastal belt, Because of this, fish catches are somewhat better, compared.

ONGC survey programmed and Oil and Gas exploration programmed will be very big setback to fishing and fish resources all over the Indian territorial waters in the few days. So this is number one issue, we have now.

Fisherman of Sindhudurga, Ratnagiri and Raged District of the Maharashtra State got a kokan package, but Mumbai and Thane district fisherman did not received, as Govt. of Maharashtra announced it.

On 20th July 2005 all fisher people from the 720 K.M. coastal belt historically came together in a big numbers say about 60 thousand in a Azad Maidan in Mumbai to demand a continuation of Tax-free diesel and other implementations for fishing and it was met by the Govt. of Maharashtra. This was great success to our MMKS.

✓ (1) ONGC SURVEY AND DETAINED FISHING

In the Arabian Sea, just in the Thane and Mumbai District Coastal in the shallow water area, survey for oil was carried out since November to May 2004 by ONGC. The CGG and PGS named foreign survey company's vessels at a time were carrying their survey, fisher people deployed on contract by ONGC. Because of 3-4 survey vessels at a time were carrying their survey, fisher people have no place to fish. That is why there was a big complaint regarding the survey vessels, from fisher people. At same places they damaged fishing equipment also. This was a very big exercise for MMKS throughout the season. At the end MMKS could able to gain compensation for losses and damages of the fishing implements. The total amount of Rs.19 lacs was distributed to the 300 people as compensation 9for damage of equipment).

There was a proposal of lurching a Morcha of fishing vessels in the sea to stop survey. But we said no, because MMKS was not registered and for fishing vessels protests to stop the survey in the sea required a big preparation to face all the difficult possibilities from the reaction from opposite side. But the brave Satpati, Dahanu fishers lunched a Morcha and they tried their level best to stop survey, but they could not succeed. Contractor of survey Vessel (CGG) has failed a case in the court against 16 fishermen leaders of Satpati Village. They are freed on bail; Mr. Subhas Tamore took a leadership at a sea Morcha.

MMKS has given memorandum to Hon'ble Minister Sri Manishankar Ayer—for demand of Compensation of losses of fishing for livelihood, total amount of Rs. Above 3 core up till now nothings has been happened. We suggest to G.B.M. of NFF here to resolve the demand of that Govt. of India should bring legislation to safe guards the fishing rights over the sea of fisherman. This is very urgent because 15 days ago again the Satpati Fishermen were beaten up by ONGC security for no cause. Enquiry is going on by Navy official, but we are sure that, there will be no justice from them.

✓ (2) HORRIBLE TSUNAMI

MR. R.K.PATIL, President of MMKS and Mrs. Pornima Meher and Mrs Vijaya Tandel from Maharashtra visited the Nagpattanam and near by area fishing villages and their lives and boats and Nets were completely drawn, it was very sad to see at, without crying one can see at the situation. A small amount of Rs.54000/- was contributed to NFF Relief Fund by MMKS.

(3) FOLLOW UP ACTION FOR 42 DEMANDS IN DELHI

Follow up action programme for the 42-point charter of demands of NFF in Delhi, MMKS has sent 10 representatives to join this programme. MLA of Maharashtra and Member of Murari Committee

Col. Shri. Sudhir Sawant helped us to meet Hon. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, the leader of Congress Party. Then we had a meeting with the Joint Secretary of fisheries in the Ministry of Agriculture, on 27th April 2005 in Delhi.

(4) WORKSHOP IN CHENNAI

Mr. R.K. Patil, Mr. Narendra Patil, Ms. Purnima Meher and Ramkrishna Tandel participated in the Workshop held in Chennai, organized by ICSF, NFF and SIFF on the issues of New Indian Marine Fisheries Policy of Govt. of India, ILO, Aquaculture authority Bill and CMZ etc.

(5) PUBLIC HEARING FOR CONSTRUCTION OF OIL PLATFORM

There were two public hearings from Maharashtra pollution control board at Thane District Zilha – Collector office for clearance of constructions of oil platform for oil exploration in the sea in front of Thane District Coastal area. Twice we attend the public hearing and strongly opposed the projects and submitted memorandum to the Collector, requesting, not to give NOC.

(6) 20th JULY 2005 AGITATION IN AZAD MAIDAN IN MUMBAI

The Govt. of India introduce VAT in place of Sales tax, the fisher people were unable to get sales-tax exemption on purchased of diesel, ice, nets etc. MMKS gave memorandum to Chief Minister and Fisheries Minister and Finance Minister of Maharashtra, requesting to continue the exemption of sales tax on materials for fisheries. But there was no response from Govt. Then MMKS decided to launch a big Morcha in Azad Maidan on 20th July 2005. There was heavy rain on the day, but fisher people come massively for agitation in Mumbai from all the places from 720 K.M. long coast of Maharashtra and joined hand in hand and shouted slogan in strong voice. Hence Minister for fisheries Mr. Anis Ahamad was forced to come down to Azad Maidan to address the big crowd of fishers and declared that tax exemption will continue for fisheries. Father Thomas Kochery, NFF General Secretary Shri N.D.Koli and Mr. Vinod Tawade (BJP) also joined the meeting.

On 24th August 2005 the State Cabinet decided, "Facility for the fisheries will continue". Thus our demand was met by govt. of Maharashtra. This is MMKS's achievement.

(7) CBRM WORKSHOPS

According to the resolution of Chennai workshop arranged by NFF, ICSF and SIFFS, two workshops were organized in the state, one at Ratnagiri on 2nd Oct 2005 and another at Vasi on 9th Oct 2005. At both the places a good number of participants were present. At Ratnagiri, Shri. N.D. Koli, R.K. Patil and at Vasai Shri Harekrishna Debnath gave lectures. All the leaders gave details information about the problems of fisher people faced in different places in India. Participants are now enough aware of the situation. They came to know how globalization is affecting the fish resources and fisher peoples. We thank the Mirakarwada Machhimar Co-op. Society and Vasai Machhimar Co-op. Society for bearing the expenditure of hosting the workshops.

(8) WORLD FISHERIES DAY

Prior to world fishers day a wide publicity of our issues like ONGC, Setu Samudram, Jamboodwip, import of fish, import of fishing Vessels, subsidy on kerosene & diesel etc. was given through Newspaper on the eve of world fisheries day on 21 Nov, 2005.

