

# NATIONAL FISHWORKERS FORUM

(NFF)

(a federation of state level trade unions in india)

100. NAT.

## ANNUAL REPORT 1999



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## FOREWORD

We are happy to present the 1999 report of National Fishworkers Forum. Scanning through the report you will recognize that NFF today is not only a national political power but also a recognized factor in the global fisheries spectrum. Fisherpeoples movement in the national and international level challenged WTO and globalisation which is recognized through Sophie prize. The visit of the members of the NFF to the Norway fishermen village exposed the global crisis in fish resources.

The heroic sacrifices made by the Chilika Fishermen for the protection of the water bodies and for their traditional rights is a challenge to all of us to continue our struggle for our rights. The constituent units of NFF expressed their solidarity by joining the march in Chilika from 10<sup>th</sup> –15<sup>th</sup> August, 1999.

Another blow during the year was the introduction of the Aquaculture Authority Bill to circumvent the Supreme Court judgment. NFF will continue to struggle against this until it is withdrawn.

The unprecedented Super Cyclone that devastated 12 districts of Orissa & part of West Bengal coast took away thousands of lives. Our solidarity was expressed by observing the fisheries day Nov 21 as Solidarity day with the victims of Cyclone.

As you read through the reports of the constituent units of NFF you will recognize the struggles of each units for the local issues and common demands- whether it is against harbors, amusement parks, ship breaking yards, anti nuclear anti thermal plants, against pollution etc. or for ownership of water bodies and fishing implements.

I express my thanks to the constituent units and their leaders for preparing the report of their union in time. Also I thank Sr. Philomine Marie, Mr. Maju Varghese and Mr. Jerome Fernandez for compiling, typing, editing, and publishing this report in time. I am grateful to all of them.

Harekrishna Debnath  
Chairperson



# NATIONAL FISHWORKERS FORUM

## ANNUAL REPORT - 1999

### INTRODUCTION:

1999 was a year which will be remembered for the fisherpeople of Chilika who under the banner of Chilika Matsyajibi Mahasasngha inspired the NFF and challenged all of us by sacrificing themselves for the protection of the water bodies and the traditional right of fishing. It was also a year when Narmada Bachavo Andolan, through their struggle created a history for alternative politics and alternate paradigm of development, It was also a year when the displaced tribal people of TAVA and BURGI dams asserted their right over the reservoirs. This year for the first time the Supreme Court Judgement created National Coastal Zone Management Authority and the state level authorities. We cannot but remember the year 1999 recognising fisherpeoples movement in the national and International level, and the National Alliance of Peoples Movement by challenging gobalisation and WTO through Sophie Prize. All these are at the same time challenging us to take greater responsibilities of moving the fisherpeople in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium.

### ALL INDIA FISHERIES STRIKE

The All India Fisheries Strike on 10<sup>th</sup> May once again brought the entire traditional fishing community together to assert their right and voice their protest. The main demands were:

- 1) Withdraw Aquaculture Authority Bill
- 2) Implement Murari committee recommendations ✓
- 3) Implement Savings cum relief scheme for fish workers including women and inland fish workers ✓

However the entire country did not go on a strike as it happened during our struggle against joint ventures. Definitely it was a very big victory in West Bengal to begin Savings cum Relief Scheme and also implementing the same scheme in Orissa.

Concerning the implementation of Murari Committee still the Government is not serious about implementing all the 21 recommendations. Though the fisheries was brought under one department, ie, animal husbandry, nothing substantial has been achieved Still 19 Joint Venture and 12 Lease Vessels are operating out of 76 "Valid approvals"! Annexure .....(1)

Aquaculture Authority bill has not yet been withdrawn. It is still pending before the Lok Sabha.

All this means that we have to continue the struggle in a sustained and persevering manner.

*Question for discussion: What are we going to do in 2000 to obtain all these demands?*

### CHILIKA STUGGLE:

Under the banner of Chilika Matsyajibi Mahasangha (CMM) the fisherpeople of Chilika agitated for the implentation of the Supreme Court order to ban aquaculture in Chilika Lake. This led to the

police firing on 29<sup>th</sup> May '99 killing 4 fishespeople and injuring about 24 others. Since then the NFF has been supporting their struggle. The NFF has made the agitation known and succeeded in bringing support from all over the world. It was during this time the Chairperson was also attacked and his house was robbed by unidentified miscreants. All these led the leaders of NFF from different states marching to Chilika from 10<sup>th</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> August for an exposure and to express solidarity with the Chilika Matsyajibi Mahasangh. During this march NFF leaders visited Bhusandapur, Pathara, jagulaipadhara, Gajapatnagar, Kumarpur, Ramalankda, Chandraput, Balugaon and Sorana villages. We interacted with the CMM leaders Raghunath Bala, Anadi Behra, Birinchee Behra, Muchiram Behera, Babla Behera, Basanta Behera, Muralidhar Behera, Dharmendra Kei and many others who traveled with us and organized and addressed public meetings, rallies etc. All these led to a bigger stuggle leading upto the World Fisheries Day 1999.

The NFF team to Chilika Solidarity march comprised of the following leaders:-

1) Hiralal Das Roy 2) Harekrishna Debnath 3) R.K. Patil 4) N.D. Koli 5) Ramesh R. Duri 6) Purnima Mehar 7) Vittal Tarey 8) Pandurang Mhare 9) Thomas Henry 10) D. Sunita 11) V Musalaish 12) V. Pothu Raju 13) K. Jerald John 14) Susai Isabel Cyril 15) Mary Stella Sebastian 16) Franklin 17) Rajan 18) Jerome 19) Ben 20) Bineeth Mundu 21) Sujana Krishnamurhti 22) Gopal Menon 23) Bhudev Bhagat and 24) K. Aleya.

Prof Govinda Panda and Mr Simanchal traveled all along the march and facilitated interactions, interpretations and travel arrangements of the group.

We take this opportunity to thank all the CMM leaders, and Mr. Maju Varghese for facilitating this with different groups in India and the World.

*Question for discussion: How are we going to establish our right over Chilika an can materialize our demand for withdrawal of Aquaculture Authority Bill?*

### UMBERGAON STUGGLE:

Umbergaon is a traditional fishing village on the border of Gujarath and Maharashtra in the district of Valsad. It is a traditional natural fishing harbour where fishermen are having a very sustainable fishery. The local people and the fishing community are very happy with the situation. The Gujarat government is planning to build an international commercial harbour. It is important to know that this proposal has come up when P & O company has withdrawn from the Dahanu project. Maharashtra government has not given up the idea. These two international harbours are within the reach of 25 kms from one another. The NFF and Maharashtra Machimar Kriti Samiti have taken a very bold step against Dahanu International commercial harbor. This proposed international commercial harbor will destroy rich fishing grounds of Dhanu and displace the fishing communities. This agitation was supported by dock workers of Mumbai and public at large. It was in this context the Umbergaon international commercial harbor was proposed. The entire public and the fishing community of Umbergaon have expressed opposition thorough two Bandhs. Seeing the opposition, the Government of Gujrath has changed its strategy saying that they are constructing a fishing harbour only. Lallubhai Tandel and his organization would like to have a full fledged fishing harbour for the sake of trawlers, purse seiners and machannised boats. Premji Bhai phoned to Thomas Kocherry expressing the wish of the Fisheries Minister of Gujarat to talk to Thomas Kocherry. The public at large in Umbergaon and the fishing community is still against even a fishing harbour.



Though Thomas Kocherry, R.K.Patil, N.D. Koli and others from the NFF supported the fishing community in Umbergaon, it seems that there are differences of opinion in Gujarat. It is important that we should discuss this matter to clarify the NFF Stand

*Question for discussion: What stand should we take concerning the construction of a fishing harbour and international commercial harbour.*

#### NATIONAL COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY: ✓

The NFF has been consistently demanding for the implementation of CRZ Notification without affecting the construction of the residences of the fishing communities in the coastal area in any way. It was in this context that the supreme court Judgment of 1995,1996 have to be seen. It was a major victory for the fishing community. However this was not implemented at all, instead the government of India introduced the Aquaculture Authority Bill to circumvent the Supreme Court Judgments. Till it is withdrawn our struggle continues. It is important to note that the Ministry of Environment and Forest was forced to appoint Coastal Zone Management Authorities at the central and state levels at the instruction of the Supreme Court. It is once again very important to note the political recognition of NFF through the appointment of Thomas Kocherry as a member of National Coastal Zone Management Authority. At the first sitting of the NCZMA itself Thomas Kocherry raised the point regarding the construction of houses of the fishing community and the rampant violation of CRZ Notification all over India documented by the NFF. The MoEF already proposed the amendment for the construction of houses. We are not fully happy with the amendment particularly changing the terminology "Traditional and customary right of the fishing community" to " the construction of houses for the local inhabitants". Also it is not clear about the zone between 0-200 mtrs. We have to continue our struggle concerning full right of the traditional fishing community over construction of houses in the entire coast. It is also important to note, the NCZMA has decided to file a case against ESSEL WORLD (Marine Park) in Maharashtra for violating the CRZ Notification. This will be the first test case for taking actions against violations of the CRZ Notification.