There was a big crowd in traditional dress of fishermen and women on the event of world fisheries day on 21 November 2005 at Mahim Bander in Mumbai, Maharashtra at 4-00 P.m. All the fisherman leaders from 720 K.M. long coastal belts were present for the event. Con. Sudhir Sawant and NFF General Secretary Shri N.D Koli, Fisheries officer Mr. Salve and Mr. Rajendra Jadhav were Chief Guest to celebrate the day.

Celebration of the world fisheries day started by worshipping the Mangrove tree by fisher women in traditional dress and taking oath of not cutting or destroying the mangrove tree as the mangrove is a breeding and nursery place for fish. We require fish for generations. Children presented traditional dance of fisher people's culture.

Mr. Rambhau Patil, President of MMKS addressed the meeting focusing the fisheries issues. Mr. N.D.Koli also addressed the meeting. He focused on how is the globalization is responsible for our issues all over India.

Col. Sudhir Sawant promised to help the MMKS and NFF in Solving the fishermen's problems, State and National level.

At the end of programme it was decided to start agitation after a month if Govt. of India does not

stop import of fish and import of foreign fishing vessels.

Maharastra Machimar Kruti Samity is now registered under Trade Union Act since last month. Kruti Samity will have take campaign tour programme for Membership throughout 720 K.m. coastal belt of Maharastra. All active fisherman and woman will be give membership.

N.K.Patil
General Secretary

R.K.Patil
President

M.N.Patil
Secretary

R.J. Tandel
Secretary



ORISSA TRADITIONAL FISHWORKERS' UNION (OTFWU)

ANNUAL REPORT-2005

Prologue:

Orissa state has a basically of 482 Kms.& there are six maritime districts. The traditional fish workers of Orissa are basically poor; backward through Orissa has mammoth marine resources. Orissa Traditional Fish workers Union (OTFWU) the only union of traditional fish workers in association with National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) is active along the coast of Orissa and act as a pressure group to mobilize government resources influence for the benefit of traditional fishers.

Vision:

Foster harmony, fraternity brotherhood among traditional fish workers, preserve cultural heritage and support needy fellows to a dignified life with self-reliance along other communities in Orissa.

Mission:

Mobilizing traditional fish workers to assert their rights & discharge their responsibilities. Enabling the marginalized traditional fisher community to lead a decent life by improving their economic status through gainful employment & improved living conditions. Protecting marine environment for sustenance of marine resources. Protecting marine environment for Govt. for formulating pro-fisher policies & implementing appropriate welfare measures for development of the community & marine resources.

Objective:

- ❖ Mobilizing all traditional fish workers & them to the fold of OTFWU.
- ❖ Promoting unity among traditional fish workers from grassroots level to State level.
- ❖ Strengthening affiliated district unions to exert pressure on district administration & Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- ❖ Generating awareness among traditional fishers on education, health & environment.
- ❖ Developing capacity of district & State union leaders to identify common issues & strategize campaign technique to thrash out micro issues that affect life and living of traditional fishers.
- ❖ Liaison & network with other like-minded groups movements to fight for common cause.

Initiatives & Achievements of OTFWU during the year 2005:

1. On the eve of Global week of Action OTFWU organized district level conventions and a mass rally in State Capital Bhubaneswar. We organized a protest seating in front of Raj Bhawan to pressurize State Govt. through Hon'ble Governor to sort-out issues of traditional Fish workers. To express its solidarity with NFF a memorandum has been sent to the President of India through Hon'ble Governor.
2. A-member delegation participated in the protest seating organized by NFF during February in New Delhi to remind Union Govt. for fulfillment of assurance given by them to Fish workers.
3. Representatives of OTFWU along with Samudram members paid visit to tsunami affected areas of Nagapattinam district in Tamilnadu, supported local NGOs/ Unions in proper distribution of relief materials to victims & assessed the situation. We submitted a situation report to the Chairpersons of NFF & other players like Action Aid & Oxfam to extend their support to our fellow victim Fish workers' in the affected area.
4. After tsunami we have appealed to all our district affiliates to collect contribution to support our fellow fishers affected by tsunami. But due to non-receipt of any follow up action from NFF, we have dropped the idea & the funds collected by our district affiliates were refunded to concerned donors.
5. With the request of a friendly NGO working for tsunami victims' in Kalpakkam area representatives of OTFWU, Samudram & United Artists' Association facilitated a training program of its social workers & encouraged the community members for promoting group enterprise.

6. With the recommendation of NFF & supported by International Collective in Support of fish workers (ICSF) General Secretary of OTFWU had participated in a consultation on community based marine resource conservation organized by FAO in Bangkok, Thailand. He has presented fisher people's stand on community based marine resource conservation & apathy of State Govt. to involve local fishing community in conservation of Olive Ridley Turtle in Orissa coast.
7. The Air Defense Guided Missiles College located near Golabandha village of Ganjam district is restricting fisher people in 7village of the locality to into the sea for fishing during their arms practice. Due to this the fishers of locality loose at least 60 days of fishing in a year. But the fishers are not compensated. So it was appraised to the local Member of Parliament in a district level convention. With his suggestion a 9 member delegation which include representatives from Ganjam district traditional fish workers union a district level affiliate of OTFWU, General Secretary of OTFWU & members of Samudram had submitted a petition on harassment done by personals & asked his interference to provide compensation to the affected fishers. The local Member of Parliament along with Local Member of Legislative Assembly led the delegation. Though the Minister of State for Defense assured to look into the matter and respond immediately but till date nothing has been heard.
8. As planned in the executive board meeting of OTFWU the district units of the union organized mass meeting in village and regional levels to educate fellow fishers and bring unity among them in presence of State level representatives. With the request of union, leaders of NFF and other state unions had joined to build opinion among the traditional fishers to strengthen the initiatives of OTFWU at grassroots level.
9. To bring unsullied young blood to add vigour in the initiative of the union this year OTFWU with the support of its district affiliates has identified and trained new generation of volunteers to foster the agenda of OTFWU further. 36 youths both female & male are being trained by the Chairpersons of NFF Mr. Harekrishna Debnath with the support of United Artists' Association.
10. To have a closer tie up with local media circle the union has organized a 3-day residential training program cum orientation for grassroots journalists from all over the coastal district. Our beloved Chairperson Mr. Debnath inaugurated the training program & facilitated the training programs along with other expert journalists.
11. With the Facilitation of OTFWU, environmentalists, conservation NGOs, scientists, environment protection & preservation NGOs, came to one platform & formed a consortium called 'Orissa Marine resource Consortium'(OMRCC) to take research, study & influence the state & union Govt. on benefits of community based marine resource conservation on Orissa.
12. Representatives of our union have interacted number of times with both Secretary & Director separately, Hon'ble Minister Fisheries, Hon'ble Governor & raised the issues primarily affecting traditional fishers.
13. We have organized State & District level media interface several times to publicize our issues & influence Govt. In two occasions the Chairperson of NFF addressed the media along with our union to draw public attention & concern towards the problems of traditional fishers & apathy of Govt. to provide justice to the most backward marine fishers of Orissa.
14. On 21st November around 5000 fishers from across the state gathered in Bhubaneswer (Master Canteen Chowk-Near Railway Station) & started a Colourful rally with banners of each district & respective groups with slogans. The started a indefinite protest seating shouting slogans to fulfill their 11 point charter of demands a State Govt. of India. With their request Mr. Dwitikrushna Panda, veteran trade union leader as well as President of State AITUC & Vice president of Central AITUC first addressed the rally's expressing his & his union's solidarity. Mr. Mayadhara Nayak, Veeteran leader of Mines Workers in Orissa also addressed the gathering followed by Mr. Prafulla Samantaray, Eminent Environmentalist. Members of Legislative Assembly Mr. Nalini Kanta Mohanty, Mr. Pattanaik, Mr. Rabindra Mallick, Mr. N. Narayan Reddy & other eminent personalities addressed the group expressing their solidarity. Hon'ble Members of Legislative Assembly promised to

raise the issue of fishers in ongoing winter session of Assembly. May be due to the information of Intelligence & police the Minister of Fisheries & ARD of Orissa invited a group of protesting representatives for a discussion in his chamber at around 4.00 pm. Police escorted the 5 member delegation along with Mr. N. Narayan Reddy the M.L.A. to the chamber of Minister. After discussion the Minister has agreed to fulfill certain demands that are under his direct control. For other demands he told he would coordinate with Chief Minister & fix an appointment on 23 to discuss with him. He also assured that during the discussion with C.M he will accompany the delegation. But the delegation forced the Minister to come to the venue where the protesters are seating & announce what he has promised to delegation. The Minister agreed with a little hesitation & immediately started for the venue. The protesters welcomed the Minister & he assured them to fulfill the demands & requested the protesters to go back & lead their normal life. But the protesters without yielding to his request asked him that unless C.M. adores this we would continue the protest seating. On 23rd a delegation met with the Hon'ble Governor & discussed about the demand & requested to impress the state Govt. to act upon immediately. His Excellency promised the delegation that he would send the memorandum meant for President of India & instruction to all the relevant State Govt. departments asking immediate action & compliance. On 23 rd Afternoon Hon'ble Chief Minister called for a discussion. But unfortunately the delegates could not discuss with him as he was bound to go back to the assembly with some urgent telephone call. However he instructed his Special Secretary to discuss with us in detail & chalk out action point. After this meeting was over the fisher went back to their home.

- 15.** During the year the executive board of OTFWU met 5 times & took some of the crucial decision & all our district level affiliates translated those decisions for the benefit of the members.

Thanks for your patient listening to our initiatives & achievements. We also thank NFF for its support to OTFWU to strengthen it further. We want to take this opportunity to raise some of the issues that need support from all of you & Central secretariat of NFF.

- ❖ Although we have appealed last year to NFF to lobby with the Govt. of India level to make compensation provision for the fisher affected by defense establishment in Golabandha, but we failed to receive any cooperation on that aspect. But this year we have initiated that process as narrated above. So we reinforce our problem to NFF to take follow up measures as they are closer to Delhi & visit more frequently.
- ❖ NFF should gear up its lobbying with Govt. of India to declare "Nolia" sub-Caste as Scheduled Caste.
- ❖ NFF should advocate for daily patrolling of coast guard in the east coast least from Haldia in West Bengal to Visakhapatnam in A.P. to protect the coast from violation of marine fishing regulation acts by trawlers & ships, from the drugs traffickers & black marketer mafias.
- ❖ We have not yet received any subsidized adequate kerosene as demanded. Through we have received information from NFF, that the Union Ministry has approved the demand. This may be the situation of other states. So we request NFF to intervene & sensitize the Ministry.
- ❖ Oil & natural gas exploration by Reliance Industry & conversion of Dhamara harbour to regular port by Dhamara Port Company is going to affect traditional fishers. This was being highlighted by different quarters. So we appeal NFF to conduct a study on the matter & take appropriate action to protect livelihoods of traditional fishers & conserve marine environment.
- ❖ Fellow fishers from Orissa now engaged as crewmembers in the private vessels of other states. They were harassed & health care. So our appeal to all the State Unions to take necessary measures to protect our fellow beings from the exploitation by our own members. This will not only help OTFWU but also other Unions from where the fishers migrate.

NARAYAN HALDER
President OTFWU

K.ALEYA
General Secretary OTFWU

RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT FISHWORKERS TRADE UNION

ANNUAL REPORT-2005

Ramanathapuram is the largest district having the coastal of 236.8 Kms. The fisher people of Ramanathapuram are organized as Ramanathapuram District Fish Workers Trade union (RFTU). In the last 12 years the Ramanathapuram District Fish Workers Trade Union is only trade union working in the fisher folk of Ramanathapuram. Since 1999 & well recognized by various political parties 7 district administration. It has well-established contacts with those who are working for fisher folk of India & affiliated with NFF 1999 onwards.

Various activities of RFTU are as follows:

STRUGGLES FOR LIVELIHOOD:

- ❖ Against Pair trawling.
- ❖ Against dynamite fishing.
- ❖ Against non-implementation of Marine fishing regulation Act.
- ❖ Against shore fishing by mechanized trawlers.
- ❖ Against the shooting of Sri Lankan and navy on innocent fish workers.
- ❖ Against Govt. Prohibition to enter in to islands (21 islands of Gulf of Manner).
- ❖ Remanding Govts'. Attention to redeem the imprisoned fish workers in Srilankan & Pakistan Jails.
- ❖ Against moneylenders exploitations in day-to-day living of the community by small-scale savings promotion.
- ❖ Efforts for free house land patta for fisher people families.
- ❖ Efforts for basis amenities like road, drinking water, street light etc.,
- ❖ Efforts for leadership & controlling the Govt. Cooperation Societies of Federation
- ❖ Implementation of various welfare schemes of gov't.

STRUGGLE AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:--

- ❖ Against Shrimp farming
- ❖ Against Garnet sand mining.
- ❖ Against Nuclear power Stations.
- ❖ Against Pollution Coastal Industries.
- ❖ Against Ship-breaking yard.
- ❖ Against coral mining.
- ❖ Against the destructive activities to the vegetation.
- ❖ Against the Sethu Samudram Shipping canal project

STRUGGLE RELATED TO WOMEN ISSUES:--

- ❖ Against sexual exploitation of fisher women.
- ❖ Creating gender sensitivity among men.