We are also happy to note that the High Court of Kerala has decided in favor of a petition filed by KSMTF against the hotel construction going on near Vizhinjam. KSMTF also has filed a case against some the constructions in Ernakulam. All these are in line with our decisions of the last General Body. Once again we take the opportunity to thank Mr Nandakumar and his team for documenting violations.

5.2) The central Ministry of Environment and Forest organized a national convention in October in New Delhi on Coastal Zone Management. Many experts and scientists of national and international repute presented their view points on the issue. The scientists and experts opinions only reinforced our stand. The unanimous recommendation of the convention voiced the need for sufficient space both landward and seaward sides for the effective management of the coastal zone and hence they opined in favor of a "no development" approach in the CRZ.

The recent cyclone in Orissa is an eye-opener. One area of observation is wherever there was large area of non-developed beach and coast the damage was less. Wherever there were mangrove and casurina forests in the coast, the damage was less. The more the space in the coastal belt as non-developed zone the risk is less.

The Ministry of Environment and Forest invited different organizations of fisher people for consultation on the implementation of CRZ Notification on 25th November 1999. NFF was represented by the Chairperson. Similarly the environment groups and other NGO's, Hotel and Tourism lobby, developers and various other groups were also invited for similar consultations separately. During this meeting with the Ministry officials the NFF position was very strongly presented especially our firm opposition to the proposed amendment of CRZ Notification replacing "traditional rights and customary uses such as existing fishing villages and gothans by "local inhabitants" (Section C, clause III under marginal heading CRZ -III) and also against the proposed relaxations for " (ii a) Exploration for extraction of oil and natural gas"

The deadline for finalizing the amendments of CRZ Notification is January 31<sup>st</sup> 2000. We need to assert our position once again immediately to prevent and thwart the attempts of the different groups that are actively lobbying to dilute the spirit of the CRZ Notification and acts against the interests of the fishing community. We must keep a constant vigil.

*Question for discussion: How are we going to protect the coastal zone? What way are we going to take action against the violations?*

**Naval Base In Karwar:** The government is going to construct a naval base in Karwar in Uttara Kannada, displacing the fisherfolk in the area. The Karwar coast is famous for 'Mackreal' in Asia. Mr. T. Peter visited this place and discussed the issues with the people.

#### NORWAY EXCHANGE TRIP:

The NFF had the privilege of sending six persons for an interaction with the fishing communities in Norway. The persons who participated from the NFF were (1) Thomas Kocherry (2) Harekrishna Debnath (3) N.D. Koli (4) Lal Koiparambil (5) Susai Isabel (6) Minakshi Manna. This was at the invitation of Gunar Album of the Norwegian Society for Conservation of Nature. We lived at the fishing harbor of STEIGN interacted with the fishermen and leaders of the coastal fishermen in Norway. They are totally marginalized by the industrial fleet and bureaucrats and the Government. All the participants in the team were unanimous in seeing the relevance of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish workers for the protection of the traditional fishing communities, inshore waters, fish resources and supply of protein food to the consumers. They also proposed to have a similar exchange in Kerala for bringing together all the trade unions and to bring about a united front for the protection of the fishing community and the resources.

*Question for discussion: What lessons can we draw from such exchanges?*

#### WORLD FISHERIES DAY:

We had a massive campaign all over India concerning the fishing community rights over water bodies and fishing implements. Originally it was decided to observe the day as a fishing holiday like last year and "SAVE CHILIKA" to be the most important focal point together with pressing for other demands and highlighting issues like overcapacity. But due to the unprecedented super cyclone that devastated 12 districts of Orissa and part of West Bengal coast and took away thousands of lives, we had to change our decision. Instead of fishing holiday the day was observed as a solidarity day with the victims of cyclone. Other agenda remain intact.

Though Thomas Kocherry, R.K.Patil, N.D. Koli and others from the NFF supported the fishing community in Umbergaon, it seems that there are differences of opinion in Gujarat. It is important that we should discuss this matter to clarify the NFF Stand

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In Chilika inspite of the grim situation caused by the super cyclone the Chilika Matsyajibi Mahasangha decided to go ahead with the World Fisheries Day program. This was a very bold and courageous decision in the context of such an unthinkable calamity. This was the very first social action by the people in the state after the cyclone. Of course the CMM had to redraft the program and cut it short in many ways. There was a massive rally and public meeting at Bhusandapur (in Chilika) where fisher people reiterated their right over the lake. It was preceded by ceremonial hoisting of National and Organizational flags, placing homage to the martyrs and followed by cultural function. WFF Co-ordinator and NFF Chairperson participated in this program and addressed the public meeting.

In Maharashtra, fishermen moored a flotilla of small fishing boats in the harbor at the sea front of the Gateway of India. The Green Peace activists joined forces with the fisher people and participated in demonstration and rally at the Gateway of India where they expressed solidarity with the cyclone victims, extended support to the Chilika struggle and asserted other demands including community ownership of fisheries and implements.

There was a pledge taking in Madhya Pradesh for establishing the rights of the fisher people over the 22 dams in the state. In West Bengal, the biggest rally was in Contai where the state Fisheries Minister addressed the public and supported the demands of the fisher people. Similar programs were held in different parts of the country.

In the International scene, there were very big get together of regional countries in South Africa, in Europe and South America. We have to continue our campaign, particularly against overcapacity and for our right over the water bodies and fishing implements.

*Question for discussion: (1) In what creative way can we continue the political campaign all over India concerning ownership over waterbodies and fishing implements? (2) Should we continue to declare November 21 as fishing holiday every year?*

#### WFF COORDINATION COMMITTEE:

The WFF CC meeting was held in Half Moon bay, Pt Montara Lighthouse Youth Hostel, California, USAA from October 4<sup>th</sup> to October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1999. Major agenda of the CC meeting was the draft constitution. A copy of the agreed constitution is enclosed for our discussion and comments. The major discussion was the representation of member organizations of WFF to the next constituent Assembly due for 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> October 2000, in Loctudy, a fishing village in France. The NFF has the right to send 3 delegates out of whom one should be a woman. We have to decided upon these 3 delegates who will have the right to vote in the WFF General Assembly. We are free to send any number of " auditors" as observers without the right of vote but with full right to participate in discussions and deliberations. However these auditors have to be proposed to the coordination committee of WFF and we have to obtain concurrence from them. We also have to raise funds for their travel.

Thomas Kocherry and Harekrishna Debnath traveled to many of the fishing communities in the Untied States. It was very much noticeable that the coastal fishing communities all over United States are the worst victims of globalisation and they are almost displaced by the industrial fleet. The WFF is the only hope for these fishing communities.

*The agenda for discussion:*

- 1) *Who are the delegates to represent NFF and India to the WFF General Assembly ?*
- 2) *What are the comments we have to make on the proposed (draft) constitution of WFF.*

#### NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PEOPLES MOVEMENTS

As the National Coordinator of the NAPM, Thomas Kocherry had an important role to play. NAPM made its impact in the Indian political scene through the historic struggle of NBA. It not only highlighted the alternative political and development paradigms but also made its impact in the national and international scene. The NFF has fully participated in the campaign in the Narmada Valley, Rally for the Valley and the Delhi March. NFF participated in international struggle by sending Philomine Marie and R.K. Patil for campaign in Europe for a month against Multinational companies and WTO organized by Peoples Global Action. NFF also participated in the Peoples Global Action international meet at Bangalore in August '99. Thomas Kocherry and Harekrishna Debnath participated in various programs including press conference and public meetings in the United States voicing fisherpeoples protest against the WTO. (Annexures...2 & 3)

#### NATIONAL CENTER FOR LABOUR:

The National Centre for Labour continued its campaign for minimum wages all over the country. NCL is going to shift its office from Bangalore to Mumbai. NCL is planning its second national meet for the election of conveners and executive committee in January 2000. However we have miserably failed in giving the membership of each state level union. SEWA Gujrath has given certificate of about 3 lakhs membership and there is about 4 lakhs membership of AP Agricultural workers Union. NFF was not able to give certificates of Membership to NCL. Unless we give certificates it is difficult to get membership in Indian Labour Conference and our participation in NCL becomes nominal. Once again we request you humbly to get the accounts and membership of your unions audited and to submit it to NFF Office Secretary.