IMPORTANT EVENTS THIS YEAR—2005

On the 5th of every month the Executive meeting is held in the union office, last year we had 11 executive meeting and one General Body meeting in these meetings. Important problems of the fisher people were discussed & appropriate resolutions were taken.

NFF Executive & General Body meetings:--

Our union leaders participated one NFF Executive meeting on 14.02.2005 & our union leaders (five members) participated in Dharna at Delhi on 26.04.2005.

NAPM organized a Dharna at Trivandram where 10 of our leaders participated.

PROGRAMMES:--

- ❖ In collaboration with coastal Action network we are organizing a lobby with MLA'S, MP'S, & all political leaders since 21.03.2005.

- ❖ We organized District level seminar on tsunami at Ramnad on 19.03.2005.
- ❖ Our union organized road ROKO for tsunami affected areas of P.V.Pattinam, Narendal on 14.02.2005 at Thiruradanai, taluk office.
- ❖ We are participated in the conference against Sethu Samudram Ship Canal, programme on 28.09.2005 at Chennai.
- ❖ We participated in the seminar organized by NFF & SIFFS at Chennai on Aug. 20th to 22nd.
- ❖ Regarding the tsunami we organized Dharna in front of collectorate Ramnad on 15.04.05 for Villages Devipattinam & More Panai.

World Fisheries Day:-

World fisheries day was celebrated on Nov 21st, 2005 on this day we had a picketing at Ramnad, Rameswaram, & Thondi. Our demands were submitted to the Govt. officials. Union leaders & other speakers highlighted the issues especially right to fish freely & the fisher people of Ramnad should not be obstructed from fishing in Gulf of Mannar & to scrap Sethu Samudram Ship Canal Project. More the 3000 people participated in this agitation.

IMPACT OF THE TSUNAMI:--

The tsunami exposes the vulnerabilities of the fishing community on the Indian coast especially Tamil Nadu. It is time to think beyond just rehabilitation. The long term plan to reconstruct lives & livelihood & to also save the coast.

In Tamil Nadu 362 villages were affected & 6.91 lakhs population affected, cattle lost are 9500. Agriculture land 2589 ha. About 8000 persons lost their lives. Total loss over 7000 crore rupees & 412 rehabilitation centers set up in Tamil Nadu & relief actions are in full swing. The union Govt. agreed to approve a Rs2, 262.65 crores to Tamil Nadu. Another package would cover the reconstruction of infrastructure & address the problem of salinity of farm lands that had been inundated by seawater & to help fisher men in turn to work by providing them boats, nets & other equipments & houses for homeless, reconstruction of fishing harbour's & fish landing centers.

In this connection we are demanding to the state Govt. to most affect our area villages, particularly the P.V Pattinam & Narenthal some fisher people were more affected. So we organize an indefinite hunger strike on 12.09.05 at in front of Collectorate. Finally the Collector gives some money to the affected fisher people.

Protest against Sethu Samudram Ship Canal Project:

- ❖ The movement organized a demonstration before the Taluk office Ramnad on 19.05.05 with a demand to withdraw the Sethu Samudram Ship Canal Project.
- ❖ Our union organized dharna at different places in Ramnad district on 2.7.05 at Thondi, Ramnad and Rameswaram.
- ❖ Rail roko agitation held at Ramanathapuram on 8.07.05. After the agitation our 2000 workers were arrested, by the evening the arrested people's released.
- ❖ On August 3, 2005 a demonstration was held at Vetharanthiyam by the fish workers federation. 100 fish workers from Ramand participated.
- ❖ Protest against Sethu Samutharm Ship Canal project RFTU and solidarity organization jointly organized the rally and demonstration at Rameswaram.

The NFF Chairperson and other movement leaders participated during the programme. More than 2500 members participated that day. Six leaders were arrested under 74 and 504 Act.

Conclusion

Our union has struggled very hard to establish its place. In the Ramanathapuram District. The Government has recognized the role of the union in our district. Fisher people have a good face in the society now. The district administration always calls the union before deciding any thing concerning the fisher people of the district.

Paul Samy
President

TAMILNADU FISHWORKERS' UNION (TFU)

ANNUAL REPORT (DECEMBER 2004 TO NOVEMBER 2005)

It is with heavy heart I am here in the General Body meet of the NFF, presenting the annual report of Tamil Nadu Fishworkers' Union. December 26, 2004 has left us with an indelible mark in history. It has drawn back the coastal people & other dependent communities by at least 25 years. While we had been at pains to impress upon the Governments of the urgent & serious need to address certain critical issues the tsunami brought us a fatal blow. At the same time TFU took the challenge, responded positively & marched ahead with its time bound tasks in the new situation.

We have crossed many a milestones, strengthened the existing bases & established new bases in many more hamlets, district level bases in Tirunelveli, Thoothukkudy, Ramanathapuram, Kancheepuram, Thiruvalluvar Districts & in the State head quarters. In all there are over 185 units under the Union. The union intervenes in the issues of the fish workers at the national level both independently & joining hands with its umbrella organization, namely the National Fishworkers' Forum.

Function during the year:

Executive & General Council Meetings.

The Union has held seven Executive Council Meetings, four General Body Meetings & 13 Consultation Meetings. The following were the programmers resolved to be carried out during the year:

1. Tsunami disaster- rescue, relief and rehabilitation.
2. Colachel Fishing Harbour.
3. Coastal Legislative constituency for coastal community.
4. Thoothoor fishermen in Pakistan jail.
5. Interventions against sand mining in Kanyakumari Coast.
6. Fishworkers' Saving Scheme and Relief Fund during the lean season.
7. Diesel & Kerosene Subsidy For Mechanized sector.
8. Old age pension for Fish workers.
9. Action on implementation of Recommendations of the Venugopal Commission & Murari Committee.
10. Interventions on issues of women in fish processing units.
11. Fishing Harbour at Thengappatanam.
12. Nuclear Power Project at Koodankulam.
13. Fight against price hike and anti people economic policies of the Government.
14. World Fishworkers' Day.
15. Fisheries College/ Fisheries School & Regional Centers of Fishing Harbour Marine Fisheries Research Institute & Central Institute of Fisheries Technology.
16. World Fishworkers Forum Tsunami Relief Fund issue.
17. Separate panchayats for fisher hamlets
18. Extension Government's free housing scheme to the interior fishworkers community.
19. Insurance for fishworkers.
20. Fisheries Cooperative Bank.
21. Thoothoor St. Jude's College Issue.
22. Sethu Samudhram Shipping Canal Issue.
23. Leadership Training (Post Tsunami scheme).
24. Establishment of Publication Division under TFU and publication of December Vadukkal.
25. Publication & release of Naithal Suvadugal.
26. Intervention on inclusion of fishermen in the list of scheduled Tribes.
27. Establishment of South Asian Fishermen Fraternity (SAFF)
28. Establishment of free tuition centers for fishworkers' children.
29. Intervention on alternate employment. Establishment of Free Tailoring Centers for fisher people.
30. Award of educational scholarships.
31. Inauguration of Ramanathapuram District office of TFU
32. Inauguration of Head Quarters office of TFU at Chennai.
33. Felicitation of Fr. Thomas Gulfam of Pakistan.
34. Cultural Training Programme.
35. Establishment of Children's Association.

The Tsunami disaster- rescue, relief & rehabilitation

The tsunami that badly hit the Indian coast among others has wide opened the eyes of the international community to the harsh realities prevailing in the South Asian coasts. In Kanyakumari District alone, tsunami killed 820 & many disappeared. The TFU rose to the occasion & contributed its humble might. It effectively intervened on areas such as rescue, relief & rehabilitation without waiting for any assistance from funding agencies. It took the urgent issues of the tsunami victims to the attention of the Government. It pressed for immediate transfer of the then District Collector and that was heeded to by the State Government in a week. The TFU organized an agitation on 20. 06. 2005 in front of the District Collectorate on demands including immediate steps towards construction of permanent houses for the tsunami victims, rehabilitation, roll back of the Sethu Canal Project.

During the post Tsunami period the union had asked the Government not to get any help to those organizations which involves in sand mining in the coastal areas of Kanyakumari District. Finally, it succeeded in its demand. Many organization provided food & shelter to the strayed people but TFU tried to provide instruments for their work. IRDWSI, an organization in Vizag & KNH joined together and under the guidance of TFU, supplied the people with 45 fiber boats, 130 catamarans (canoes), many fiber catamarans, 175 engines & 175 sets of fishnets. Thus the fishers from Arokiapuram, Keezha manakkudi, Pillaithoppu, Kadia pattanam, Puthoor, Kottilpadu, Colachel, Simon Colony, Vaniakudi, & Midalam benefited by this scheme. They were given all this on condition of repaying it at various intervals.

Later on fishers from Pallam, Enayam, Enayam puthenthurai & Kurumpani were also given instruments for fishing. On 26.02.2005 KNH director, KNH's national convener Satheesh Samuel took part in the function for disbursement of Tsunami Relief Funds at Kadiapattinam & Puthoor. On 31.05. the District Collector Sunil Palival and TOFCOFEDN Co-coordinator Balakrishnan took part in the functions held at Colachel & Kadiapattinam respectively.

Colachel Commercial Harbour VS Fishing Harbour.

Colachel is the only natural fishing harbor in all over Tamilnadu State. The way leading international ships movement is 20 km. away from Colachel and 'Wedge Bank' is also closer to this Colachel Harbour. But Tamilnadu Government & Malaysian Government has signed an agreement to build a mega commercial harbour in Colachel. All over the world mega commercial harbour have created great pollution & environment problems as well as economic destruction to the poor workers. In Tamil Nadu, there is 1076 km. length coastal belt, out of which only 68 km. (6.5%) coastal belt is in Kanyakumari district. Highly skilled fishermen are found here. For the welfare of the fishermen & the economic development of the district a modern fishing harbour should be built in Colachel.

Around 3 years TFU conducted various counseling, procession, protest & public meeting to stress this demand. The TFU have decided to stage its agitation at state head Quarters at Chennai in January 2006.

Constituency for Coastal Area in Kanyakumari District

Fishers form the second biggest community in Kanyakumari district. There are about 2.5 lakhs coastal fish workers & 65000 interior fish workers. In Kanyakumari district there are 7 assembly constituencies & 1 parliament constituency. It is the fish workers (3.15 lakhs of votes) that decide the win or loss of elections. So the TFU is creating two constituencies for the fisher folk. TFU strongly hopes that it is possible only by the representatives of fishers to explain the difficulties of fishers in the legislative assembly. So it is a must to arrange legislative constituency for the fishers.

For that TFU is taking the vital role in forming a core group called COASTAL CONSTITUANCY DELIMITATION ACTION COMMITTEE (CCDAC). Along with TFU, CCDAC staged rally & hunger strike at Nagercoil as well as in Chennai. It also met Tamil Nadu the Chairman Justice Kuldeep Singh, Mr. Palani Sami, Tamil Nadu election Commissioner, Tanraj M.P, Krishnasami M.P, Ponnudi, and former Minister. It also held a rally from Christopher bus stand to collectorate in this regard.

Thoothoor fishermen in Pakistan Jails:

Nine of our fishermen from Thoothoor, Kurumpanai (Kanyakumary District) & Thiruvananthapuram district (Kerala) were under detention in Pakistan Jail (Karachi) for over eight months for inadvertently drifting into the international waters. The TFU consistently & successfully worked towards the release of these of fishermen. The TFU also provided provisions

& rations for the families of these nine fishermen after their return.

Lean Season Saving Cum Relief Fund

NFF had already conducted its general body meeting at Orissa & decided that interior fishermen & fisherwomen also must be given lean season fund. On the basis of the decision of NFF, coastal women were included in the scheme & collected their monthly premium but they were not given any lean season fund. The interior fisherwomen were never included in the scheme. TFU is pursuing this and the demand of old age pension for fishworkers.

Thengapattinam Fishing Harbour

Due to the lack of facility for fishing Kanyakumari fishers are compelled to go to other district & states for fishing. There, due to difference in language, technique and over crowding, every now and then fighting occur and fishers happen to lose their boats and even lives.

In order to avert such situation it is of utmost importance to construct fishing harbours, fish landing centers etc. so that they can try to fish in their own areas. Thengapattinam is suitable for constructing a harbour in and around Thoothoor. TFU urges and fights for the same.