*Agenda for discussion: (1) When are we going to get the audited statement to the office secretary of NFF? (2) When are the Maharashtra and Gujrath Union going to be registered?*

#### ISA NET:

Industrial Shrimp Action Network (ISA NET) is an international body fighting against industrial shrimp aquaculture all over the world. They have supported the Chilika Struggle actively and campaigned internationally for the right of the fishing community in Chilika. They supported NFF stand on Aquaculture. They have requested the NFF to join in the network.

*Agenda for discussion: What about NFF joining in the ISA NET?*

## FUNDING:

The NFF has been supported by the fishermen and women, friends and benefactors in various states. Suddenly there is a short coming of the funding. The NFF is facing real financial shortage. We have to do something.

However it is important to mention here that the Sophie Prize Money of US \$50,000/- is given by Thomas Kocherry for various activities of WFF, NAPM and NFF. He has received the award for his involvement in the WFF, NAPM and NFF. He has applied for a prior permission for bringing this money to a trust called the TANIMA. He is going to invest the entire amount to the trust Fund and the interest will be given to the different needs of WFF, NAPM and NFF. A committee is constituted for disbursing the money to various needs.

The Committee is

1) Thomas Kocherry (2) Harekrishna Debnath (3) General Secretary of NFF (4) President of KSMTF (5) Vice President KSMTF (6) Secretary KSMTF (7) Jaya Gopal (8) Latha Raman (9) Lal Koiparambil (10) Pushpi John.

However there is a need for collecting funds for the running of NFF every year. We would like to propose collection of funds in the light of Kerala experiment where the culture of fishing communities is presented to different schools and institutions by which we project the community culture and also raise funds.

*Agenda for discussion: If it is agreeable we should plan for each state for fund raising.*

## CONCLUSION:

1999 will be remembered for a long time in future for the staggering loss of lives and property due to the two consecutive cyclones on October 17<sup>th</sup> and 29/30<sup>th</sup> in Orissa and the untold miseries inflicted upon the survivors by the catastrophe. We condole the death of the victims and once again express our solidarity with the survivors of this calamity. Let us renew our vow to protect the coastal zone to protect ourselves and minimize the threat of such catastrophes.

We take this opportunity to thank each and everyone for building up our organization. In particular we join in solidarity with the four martyred fishworkers in Chilika whose souls and blood are crying for our support, action and carrying on the struggles. Let us take an unanimous stand to carry forward our struggles for the protection of our communities and resources.

**R. K. Patil**  
(General Secretary)

**Harekrishna Debnath**  
(Chairperson)

ANNEX.....1

By registered post No. 21005/1/99 – FY (ind) Government of India  
Ministry of Agriculture  
(Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying)  
Krishi Bhavan,  
New Delhi.  
Dated the 14<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1999

To

Shri Rambhau K. Patil,  
General Secretary,  
National Fishworkers Forum,  
183-C veer Savarkar Marg  
Shelar Bhuvan,  
New Mangel Wadi,  
Mahim Mumbai- 400016

**Subject: Deep Sea Fishing by Vessels under Joint Venture  
and Leasing- regarding.**

Sir,

I am directed to refer to this Ministry's letter of even number dated 22.07.1999 and your letter dated 20.07.99 on the above mentioned subject and to enclose herewith a revised list of companies who were operating their deep sea fishing vessels as on 28.2.1999 in Indian Waters under Joint Venture/ Leasing for your information.

Encl:- As above.

Yours faithfully

Sd.  
(J. P. S. Maehrotra)  
Deputy Commissioner (Fisheries)



JOINT VENTURE NOS. OF VALID APPROVALS AND VESSELS IN OPERATION  
AS ON 28-02-1999

| Sl           | Company                                       | Valid approvals<br>(no of vessels) | Vessels in Operation |
|--------------|---|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1            | M/s Buoy- Dac (I) Ltd. New Delhi              | 1                                  | Nil                  |
| 2            | M/s New Oriental Trawlers Pvt. Ltd Hyderabad  | 3                                  | 3                    |
| 3            | M/s Fortune Oceanic Products Ltd. New Delhi   | 2                                  | Nil                  |
| 4            | M/s Indamar Fisheries Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi     | 2                                  | 2                    |
| 5            | M/s Leo Suizind Fisheries Ltd. New Delhi      | 4                                  | Nil                  |
| 6            | M/s Ting Tai India Ltd. Vishakapatnam,        | 2                                  | 2                    |
| 7            | M/s Green Wave Marine Harvest Ltd. Hyderabad  | 1                                  | Nil                  |
| 8            | M/s Marine Resources International. New Delhi | 2                                  | 2                    |
| 9            | M/s Inchita Fisheries (P) Ltd. Madras         | 6                                  | Nil                  |
| 10           | M/s Dragon Fisheries Ltd. New Delhi           | 8                                  | 8                    |
| 11           | M/s Fishing Falcons Pvt. Ltd Hyderabad        | 2                                  | Nil                  |
| 12           | M/s Inko Fisheries Pvt. Ltd                   | 2                                  | 2                    |
| 13           | M/s Swan Fisheries, New Delhi                 | 4                                  | Nil                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |   | <b>39</b>                          | <b>19</b>            |

LEASING NOS OF VALID PERMIT & VESSELS IN OPERATION  
AS ON 28-2-1999

|              |   |           |           |
|--------------|---|-----------|-----------|
| 1            | M/s Port Blair Manish- A- Trading Co. Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi | 10        | Nil       |
| 2            | M/s Srikumaram Fisheries, Chennai                         | 4         | Nil       |
| 3            | M/s Sovin Sea Foods Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi                  | 2         | Nil       |
| 4            | M/s Adaman Marine Products Dev Co Port Blair              | 3         | Nil       |
| 5            | M/s Balaji Sea Foods Vishakapatnam                        | 2         | Nil       |
| 6            | M/s Andaman Fisheries Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi                | 3         | Nil       |
| 7            | M/s Sima Marine, New Delhi                                | 1         | Nil       |
| 8            | M/s A.K. International, New Delhi                         | 5         | 5         |
| 9            | M/s Moon Marine India, Chennai                            | 37        | 12        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |   | <b>37</b> | <b>12</b> |

**STATEMENT OF FATEHR THOMAS KOCHERRY AND HAREKRISHNA  
DEBNATH LEADERS OF THE FISHERPEOPLE OF INDIA**

**October 13, 1999  
Seattle, Washington**

The World Trade Organisation is nothing but a continuation of colonialism that exploits the life resources and displaces people. The WTO is an expression of globalisation side by side with the marginalisation of the vast majority of the people. The WTO is an expression of accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few while the vast majority is in pauperization.

Industrial fishing fleets are dominating the world's fisheries at the expense of the vast majority of the fishing communities. The industrial fleets are destroying the fishing grounds, depleting fish populations, and displacing fishing communities all over the world. In addition, these industrial fleets are involved in catching small fish- such as heiring and anchovies often used by traditional coastal communities around the world- to be converted as fishmeal for shrimp and salmon aquaculture. Some figures show that as much as 14 pounds of fresh fish caught by industrial fleet is required to produce one pound of farm raised salmon. This is a total denial of food for the poorer people in the world. Seventy five percent of the fishing grounds are already depleted through industrial over fishing and destructive fishing practices. Seventy five of the fishing grounds are on the verger of collapse because of the industrial pollution and industrial aqua culture. All these are encouraged by the open door policy of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund(IMF) and the WTO who present these policies as absolutes and inevitable in order to force everyone to fall in line.

It is in this context that fisherpeople all over the world have come together under the banner of World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers to challenge this kind of globalisation and marginalisation. We are on a big campaign centered around the World Fisheries Day on November 21 so that we can recapture the waterbodies, the fishing implements, and the distribution of fish resources all over the world. This is the only way we can sustain the fish resources, sustain the fishing communities, and supply protein to the masses all over the world for many generations to come.

We are in a campaign all over the world- particularly in the USA- to encourage the mobilization of the people to protest against the WTO particularly on the 30<sup>th</sup> November when the ministers are assembling for the new negotiations.

We are in solidarity with all the struggling and working people of the world. We are saying no to the WTO. We have to put an end to this madness that the UN, ILO, UNESCO, WHO an other such bodies are revived so the world can survive. The greed of a few should not destroy the vast majority of the people in the world and the environment. Let the countirs who accumulated wealth, World Bank, IMF redeem the indebtness of the vast majority of the countries in the world, in a time we are going to celebrate Jubilee Year 2000. We should not allow the greed of the multinational companies through the WTO to destroy the whole world.