Interventions Against sand mining in costal Areas

Kanyakumari Coast harbours good rare earth resources. For the past 35 years the Manavalakkurichy Plant of the Indian Rare Earths Ltd. (Department of Atomic Energy) is engaged in mining these rare earth, which remained a threat to the neighborhood & livelihood of the fishing communities. In late 2003 a private mining agency from Thirunelveli started mining in some of the coastal hamlets here, which triggered tension & resulted in a clash. The TFU took lead role in the formation of a Joint Action Committee for Environmental Protection, enlisting the support of the Kottar Catholic Church. An agitation was organized on the issue, which led to the termination of mining in Midalam area.

World Fisheries Day November 21, 2005

Counseling & meeting of TFU on World Fisheries Day 2005 was held on 23.10.2005. In the counseling it was decided to celebrate the day from Nov. 12 to Nov. 21. It was also decided to conduct various competitions and seminars at zonal level and district level along with leadership training. On the basis of it, zonal level counseling were held at Arokiapuram, Pallam, Melathurai, Vaaniakudi, Enayam, Marthandam, Manakkavilai, Thoothoor and Elankadai.

On 12th November at RDO Office at Nagercoil, the inaugural day celebration was held. Dr. Vareethaiah gave felicitation and the president of Coastal People Organization (CPO) participated in the meeting.

Consequently, on 13.11.2005 a leadership-training program was held.

On 14.11.2005 children's day was celebrated at Middleman.

On 15.11.2005 a seminar on ecology was held at Pallam.

On 16.11.2005 a women's awareness program was held at Marthandamthurai.

On 17.11.2005 a seminar on ecology was held at Pillaithoppu.

On 18.11.2005 interior fish workers problems were discussed at Palliyadi.

On 19.11.2005 Fishers culfest was held at Nagercoil.

On 20.11.2005 awareness program was held at Vainyakudi.

This year World Fisheries Day was celebrated as a demand day by TFU. On this day a procession & a meeting was held under the leadership of T Peter Dhas, the president of TFU, B. Xavier. CPO president inaugurated the function. Thousands of fishworkers went on procession from Meenaxipuram in Nagercoil, demanding the following: -

1. Ban on fishing by foreign ship in Indian Sea.
2. Withdraw the fish import policy.
3. Cancel the Sethu Samudra Project.
4. Avoid construction of Nuclear Power Station
5. Construct fishing harbours at Colachel as well as at Thengapattinam.
6. Announce the Tsunami disaster as national disaster.
7. Avoid exploiting the coastal areas in the name of tourist centers.
8. Separate legislative constituencies for the coastal people.
9. Enroll the fishers in the SC/ST list.
10. Provide lean season fund to interior fishworkers too.

11. Stop sand mining at coastal area by Govt. as well as private companies.
12. Save the A.V.M. Canal from its destruction.
13. Restore Thoothoor St. Jude's College administration to the proper authority.

The procession crossed the important streets of the town and reached at Ponnappan Thidal". P. Alexander, Kanyakumari district president of TFU welcomed all. Rev. Fr. Thomas GULFARM, from, Pakistan, as the chief guest added colour to the function. T. Peter Dhas, Rev. Fr. Churchil, President, All India fishermen Advocates Association, M.A.Sekhar TFU coordinator Thiruvallor, Kancheepuram districts, & many others addressed the public.

Sethu Samudra Canal Project:

Sethu Samudra Canal Project is not scientific. It could affect the 15 lakhs fish workers. It would destroy 23 islands in Gulf of Mannar, Coral rocks & also areas of Thoothukkudi, Ramanathapuram, Puthukkottai, Thanjavoor, Thiruvaroor would be completely wiped out.

On implementing Sethu Samudra Canal Ptoject 137 fisher villages will be affected directly, 1500 square Km of exclusive fishing area will be badly affected. Out of 3268 living creatures 377 rare creatures belonging to this area will disappear. All fishes will completely be destroyed while coral rocks, and other rocks are removed, while 3000 ships pass through this area no catamaran, mechanized and out- board fishers can work. Spending Rs. 2500 crores on this project is of no profit to the fishermen.

To avert this project TFU organized signature campaign, counseling & seminars & public meetings. One day before laying foundation stone on 01.07.2005 TFU organized a procession through important streets of the town and reached the district collector's office & submitted a complaint in this regard. People demonstrated black flags on their house roofs. TFU fights against this with determination.

December Vadukkal

The first entry in the series of publication was a post tsunami document December Vadukkal authored by Prof. Dr. Vareethaiah Konstantine, a noted scholar activist from the District. The book carries the author's reflections on post tsunami issues, informed opinions of activists, abstracts of the GOs of Tamilnadu Govt. & resolutions & recommendations of movements, NGOs & action groups on Tsunami reconstruction & rehabilitation. The book was released on 29. 05 2005 and was well received by the stakeholders & soon it went out of stock (3000 copies- Edition).

Naithal Suvadugal

The second Publication in succession, by the same author (Dr. Vareethiah Konstantine) Naithal Suvadugal (Foot Prints on the coast) is a compilation 16 well researched essays on critical/ core issues of the Kanyakumari Coast & its fishing communities, most of which were published early in several periodicals. This number was released on the World Fishworkers' Day, Novemb3er 21, 2005. This 396-page document is the first of its kind in the entire coast of Tamil Nadu. Some of the issues discussed in detail in the volume are -

- ❖ Leadership in the fishworker community
- ❖ Economic development
- ❖ Contribution of fisherwomen to the community development
- ❖ Water resources in the coast
- ❖ Religion and the Fishworkers
- ❖ Political Participation
- ❖ Sand mining and
- ❖ Neighbours and livelihood security.

St. Jude's college, Thoothoor – An Act of Redemption

This educational institution was registered in 1978 for Latin Catholic Fisherman society. It had been imparting good education for the last 25 reputed institution legally & to hand over it to the legal committee. TFU along council for Redemption of St. Jude's College stated this problem to the district administration & to the district collector.

On 14.11.2005 at 10 am the union started a procession from Nagercoil Christopher bus stand & passed through important roads of the town. Under the leadership of Peter Dhas the union submitted its demand to the district collector. John Christopher, John Leonard, B. Xavier, P.Alexander, A Bernard Annathurai, St. Jude's college welfare socity president John Bosco &

many more actively participated in it.

Felicitation to Mr. S Alphonse

S.Alphonse, an actual fisherman who gradually became the Head Master of Govt. Primary School at Vadiveesvaram, Nagercoil was awarded Dr. Radha Krishnanawarded by the Central Govt. On behalf of TFU this teacher was felicitated on 23.10. 2005 at 5 pm at Revenue Department Association Office.

T.Peter Dhas, the president of TFU presided over the meeting, P. Arokia Dhas, president of Pallam panchayat, Dr. Vareedhaiah & many reputed people greeted him. Eswaran Deputy Superintendent of police offered his dgement.

Coastal Villages-Separate Panchayats

Coastal villages are still at far behind without basic amenities like potable water, streetlight, toilets, and sanitary facilities. The prime reason for this is that the presidents of these panchayats are from other societies. TFU urges the Govt. to consider this matter & reconstruct separate panchayats for villages according to the population and also the leaders of these panchayats to be elected from among them.

WFFP – Tsunami Relief Fund

No one can deny the fact that TFU in Kanyakumari district is working under NFF. In the post tsunami period through the telephonic conversation we were given to know that NFF was planning to give Rs.5000/- each to the victim families. Later on a letter of disappointment was sent by NFF Chairman stating that it was ready to give its over all contributions to the 251 victims in Ramanathapuram, Thoothoor & areas from Arokiapuram to Mullorthurai in Kanyakumari district. Of these Ramanathapuram and Thoothoor were not affected by Tsunami. Yet the sum was given to 85 victims in Ramanathapuram & to 83 victims in Thoothoor. Whereas areas from Arokiapuram to Mullorthurai, where TFU works actively, was promised to give only to 83 victims. How can we, the real sufferers accept this proposal? So TFU executives & general body rejected the sum, as it was very least comparing to no affected areas.

South Asian Fishermen Fraternity (SAFF)

While fishing in deep-sea, there is possibility of trespassing into another nation. Every year many fishers happen to trespass unknowingly & suffer without any help. They were to be rescued. In order to help them & to return them to their native land TFU organized a South Asian Fishermen Fraternity (SAFF) at Nagercoil on 18.11.2005.

Rev.Fr. Charles Bromeo, EX. Director of Coastal peace & development, Presided over the meeting Assistant Director (CPD). Rev.Fr. Antony Claret, Rama Subramani, Superintendent of police Kanyakumari district, T. Peter Dhas, Prof. Dr. Vareedhaiah, Rec. Fr. Thomas Gulfarm, a Priest from Karachi (Pakistan) and many others participated in the meeting.

Tuition Classes

In order to boost up the weak students in their studies TFU plans for tuition classes at various places of Kanyakumari district. The classes are going on at Mekka mandapam, Melamanakkudi, Midalam, Muttom, Karinkal, Palliadi & Colachel. At present including graduate teachers, 16 teachers are working in it. In short period the students witness improvement in their studies. Moreover TFU paid educational loan for 16 students their higher studies. TFU also plans to start computer center for students.

Free tailoring training center

With the intention to grow self-confidence and alternative job for fisher women. TFU opened 2 tailoring centers at Midalam & Pillaithoppu. All centers run successfully & smoothly.

Educational Scholarship

In order to create competitive spirit in their studies among the children of members of TFU, we distributed cash awards & shields to the students who came of with flying colors in their 10th & 12th standard examination. The same will be continued in the other working districts of TFU.

Bank Loan – Self-Employment Opportunity

The women's units, which work under the activities of TFU, are provided with bank loans. Around 448 SHG work in Kanyakumari district. They all function smoothly in the areas getting bank loans, self-employment & finding solutions to women's problems. 251 group received rs.4.5 crores in three terms from Pandian Grama Bank, Sree Venkadesapuram branch, Thoothukkudi.

Around 3 crores of rupees were repaid. We continue with the same task.

Offices at Ramanathapuram, Chennai & Thoothoor Zonal

We are indeed glad to inform our newly extended branch offices at Ramanathapuram as well as in Chennai. The Ramanathapuram office, at 3/1872, Valasai Street, Main Road, Thankachi Madam & P.O. -623529, Ramanathapuram District, was inaugurated on 23.11.2005. S.M. Manikkam, Thankachi madam Panchayath president inaugurated the office. L.G.S. Kumar, TFU Ramanathapuram district co-coordinator, presided over the meeting. T.Peter Dhas, TFU president, P. Alexander, Kanyakumari district president, A.Bernard Annathurai, Kanyakumari district secretary were the chief guests to the function.

In Chennai, a TFU office was chosen at 74/12-kodimara streets, Rayapuram, Chennai 600013. Soon it will be inaugurated & will start functioning as the head quarter for the districts of Kanchipuram, Thiruvalluvar, & Chennai.

Thoothoor area, Erayumanthurai to Neerodi (8 villages) are at distant from Nagercoil. For the convenience of the fisher people of this area TFU looks into the matter & will open a branch office at Thoothoor.

Felicitation to Rev. Fr. Thomas Gulfarm

South Asian Fisherman Fraternity (SAFF) was inaugurated at Nagercoil on 18.11.2005. on the day Fr. Thomas Gulfarm who helped the 9 fishermen who were arrested in Pakistan jail, was thanked by the parish committee, & TFU in his presence at Thoothoor. The meeting was presided over by T.Peter Dhas, President, and TFU. Prof. Dr. Vareethaiah, Rev.Fr. Antony Claret, CPD joint Director, Rev. FR. Churchil, J.G.Prince, and District Congress. Praised Fr. Thomas Gulfarm for his valuable service to Indian people.

Fishermen Grievance Day

In order to study the situation in coastal area & standard of living of fisherman community, there was a need to hear the sufferings of fisherman. So TFU urged the district administration, for the same. On 28.10.2005 under the leadership of the district collector, Sunil Paliwal, a meeting was held at collectorate. On behalf of TFU T. Peter Dhas, the president TFU, participated the meeting & brought forward a few of the present problems of coastal areas of Kanyakumari district such as save coastal ecology, stop exploiting coastal areas in the name of tourism, scholarship for the students who are affected by tsunami, sand mining. The district administration to support the action council of redemption of St. Jude's college etc.

FUTURE PLAN

- ❖ In future TFU will act jointly with NFF, WFFP & SAFF.
- ❖ TFU will act tirelessly to fulfill the listed demands of fishermen community.
- ❖ TFU will expand its branches throughout Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Jointly act at district as well state level along with organization, which comply with our principles.
- ❖ Struggle hard to construct newly coastal constituency in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Jointly venture with other organizations to save coastal ecology.
- ❖ To strengthen the Action Council of Redemption of St. Jude's College Thoothoor & to save it at the earliest.
- ❖ To make leaders from fishermen communities by providing leadership training.
- ❖ Organize district & state level conference.
- ❖ Publish a monthly magazine called "MEEN THOZHILALY" (FISHWORKER) to analyze the problems of fish workers.
- ❖ Publish books, on behalf TFU, in order to focus social problems of fishermen community.
- ❖ Construct a web site for TFU thus to bring out the problems of fishermen community throughout the world.
- ❖ To open boat yard, & outboard motor (OBM) repairing center & cold storage etc.
- ❖ To give training to athletic coaching to fisher pupils.
- ❖ To give career guidance to fisher people for their higher studies.