Sd.  
**THOMAS KOCHERRY**

Sd.  
**HAREKRISHNA DEBNATH**

**Statement of Father Thomas Kocherry**  
**Coordinator of the World Forum of Fish Harvestes and Fishworkers**  
**And**  
**Harekrishna Debnath**  
**Chairperson of National Fishworkers Forum of India**

**October 18, 1999,**  
**Washington DC**

The fisher people of the World reject the World Trade Organization (WTO) and do not support or agree with - the forthcoming WTO Ministerial meeting in Seattle in December 1999.

During this tour of the Unites States and Canada, we intend to expose the WTO, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund and the actions they have undertaken in the name of "globalisation". Globalisation and marginalisation go side by side. These organizations have replaced the United Nations and have been reduced to the machinations of the multi national and trans national corporations (MNCas & TNCs). These world organizations are controlled by the corporate world. Movement of capital and profit are their only; motive. They are not interested in the food security, education, health, and shelter of the vast majority of the world.

In the world of fisheries, our seas are opened up to these MNCs and TNC's. With their industrial fleets, they have swept the oceans, destroyed fishing grounds, and displaced fishing communities who depend on the ocean for their livelihood. The industrial fleets owned by these MNC's and TNC's have been catching low value species such as herring, anchovies an sardines – the poor people's food – to convert into fish meal in order to produce shrimp and salmon through industrial aquaculture which pollutes water bodies and drinking water, displaces millions of fisherpeople, and destroys mangroves.

The WTO ministerial negotiations are going to take up fisheries agreements and subsidies. We reject any agreements and oppose giving subsidies to these big companies and their fleets. Subsidies and other forms of assistance should protect small fishing fleets, traditional and artisanal fishing communities in order to ensure the sustainable fisheries of the world.

The World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF) is an international body campaigning for the protection of the resources of the oceans and the fishing communities that depend on fishing for their livelihood. Every year, particularly on World Fisheries Day, which is celebrated on November 21, we campaign that the fishing communities that depend on fishing for their livelihood should own the water bodies, seas, rivers, lakes, and fishing implements. They should market their own catch. This is the only way we can have sustainable fisheries and fresh fish for the consumers.

Therefore we request that people of good will join us and resist the WTO and bring about a shift in the current paradigm in order to ensure sustainable fisheries, the conservation of the fish resources, and guarantee fresh and cheap fish to all people in the world.

Sd.  
**THOMAS KOCHERRY**

Sd.  
**HAREKRISHNA DEBNATH**



**REPORTS FROM THE STATES**

# DAKSHINBANGA MATSYAJIBI FORUM (DMF)

## ANNUAL REPORT :- 1999

### INTRODUCTION:

1998-99 was very significant to Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum for a number of events. This year we experienced the success of our long struggle for implementation of Marine Fishing Regulation Act and Savings cum Relief Scheme in West Bengal. On the other hand the severe wrath of nature took away lives and destroyed invaluable properties.

The fisheries scenario in the state project a grim picture. Fishing efforts were disrupted by whim of nature almost throughout the whole fishing season. Motorised gill-netters experienced sharp depletion catch since the winter of 1998. A moderate estimation shows that only 5% of the big gill-netters made marginal profit, another 20% succeeded to meet the operational expenses and the rest suffered loss of varying degree.

According to the reports of the wholesale markets the total catch was at least 30% less than the previous year. The small fixed bagnet fishermen producing dry fish had a peculiar experience. They got only minimum amount of their prime conventional target species like Ribbon fish, Bombay duck, Anchovies, Sadapata, Lalpata, Tabra and Promfret. Instead they got a supper bumper catch of tiny shrimp, locally called GOGUA the lowest grade to catch. Such huge quantity of this species was never caught before. But this phenomenal catch of 'GOGUA' gave more trouble than profit mainly because of large scale rotting of catch due to untimely rainfall and also for very low prices due to over production.

As per the assurances of the West Bengal Minister of Fisheries Sri Kiranmay Nanda, given during our indefinite dharna in July 1998, Saving cum relief scheme has been introduced in West Bengal. In the current financial year a total number 5000 beneficiaries have been covered by the scheme which includes both women and men fish-workers. Most of our organizational activities in 1999 were concentrated on the implementation of the scheme. The major task was identifying the prospective beneficiaries and processing their cases like obtaining identity cards as fish workers, certificates of the panchayat whether the applicant is below poverty line or not, obtaining sanction from the respective fisheries officials and finally monitoring and facilitating the timely deposit of the workers share in the prescribed manner etc. This being the initial year of implementation of the scheme in the state we had to cope up with the challenge of setting a procedure in collaboration with various departments.

We succeeded in obtaining sanction for 3630 cases including 475 women in Midnapur district alone. The scheme was formally inaugurated in a public function at Dadanpatrabar on 16<sup>th</sup> July 99. NFF Chairperson handed over Rs 40000/- to the officials as a part of the workers contribution to mark the beginning of the scheme. The reimbursement will be formally inaugurated by the Fisheries Minister in Contai on 6<sup>th</sup> December 99.

We demanded to increase both the amount of money and number of beneficiaries and to extend the scheme to the Inland sector as well.

## MARINE FISHING REGULATION ACT

After all these years of pursuation the Marine Fishing Regulation Act has come into force in the state on and from 8<sup>th</sup> March 1999, by notification No. 461/Fish/c-v-1A-2/90. The salient features are: -

- i. Compulsory registration of all fishing crafts.
- ii. Compulsory fishing licenses for all fishing crafts
- iii. Compulsory insurance for all sea going Fishworkers
- iv. Ban on mosquito nets in the sea, creeks, and rivers
- v. Reservation upto a distance of 15 kms for non motorized and motorized crafts upto 30 H.P
- vi. Closed season from March to June
- vii. Compulsory insurance for all mechanized crafts

The provisions are not fully in accordance with our agreements and demand. We have objections particularly on the blanket closing of season and its timing and absence of any specified restriction for trawling and failure of the Government to ban trawling during the monsoon months. We represented our grievances and demands to the Ministry.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES OF DMF IN 1999:-

As per the decision of the NFF General Body 1998 we had the first meeting with Ganga Mukti Andolan leaders and Indian Association on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1998 at Diamond harbor. It was decided to organize a workshop in Calcutta on the Farakva issue. As a follow up of our discussion to workout a common strategy with Ganga Mukti Andolan, DMF leaders traveled to Bihar, Maldah, Sonapur, Bhagulpur and other places several times. Shri Hiralal Das Ray, Sri Nirmalundu Das, and Manisha Banarjee participated in a number of programs of the Ganga Fisher people. We initiated a study on the fisherpeople of the Ganges. Ms Manisha Banerjee has been given responsibility to conduct the study.

The workshop on the Farakka issue was organized in Calcutta on 18<sup>th</sup> April 99

Indian Association was the main host where they contributed towards the expenses of the workshops and participated in a big way. Shri Thomas Kocherry inaugurated the programs of the day. Representatives from Bihar, UP, Assam and West Bengal took part in the workshops.

In the Annual Conference of the Midnapore district Mahila Matsyajibi Kalyan Samity ( the women front of the Union) was held at Dadanpatrabar on 24<sup>th</sup> January 99

It was a grand occasion where about 500 women participated. NFF Chairperson was the chief guest. It was very well organised with materials support and full collaboration of the DMF rank and file. A new committee was elected.

The Kantai Mahakuma Khoti Matsyajibi Unnayan Samiti had its Annual General Body meeting at Gopalpur, a fishing village on 6<sup>th</sup> February 99, Shri Thomas Kocherry and Sri Harekrishna Debnath were guest of honor. A new committee was elected.

The Jaldah-Tajpur Matsyajibi Samiti organised a workers meet on 7<sup>th</sup> February where Sri Thomas Kocherry & Shri Harekrishna Debnath were the main speakers. Shri. Bhaku Chasan Dhara presided over the meeting. DMF Chairperson and Sri Amulya Kumar Bar, District president, Sri Krishna Das and NFF EC member Ms. Sita Kaur also addressed the meet.

In compliance of the NFF General Body decision a meeting of the different state level leaders was held in Diamond Harbour on 19<sup>th</sup> April '99.

The main agenda was to finalize the preparations for the All India Strike on 10<sup>th</sup> May. Shri Thomas Kocherry, Shri Harekrishna Debnath, Shri Anil Prakash, Shri K. Aleya, Shri Gopinath Das, Smt. Sita Kaur, Shri Amulya Kumar Bar, Shri Santhosh Das and other leaders of DMF and SSMSU & GMA attended the meeting.

Annual General body of DMF was held in Diamond Harbor on 19<sup>th</sup> April '99 WFF Coordinator Shri Thomas Kocherry and NFF secretary Shri Anil Prakash were present during the proceedings. A new executive committee of the DMF was elected with Shri Amulya Kumar Bar and Shri Shyamal Mondel as Chairperson and General Secretary respectively.