Mangalore
6.12,2005

T. Peter Dhas
President
Tamil Nadu Fishworkers Union

Vangakadal Meen Thozhilalar Sangam

Nagapattinam District, Tamilnadu,

Ref. No.

Date: 06.12.05

Activity Profile – Jan to Dec 2005

Introduction:

Vangakadal Meen Thozhilalar Sangam, a trade union of fish workers with 3674 members was registered this year (October 2005). Though this trade union started functioning from the year 2003, it got registered only this year.

Objectives of the Union:

- To initiate actions to protect lives and livelihood of coastal communities.
- To work and struggle to gain political power for the coastal communities.
- To lobby for fishery friendly policies and schemes.
- To fight against the destructive policies and projects of the State.

Status of Membership:

The Vangakadal Meen Thozhilalar Sangam had 3674 members during the Sangam registration. We are in the process of registering new members to the trade union. We are also taking steps to include workers from allied fishery sector. At present, Vangakadal Meen Thozhilalar Sangam has 5% members from allied fish workers.

Activities of Union:

- Monitoring the implementation of the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes of the Governments.
- Supporting the victims to claim their compensation of damaged fishing crafts.
- World Fisheries Day - Human Chain and Rally.

1. Supporting activities to claim fishing crafts:

For those who had lost their fishing crafts in tsunami, the union has taken steps to claim and receive their compensation. The Union has linked with other NGOs and supported the fish workers to avail fibre boats in Killai and Thillaivilagam.

2. Human Chain on World Fisheries Day:

On the World Fisheries Day, 21st November 2005 the trade union organised a Human Chain at Nagapattinam, in which 2500 fish workers from the 51 fishing villages of Nagapattinam and Karaikal Districts participated in spite of heavy rains. The main demands raised were:

- To stop the dredging activities of Sethu Samuthiram Ship canal project immediately.
- To issue fishing identity cards to fish workers.
- To immediately compensate the damaged nets by the dredger ship.
- To include women as fish workers and compensate their loss in tsunami.

3. Supports to the Campaign Against Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project:

The Union supported the campaign activities against Sethusamudram Shipping (Sea Channel) Canal Project.

Press Conference on 16th June 2005: A Press Conference on the impacts of Sethusamudram Shipping (Sea Channel) Canal Project was organised on 16th June 2005, at Chennai, in which leaders representatives from Nagapattinam participated and addressed the conference.

More than 2500 members of Movement Against Sethu Samudram Shipping Canal Project were arrested when they attempted to hold demonstration to protest against SSCP foundation laying ceremony to be held at **Madurai on 02.07.2005**. About 120 representatives from Nagapattinam participated in this protest.

Again on 8th August 2005 at Ramanathapuram, more than 3000 people were involved in Rail Roko, raising slogans against Sethu Samudram Canal Project, in which too 130 representatives from Nagapattinam participated. They were all arrested and kept in custody till the evening.

4. Campaign to Ensure the Rights Over Coastal Lands:

As per the existing legal frame work CRZ notification sets the base for framing any kind of policies with regard to shelter for coastal communities in the aftermath of the terrible humanitarian disaster that has affected thousands of kilometers of coastal areas in the Tamilnadu state. Before proceeding to the exact provision of the law one has to understand the existing developments along the coast. **CRZ law does not prohibit fishing dwellings within 500 m of the highest high tide line.**

The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification - 1991 enacted to protect the coast and the traditional fisher people who are depending on the coast, sea and the resources, is being continuously amended and diluted to suit the interest of the industrial lobby. **It is not fishing dwellings that destroyed the coast but industrial establishments, tourism projects and farmhouses, entertainment parks and hotels.**

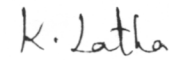
The most disturbing aspect of the outcome of this tidal wave is the move by the Government and supported by a few intellectuals to move the fishing people away from their destroyed home and lands and claim that they can be taken out of CRZ area are resettled 500 mts or 1 km away. We remain totally opposed to this move as it displaces the coastal communities and especially the fishing people from their homeland. The circular letter dated 19.01.2005 by Mr. R.Santhanam, I.A.S., the Special Commissioner of Relief and Rehabilitation clearly

stated that "In case us houses within 500 metres line, it is necessary that they are compulsory relocated. However, if a further distance above 500 metres is required because of the topography, relocation may have to be undertaken. It is necessary that the vulnerable areas be fully covered. In case of relocation, the existing houses will have to be handed over to the government by a process of relinquishment for appropriate action, since the beneficiaries in the new locations will be given full ownership patta for the area under their enjoyment and the construction will be fully funded either by the government or by the Non Governmental Organisations / Voluntary Agencies / Public and Private Enterprises / National / International Rehabilitation Organisation". Along with this circular a format was attached to get the consent of the fishing community to move away from the coast. In the name of field survey signatures of the fisher people were received on the formats. This clearly depicted the intention of the State to evict the fishing community from the coast, using their vulnerable situation.

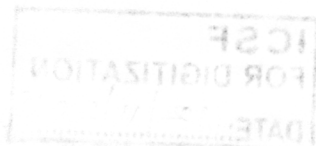
Coastal Action Network initiated a campaign in all the coastal districts opposing this move. As a first step it began a signature campaign demanding to withdraw this anti fisher people circular, in which the Union actively participated and made all the villagers in Nagapattinam district sent petitions to the Commissioner of Relief and Rehabilitation, the Chief Minister and the District Administration.

Later Tamil Nadu Government passed the G.O. No. 172, which is also an attempt of the State to gain control over the coastal lands in the name of using it for public purposes. Demanding the fisher people to surrender the coastal lands if they need a safe house beyond 1000 meters from the High Tide Line is against their right to live on the coast to have a livelihood, which is ensured by the Constitution of India and the CRZ Notification. Getting a safe house is a fundamental right of the fishing community. Also the State withering its legal duty to support the fishing community in their construction of the houses within 200 meters, when it is legally recognized by the CRZ law clearly depicts the anti fishing people attitude. The campaign to withdraw this G.O. No. 172 was being initiated in Nagapattinam District.


(V. Kuppurethinam)
President


(K. Latha)
Treasurer

(Presented in the NFF General Body Meeting from Dec 6th – 8th 2005 at Mangalore).



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