On 20<sup>th</sup> April '99, WFF Coordinator Thomas Kocherry and NFF Chairperson visited Jmmudip accompanied by a team of DMF leaders and Jammudwip dry fish producers' Association leaders. Jammudwip is an offshore island off sagar island and at a distance of about 6 kms from Frazergonj. This island is about 5 km long and 1.5 kms wide in the Bay of Bengal. There is a channel right through the island which provides excellent landing facility for the fisher boats. The fisher people engaged in the production of dry fish have been using this island as a temporary transit and fishing village from the months of October to the next February every season, at least for last 50 years. There are records of payments of taxes and other form of revenue for permits form the forest department since 1973. This was the year when the sundarbans Biosphere Reserve was created and this island was brought under forest department. Earlier there was no permanent habitation in the island. At present there are 117 families living on the northern part of the island in a cluster. Where as the fisherpeople uses the southern part for their operations eg. Fish landing, drying, temporary living etc. More than 10,000 fishworkers are engaged in this place every season- a good number of them is shore based women Fishworkers. Another 2 / 3 thousand people are engaged in various ancillary works. In 1998 the forest department declined to permit the fisher people to operate from Jammu island quoting the Environment Protection Act and Forest Act. This means total displacement of a large number of fisher people from their livelihood & a blatant denial of their right to customary use of the place. The leaders of the community approached NFF for intervention. This visit was organised in this context.

A huge public protest was organized on 21<sup>st</sup> April '99 in kakdwip town. More than 10,000 fisherpeople assembled. The public meeting was presided over by Santhosh Das, Chairperson of SSMSU. WFF Coordinator, NFF Chairperson, DMF Chairperson and many other leaders addressed. The entire community took a firm pledge to continue to struggle for the protection of their right to pursue the traditional livelihood. A deputation was led to the SDO, Kakdwip and memoranda were given to the DM and to the conservator of forest.

This year the dry fish season has been delayed by continuous rainfall and by consecutive cyclones in October. Fishermen have just started moving to the island. Tension and uncertainty is prevailing regarding the stand of the forest department.

All India fisheries strike was observed on 10<sup>th</sup> May. There was a mass rally and demonstration in Contai. Memoranda were submitted to the SDO and the Assistant Director of Fisheries. Similar deputation were also led and memoranda submitted in Kakdwip and Diamond Harbor to the respective administrative authorities.

DMF lead a march in Contai on 2<sup>nd</sup> July in support of the Chilika struggle and a memorandum was sent to the Chief Minister of Orissa.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> July 99 DMF participated in the Day-long Dharna in Calcutta organised by NAPM in support of the Narmada Struggle.

A formal inauguration ceremony of the saving cum relief scheme was organised at Dadanpatrabar on 16<sup>th</sup> July. NFF Chairperson, DMF Chairperson, fisheries officials & panchayat leaders were present.

To express our solidarity with the Chilika fisherpeople we participated in the NFF Chilika march from 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> August '99.

The super cyclone of 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October '99 caused unthinkable damage to the Orissa coast. It affected the adjacent Midnapore coast of West Bengal substantially. Many boats were sunk, nets lost and all the 26 transitory fishing villages along the Contai coast were seriously damaged. We lost 23 fishermen of Jaldah, 23 fishermen of South 24 Parganas and 2 of North 24 Parganas at sea.

A good number of fishermen go to Paradip, Dharma and other areas of Orissa from West Bengal every year. After the cyclone, 270 of them have not returned till date and probably will never return. DMF LEAD A SEARCHING TEAM JUST AFTER THE CYCLONE TOGETHER WITH the kinsmen of the victims. DMF leaders visited the affected villages of Contai Coast. We made an assessment of the damage and represented our demands for cyclone relief for the affected people.

#### **PROTEST RALLIES AGAINST THE BRUTAL ATTACK ON NFF CHAIRPERSON**

NFF Chairperson Shri Harekrishna Debnath was brutally attacked by a group of mafias on 6<sup>th</sup> July '99 at midnight at his residence just after his return from Orissa leading the Chilika Bachavo Andolan there.

Protest rallies against this nefarious act on the NFF Chairperson were launched at Conai and Diamond Harbor on the 8<sup>th</sup> July. Memorandum was sent to the Chief Minister, Home Minister, Fisheries Minister of West Bengal for immediate arrest of the culprits and for taking necessary security measure for him. Fishery minister intervened in the matter, latter on some miscreants were arrested.

Nov 21 was observed in West Bengal as solidarity day with the cyclone victims of Orissa and West Bengal. The World Fisheries Day programme included ceremonial plantation of mangrove in our villages. National and organisational flags were hoisted in all the offices of fishermen's organisations in all the places. Our demands were printed on posters and leaflets.

- ✓ i. Ban factory trawlers and other destructive fishing practices
- ii. With draw Aquaculture Authority Bill
- ✓ iii. Stop industrial pollution
- ✓ iv. Save Chilika- Save fishing community
- ✓ v. Protect fish resources- protect fishing community.
- ✓ vi. Ensure fishing community rights on fisheries and fishing implements.



The main assembly of the World Fisheries Day was held in Contai town in the afternoon. Five thousand Fishworkers participated in the assembly. West Bengal Fisheries Minister Sri Kiranmay Nanda addressed the gathering and extended his moral support for our demands. The best girl and boy students of the fishing community was awarded prizes (of merit). This year the World Fisheries Day honor was bestowed up on Shri Nirmalendu Das for his services to the community. The citation conferred to him was proclaimed by the Minister in the public meeting. The program ended with a cultural function.

We are very happy to inform that a new union of the coastal fish vendors has been registered in West Bengal. This union is working in close cooperation with DMF.

Our member Smt. Minakshi Manna went to Norway in September as member of the NFF delegation to that country. We take this opportunity to thank NFF for the selection of Minakshi. Also we thank BENFISH for their financial support towards her passage money. Her trip to Norway generated a lot of public interest and the news was covered by the printed and electronic media.

It is very sad to note that DMF Tridib Roy has been totally injured in a serious road accident while traveling by car on his duty as journalist on 15<sup>th</sup> September with 4 others. One of them died in the hospital. Shri Tridab Ray is straggling with multiple fractures of he spine, thai, femur, and ribs. We wish him an early recovery.

We like to inform that our members are reporting fresh arrival of foreign fishing vessels in the sand head region and off Sundarbans. These are bottom trawlers and purse-seiners. We are apprehensive of the return of those atrocious days, which we experienced few years back.

#### FUTURE PLANS

- i. We plan to take up elaborate programme to sensitize the fisher folk for proper implementation of Marine Fishing Regulation Act.
- ii. To organise struggle for increasing the number of beneficiaries under Savings cum Relief Scheme.
- iii. To build up movement for establishing fisher peoples right on water odies and imple-ments.
- iv. To work for the protection of the coastal zone
- v. To intensify the struggle for a comprehensive fisheries policy.

**Shysmal Kumar Mondal**  
(General Secretary)

**Amulya Kumar Bar**  
(Chairperson)

# GUJARAT FISH WORKERS FORUM

## ANNUAL REPORT 1999

I am very happy to present the report of the Gujarat state level fisheries before the annual general body meeting.

I request you to comment on the report and give suggestions.

Gujarat state has a coast line of 1600 kms. There are 7 lakhs of marine fishermen and an equal number of Inland fishermen. The total population is 4 crores and 13 lakhs. 73 rivers and riverlets merge into the sea of Gujarat. There are 41 major and minor and Intermediate ports and more than 120 fish landing centres. Most of the ports are connected with fish marketing places and accessible to town and villages by road and railways.

Fishing and exporting of fish are the main occupation. Last three years the catch has decreased by 40%. Total catch during the last year was 7.15 lakh tons.

Geographically Gujarat has a Gulf of Kutch and Gulf of Khambhat, both are important places for breeding for the fish. Gulf of Kutch is one of the best fishing grounds of Gujarat.

The total landing of fish per day is worth more than 1 crore. This is used locally and exported to other countries. Gujarat earns foreign exchange worth of Rs 350 to 450 crores per year.

The operation of the teshil vessels are increasing day by day. It is very dangerous and we have to stop this. Since people do not recognise the danger, the government has to put a stop to these new vessels.

Parivarthan Sureksha Samithi had called a conference at Baroda and also another meeting on 20.01.99 at Gujarat Pollution Control Central Office at Gandhi Nagar.

Dr. Kiran Bedi vs UBI & GRS pending before the honourable Supreme Court order dated 18-12-98 We decided to contact the authorities in the state of Gujarat, to devise the way & means for the improvement of the condition around the Gandhi Memorial and also to make appropriate suggestion before the court the central pollutions control board has to deal with the following aspects in the report.

1. Whether any fish drying activity is being carried on the area (including plots) surrounding the memorial as also the overall sanitary condition.
2. The condition of the road leading to the memorial.
3. Specific distances from the Memorial to the land or plots on which the fish drying activities are being carried out.
4. The hygienic conditions around the memorial and indicating the

landing site for the fishing vessels including the distances from the landing sites from the Memorial.

5. The submit suggestion in consultation with the Gujrat Maritime Board, whether the fish landing sites can be shifted to a distance of 3 Km, at least from the memorial and suggest proposal for shifted of fish drying activities on 24-11-99 on South Gujarat pollution participate in the conference

In connection with Supreme court decision the central team of pollution control board visited Gandhi Nagar on 8.02.1999. Premji Bhai Khokhari attended the meeting and spoke for the fishermen.

One team of NFF visited Mandavi on 14.02.1999 and realised the problem of the Fishermen. It is advisable to study Mandra port, a private port under construction. The sea at Kutch coast is one of the best fishing ground in Gujarat as well as South Asia.

## ENVIRONMENT

Last 50 years environment is polluted to a great extend. They have created problems to human life. More Industries are established in the coast of Gujarat. The waste is thrown into the sea. The fish die and the health of the people are affected. The fishermen have no earnings and they are put out of employment.

In this pitiable condition, the fishermen have to fight for their livelihood. People have lost their trust in the government. The pollution control board have to trust in the people and work with them. In Valsad the Dehri dam people are living in miserable condition and it may cause the people to vacate the place.

The Gujarat Govt. have high expectations for development. They are providing 10,000 crores of rupees for developing facilities for the port. They are also spending for the development of industries, Rs 10,000 crore for Hazira Industry, Rs 15,000 crores for Vagara, Rs 20,000 crore for poparave and Jamnagar. New privately owned ports are established. The govt. have given help of those establishments as relief.

60 to 70% Chemical Industries have been established at the coastal area and pollution of the sea is on the increase. Gulf of Khambhat, Gulf of Kutch and the entire Saurashtra sea are completely used for fishing by the fishermen.

Natural resources have to be sustained for the livelihood of the the fishermen and should not be destroyed in the name of development.

A study tour was organised and a team of nine people started from porbandar to Kanyakumari. The objective of the tour was to study the fisheries life in other states, fishing skills, and techniques, landing facilities, various type of nets used, rate of catch etc. Premjibhai Kokari was the leader.

Ramji Damji, Aravind Panjari, Devaji P posteria, Suresh Marjai Shial, Manish Kanjiugi Giga Hoder, and Nareshi were in the team. The first halt was in Mumbai. While we were in Mumbai a telephone call came for Premjibai to attend a workshop of the National Committee for Labor Rights organised by CEC. Premjibai participated and suggested that fishermen should be included in the unorganised labour and marine boundary between India and Pakistan should be safe guarded and security agency should take the responsibility. In Mumbai the team visited Colaba, Millet bunde, to learn about the sale of fish catch.

From 17.03 to 2.04.99 the team visited South India under the banner of National Fishworkers Forum. In the Trivandrum the office staff welcomed the team. Mr. T. Peter the state president of KSMTF came with us to visit the fishing villages. In the villages we discussed with the Fishworkers the various techniques used for fishing, the mode of pricing and the details of the catch etc.

From Trivandrum the team went to Rameshwaram, a religious place in South India. The condition of the fishermen there is worse. The difficulties they face like the decrease in the fish resources, invasion of the big trawlers, and other difficulties were discussed with them.

On 21<sup>st</sup> the team went to Madurai and visited the Meenakshi temple and left for Bangalore. There the team attended the two day workshop of the fishermen of Pakistan and India and the meeting put forward the following demands for consideration and action.

- 1) Fishermen are hard working people and are not smugglers or anti national people. They are poor people.
- 2) Due to exclusive economic zone restrictions both fishermen from India and Pakistan are captured by the security guard and subjected to harsh inhuman treatments. They are languishing in Indian and Pakistani Jails, where the facilities are not satisfactory.
- 3) With humanitarian gesture and in view of social justice the request is forward to give priority to this issue and deliver the fishermen from the inhuman situation in the progressive 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

On 29.03.99 the team visited Panajim Goa. There they observed the fishing activities, the co-operatives, pricing and the method of sale. Premjibai Kokri visited the Mandove Fishermen Marketing society and had discussion with Mr. Sanjay. V. Colakar.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, the team left Goa and reached Porbunder on the 4<sup>th</sup>. The conclusions of the team after the tour was that the availability of fish in the territorial waters is scarce and fishermen go out in the deep sea for fishing. Because of this the coast of operations are on the increase, it is necessary to establish pricing systems and get more price. The reality of the crisis is not recognised by the fisherpeople therefore awareness building is necessary on this issue. The middle men gets the profit and the real producer suffers. Because of the depletion it is not necessary to build more boats. This awareness has to be created in the people.

To demand the pollution control board to watch and implement the decisions of the control board. It is difficult to get advance loan for fishing boats. There is exploitation in this regard. The state and central government should do the needful for the survival of the fishermen and the fishing community.

On 18.05.99 very heavy cyclone hit the coastal areas of Saurashtra and Kutch. Boats were sent out to every corner of the sea to rescue the fishermen. About 747 have lost their lives. Some dead bodies were found on the Kutch coast like Lakenpur and few fishing trawlers were sunk into the sea.

Premjibai was constantly in touch with the coast guard. He wrote to the state and central governments for immediate relief. The Gujarat government decided to give one lakh to the dependents and eight thousand to the under age. With great difficulty and constant involvements we were able to release 109 fishermen and 17 boats on 16.7.99 from Pakistan. We pressurised the Harbour Development Authority to provide fresh water for the fishermen.

Pariyavan Surze Samiti called a meeting at Ahmedabad Gujarat Vidya Bhavan on 18.08.99. It was organised by Greenpeace. The meeting highlighted the pollution in the South Gujarat coast.

The fishermen send a memorandum to the Minister to protect the sensitive ecosystem of Kutch coastline. Under the banner of National Fishworkers Forum we organised a seminar in Porbandar. The meeting was addressed by Sures Navy Captain who explained the operation of Saraza Porbandar Naval base in Gujarat.

The fishermen of Gujarat always have high spirit. To date no fishermen was involved in any anti national activities. In the 1971 war they functioned as watchmen and guarded the coast. The brave fishermen were recruited for coast guard and other marine services.

The Gujarat Fishermen Association of Cooperative Society started the preparation for World Fisheries Day celebration well in advance. In connection with the World Fisheries Day we decided to inform all the members of the fisheries and Finance Dept. to assist to implement our demands.

#### **Demands:**

- ❖ To increase the quota of sale tax free diesel
- ❖ To provide sufficient kerosene
- ❖ All ports including the small ports should be protected
- ❖ To provide rescue facilities to save the fishermen during the rough season.

Dewali cards were sent out with request to celebrate World Fisheries Day on 21<sup>st</sup> November. The demands were printed on the cards.

On 20.10.99 NFF and Fisheries Dept jointly organise a meeting with the support of Customs, Ports and Insurance company. The Dy collector of Porbunder addressed the fishermen on " Fishing vessel insurance and crew" , Premjibai, representative from the Insurance company and Marine Dept spoke to the group. The meeting was organised at the Chamber of Commerce Hall Porbandar.

On November 21<sup>st</sup> World Fisheries Day a strike was organised at Subash Nagar fishing village of Porbandar.

**P.V.Khokhari**

# KERALA SWATHANTHRA MATSHYATHOZHILALI FEDERATION

## REPORT, 1998 DEC - 1999 NOV

At the call of NFF for an all India Fisheries Strike on 10/5/99, KSMTF declared "No Fishing" in the coastal districts of Kerala. The demands highlighted were

1. To implement Murari Committee recommendations
2. To withdraw the Aquaculture Authority Bill
3. To Ban Monsoon trawling permanently
4. To implement the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification without restrictions to build houses for the fishermen community within 50mts HTL

To create awareness among the people on these issues a rally was organised. The Dynamic Action group travelled with us with their awakening songs and Dramas. These songs and drama depicted the need for protecting the fisheries sector and fish resources for the survival of the fishermen. It was an awareness creating process for the public. The rally started from Ernakulam on 2<sup>nd</sup> and reached Thiruvananthapuram on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

On June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1999, the state committee members and the Fishworkers of the trivandrum district observed a one day fast in front of the secretariat to ban monsoon trawling permanently, but the government continues to ban trawlers yearly only that too after we declare the strike. During the year a co-ordination committee was formed including all the organisations of the traditional workers.

On Sept. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, the state council was held in Kozhikode. Before this council Jilla councils were held in all the districts and each district drafted the issues and demands affecting them and presented them at the state council. After discussions, the demands evolved in each district conventions were integrated and a state wise draft was prepared and each district was asked to discuss the same in their general body. After this common demands were drafted and was decided to declare a state wise struggle to achieve these demands. What came through all the demands were based on class, caste, gender and environmental issues.

As we establish our demand for the ownership of the water bodies and fishing implements, the convention also decided to take up issues affecting the fisheries sector and initiate new modes of struggle. It was decided that topics like Fishermen community and social uplift, women's perspective, voluntary organisations and the Federation, DPEP syllabus etc should be discussed in different groups for more clarity.

The election of the State Executive committee was done at the General Body.

### OFFICE BEARERS

|                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| T.Peter        | • President       |
| P.P.John       | General Secretary |
| P.V Pavitran   | Vice President    |
| S.James        | "                 |
| Baby Mercy     | Joint Secretary   |
| S. Moiden koya | "                 |
| P.M.Varghese   | "                 |

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John J.P (Tvp), Fr. Thomas Kocherry-(Tvp), M. Ambrose (Kollom), S. Stephen, N.Peter (Kollam), B. Victor (Kollom Inland), Rajan Lazar (Allepey Inland), T.V. Philip (Allepey Inland), K. V. Francis (Pta), Lal Koilparmbil, A.P Felex, Usha peter (Allapuzha), KV. Raphel, K. K. Bhaskaran, Mani Gopi (Ernakulam), C.K. Mustapha (Malapuram, M.P. Bhaskar (Kozhikode)

## NOV 21 WORLD FISHERIES DAY CELEBRATION

District level symposium was organised and flags were raised in all the fishing boats and cattamarans

## THERMAL PLANT IN KAYAMKULAM

KSMTF organised protest rallies and Dharna in the land and lake against the Thermal Plant. They demanded compensation and rehabilitation for the displaced people. Rajan Laser, Antony, P.P. John, T. Peter, Lal Koilparmbil and Baby Mercy gave Leadership to the struggle.

During the year memorandums were given and struggles were organised for the following

- Permit for kerosene, to increase the quantity and reduce the price
- To include women and Inland Fish workers in the Famine Cum Relief Scheme
- ✓ ➤ To ban monsoon trawling permanently
- To distribute the outstanding pension and increase the amount to Rs 300/-

When ever struggles were organised press conferences also were held to highlight the issues.

## EXPOSURE PROGRAME IN NORWAY

Lal Koilparmbil from KSMTF participated in the exposure program.

## ALAKAL

KSMTF has a fortnightly publication in Malayalam "Alakal".

## NAPM

Collaborated with in various activities during the year.

## ORISSA RELIEF FUND

Funds were collected and given to NFF Orissa Victims Fund.

T.Peter, Baby Mercy, Zeeneth, K.t. Vinent, S. James and Thomas Kocherry participated in the General Body held in West Bengal in December 1998.

During the year 9 State committee and are state council were held.

**T.Peter**  
(President)

**P.P John**  
(Gen. Secretary)

## KERALA – FISHERWOMEN'S ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD DEC 1998- NOV 1999

The major activities of KSMTF on fisherwomen's issues for the last one year were the following:

### WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS TO FISH PROCESSING PLANTS

In order to address the problems of fisher women's migrating to other states for working in fish processing/pawn peeling factories, efforts are made to mobilise migrant women so as to organise them for agitation to protect their rights and Ms Izabella Jesudas (KSMTF District Member) spearheaded the activities in this line. In this context, a group of 3 members in each district was entrusted to prepare a list of migrant women workers. In Quilon district, the list is completed, In other districts, efforts are going on. On behalf of KSMTF the Coastal Women Forum (Theera Desa Mahila Vedi) in Thiruvananthapuram associated with the Awareness program organised by the Labour Department at Thiruvananthapuram. Ms Sophy Yesudas (Convener, Theera Desa Mahila Vedi) took leadership to mobilize migrant women in Thiruvananthapuram and had discussion with Labour Department Officials

### Women's Participation in Peoples Plan Campaign (PPC)

In order to activate the decentralised planning process of three-tier Panchayat, peoples plan campaign was initiated by the state planning board. Of the 13 sectors identified for developmental activities, one is womens welfare and development. In coastal panchayats, adequate share of project fund was not evolved under the head "Womens welfare & development \". Through campaign with fisherwomen, KSMTF ensured active participation of fisherwomen in the Grama sabha (village assembly) of the panchayats for raising their issues and to suggest project proposals. Also training programmes for fisher women leaders on " Intervention / strategies on PPC, Project priorities for fisherwomen" and " Relevant Projects for Fisherwomen" were organised. As a result of constant efforts and pressurisation at different levels by KSMTF, situation has improved now. Some of the local govt. bodies (Panchayat) have implemented saving – cum- relief scheme for fisherwomen (Eg; Trivandrum Corporation) It is proposed to continue KSMTF's efforts to mobilise fisherwomen in this direction.

### UNITS OF WOMENS FISH VENDORS UNION IN LOCAL MARKETS (TRIVANDRUM)

Due to the unfair intervention by the merchants/ commission agents in local markets, the women fish vendors are subjected to exploitative practices in the local market. Neither fish stalls nor basic amenities provided in the local markets for fisherwomen, through the local government bodies collect tolls. The fisherwomen are threatened by commission agents to pay exorbitant market toll, more than what is authorized by the local bodies to collect. Male fish merchants in the local market take fish for home consumption forcefully from fish vendors. The fish baskets/ vessels of women fish vendors are often stolen by the locals. At times, the fisherwomen are allowed to vend fish only through local merchants/ commission agent. The trade union in the local markets of political parties forcefully collect contributions and festival bonus from fisherwomen. In the name of market complex proposed by local govt. bodies, women fish vendors are displaced from the local markets, thus losing their place of employment and source of income.

To protest the ill treatment of women fish vendors in the local markets and to assert their right of employment, units of women fish vendors were initiated with the leadership of Ms Sophie Yesudas (Convener, Theera Desa Mahila Vedi) or Ms Laly John (Joint convener, Theera Desa Mahila Vedi). A study entitled " A study on exploitative practices and Basic amenities in Local Markets of Trivandrum" was quite informative to organise discussion at different levels. The study findings helped to commence units of women fish vendors union in the local markets. So far units were commenced in 3 important local fish markets in Thiruvananthapuram corporation area, under the auspices of KSMTF. The Women's commission chairperson Mrs. Sugathakumari inaugurated by units of Women Fish vendors union in Local Markets. Important dignitaries spoke on the occasion include Mr. Kadakampalli Surendran MLA, Mrs Leenama Jose, Mr. T Peter, Mr. J.P John, Sr. Philomine Marie etc.



# MAHARASHTRA MACHHIMAR KRITI SAMITI (MMKS)

## ANNUAL REPORT – 1999

### FISHING SCENARIO

The fish catch during the year was poor. A large number of fishing boats had to be kept idle. We requested the state Government to declare fish famine in the year 1998-1999 on the entire coastal belt of Maharashtra by a memoranda dated 24-3-99, 6-4-99, 22-4-99, 2-7-99 and 10-9-99. In that context we also made certain demands viz. (i) grant lump sum financial assistance of Rs 2000/- per family of fishermen, after the rainy season of three months is over (ii) Stay recovery of installments of loans taken by fishermen from their cooperative fisheries societies & waive the recovery of interest on loans (iii) grant medium term production loans to defaulting fisheries societies who are unable to repay production loans taken earlier & issue suitable instructions in this regard to the concerned banks (v) review norms adopted for ascertaining fish-catch & for declaring fish famine on that basis. Unfortunately, the state government did not take cognizance of our memoranda inspite of repeated personal contacts. The current fisheries scenario continues to be the same.

### ATTACK ON SHRI HAREKRISHNA DEBNATH, CHAIRPERSON OF NFF, AT CALCUTTA ON 6<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 1999

The MMKS condemned the brutal attack on Shri Harekrishna Debnath by mafia gangs and sent letters to the prime minister and the Chief Minister of West Bengal on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1999 urging them to institute immediate inquiry into this attack and punish the culprits. At the venue of Dharna agitation organized by the Narmada Bachavo Andolan on 12<sup>th</sup> July, 1999 in Mumbai, the fishermen who participated in the agitation in large number put up banners and gave slogans condemning the heinous attack.

### ALL INDIA FISHERIES STRIKE ON 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 1999

The fisheries strike was organized by MMKS in coastal Districts of Maharashtra on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1999 in response to the call given by the NFF. Pamphlets and posters highlighting our demands were printed & circulated. A large number of fisher folk joined the strike. The strike was successful.

### SAVINGS CUM RELIEF SCHEME FOR INLAND & MARINE FISHERMEN & FISHER WOMEN

MMKS has been in constant touch with the Fisheries Department of the state government and the commissioner of fisheries impressing on them the need for implementation of this scheme of the central government. We have also addressed letters to the central government on 2-1-1999 7 30-3-1999 in this regard. The commissioner of Fisheries whom we met on 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October 1999 desired to have details regarding the expected share on implementation of the scheme. We have now supplied these details under our letter, dated 15<sup>th</sup> November 1999. We hope that the scheme will be provided for in the budget of 2000-2001.

### PORT DUES ON FISHING BOATS

In terms of the Maharashtra govt's Notification, Home Dept. IPA 1084/1960/1966TRA-4, dated 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1992, port dues are being levied on sea- going power driven & other than power

driven vessels on the specified ports taking into account their weight. MMKS has been demanding its cancellation on the grounds, inter-alia, that the provisions of the Notification are not applicable to the vessels of the traditional fishermen, since their fish-catch, besides being a perishable commodity, is not guaranteed and also the production of fish & its viability depends on a number of factors including expense, on maintenance & repairs of boats, wages of fishworkers, ban on monsoon fishing etc, apart from investment made in the purchase of vessels and the responsibility shouldered by the fishing community in providing response form the erstwhile Shiva Sena- BJP alliance Govt. The matter has been taken up with the New Democratic Front Govt. vide out letter dated 15-11-1999

#### HIKE IN DIESEL PRICE

The hike in diesel price made effective from 5<sup>th</sup> October, 1999 has adversely affected fishing operation. A delegation of leaders of fishermen called on the petroleum Minister Shri Ram Naik on 20-11-1999 at Pune and presented to him a memorandum seeking cancellation of the hike and proportionate increase in the quantum of excise duty exemption of 35 paise per liter of diesel, sanction in 1988-89, relative to the hike s made from time to time. This linkage is sought for in the case of all fishermen irrespective of whether the diesel is supplied to them by the fisheries cooperative societies or not. The Minister admitted that there is a substance in this demand. We are waiting for the central government's formal response.

#### VADHAVAN MEGA PORT PROJECT

The Democratic Front Govt. is in power in the state. Even though the Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Authority declared the VadHAVAN Mega Port as impermissible & illegal, the erst while Sena – BJP Govt. was very keen on launching on this project, it figured in the Election Manifesto of Shiva Sena. We have addressed a communication to the Chief Minister of the Democratic Front Government to cancel this project in view of the judgment of the Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Authority & make an announcement to that effect. However, the D. F Govt. is also, as revealed by the news in the press, thinking in terms of executing the project. The situation is being closely watched for adopting a suitable strategy, if need be.

#### WORLI- BANDRA SEA LINK IN MUMBAI

Under its order, dated 7<sup>th</sup> January, 1999, the Govt. of India in the Ministry of Environment & Forests gave clearance to the above project. MMKS has been opposing the sea link bridge from Nariman point to Bandra comprising four phases of the last over fifteen years in view of its disastrous effects on the marine ecology and fish resources, affecting the very means of livelihood of fishermen. The formal announcement about the clearance were made by the Govt. on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1999. The very next day we sent a letter to the then Chief Minister protesting against the project, followed by letters, dated 8<sup>th</sup> March, 7<sup>th</sup> April, 26<sup>th</sup> April, and 14<sup>th</sup> September 1999 addressed to the Govt. and other concerned authorities. None of these letters raising objections has so far evoked any response from Govt. side. A public meeting was organized by fishermen at Mahim, Mumbai on 4- 04 –1999 which was joined by the morcha of about 3000 tribals under the banner of Narmada Bachavo Andolan led by Ms Medha Patkar. Demonstrations against this project was organized by MMKS on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct. 1999 in which environmental groups also participated. A meeting was organized by MMKS and Bombay Natural History Society on 21<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1999 in which leaders of fishermen, environmentalists and researchers participated and expressed their strong opposition to the project.

On 24<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1999, a general meeting of the MMKS was held which was attended by representatives of fishermen from all coastal districts. The issue relating to the sea link bridge was discussed at length in this meeting & it was decided to take up the matter with the new democratic Front Govt. Accordingly, a letter was sent out to the new Chief Minister on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1999 registering our opposition to the project and seeking its cancellation.

While the work regarding the sea-link is under way, a large portion of about 50 acres of the Mahim creek is being reclaimed destroying the mangrove jungle. Demonstrations were organized against this blatant violation of the CRZ. On 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 1999, a mammoth morcha to the site was organized by fishermen. Dalits and environmental groups to protest against the construction of the sea-link bridge and the reclamation. Again, on 1-12-99, demonstrations were organized by fishermen.

The Govt. has been avoiding making available details about the project including the management plans inspite of repeated requests. A meeting of the leaders of the MMKS and other organizations involved in the environmental protection of the nearby Shivaji Park beach with the Chief Minister was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1999 when the Minister for PWD and officers concerned of the State Govt. were present. All the organizations registered their strong opposition to the Worli-Bandra sea-link project and the reclamation of the Mahim creek. As directed by the Chief Minister, the PWD Minister paid a visit to the site of Mahim creek on the same day to see for himself the ground realities. He is expected to submit his report to the Chief Minister soon.

#### DEFECTIVE CARGO SHIPS IN MUMBAI PORT

There are a few defective cargo ships including foreign ones abandoned in Mumbai port, They have remained there uncared for, for a long time. These defective ships pose severe environmental & health hazards apart from being hurdles in the fishing activities of the traditional fishermen. We have taken up this matter with the Mumbai port trust, Shipping Corporation of India, Coast Guard and the state commissioner of Fisheries, with a view to hasten their immediate removal from the Mumbai Port.

#### NHAVA SEA-LINK PROJECT

A public hearing was held in Mumbai on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1999 to invite suggestions and objections about this proposed project. We participated in this public hearing and demanded the relevant documents & information in respect of the project. It is reported in a section of newspapers that another public hearing is proposed to be held sometime during December 1999, with the installation of new Govt. in the state. The local fishermen will be consulted & our stand in relation to this project will be crystallized.

#### CONVERSION OF THE BATTLE SHIP "VIKRAM" INTO MARITIME MUSEUM AND STATIONING IT IN MUMBAI PORT

A proposal was mooted by the former Govt. to station the warship in Jamshetju Bunder at Mumbai. About 1000 local fishermen who have been carrying on their fishing activities in this area since pre-independence days, vehemently opposed the proposal as that would deprive them of their only means of livelihood. A token hunger strike was organized by the local Kulaba Koli Jamshetji Bachavo Kriti Samiti. Leaders of MMKS participated in this agitation & supported their stand. We also

requested the state Govt. to indicate the location where the warship would be anchored for being converted into museum in order to ensure that the interests of the local fishermen are not adversely affected. The erstwhile State Govt. was very keen on launching this project & accordingly sanctioned Rs. 5.00 crores therefore. The central Govt. has also waived the recovery of purchase price of Rs 18.00 crores from the state Govt. The newly inducted Democratic Front Govt. Chief Minister had a meeting with the local fishermen on 23-11-99 to hear their objections. The situation is being watched.

#### WORKSHOP ON OVERCAPACITY

The workshop on overcapacity could not be organized in October- November, 1999 as planned. We have approached Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Mumbai & the State Fisheries Commissioner with a request to make available status papers on the relevant subjects. The matter is being followed up by personal visits. The workshop could be organised sometime during June – July 2000.

#### AMENDMENTS TO CRZ

As advised by the NFF Chairperson, suggestions in respect of some provisions in the draft Notification dated 5<sup>th</sup> August, 1999 of the Ministry of Environment and Forest were sent to that Ministry & the National Coastal Zone Management Authority under the M. M. K. S's letters, dated 9<sup>th</sup> September 1999. We were invited to participate in the discussion arranged by the Ministry of Environment & Forests on 24-11-1999 in New Delhi. That Ministry's letter dated 16-11-99 reached us after the scheduled date for discussion.

#### WATER TRANSPORT FOR PASSENGERS

The Maharashtra Maritime Board has planned to develop water transport network for passengers along the Mumbai City's western water front from Nariman Point to Borivali. Since this plan, apart from violating the CRZ, will deprive the entire fishing community on the coastal belt of Mumbai from their only means of livelihood, we have opposed it and demanded its cancellation vide our letter, dated 25<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1999. A meeting was convened on 5-11-1999 by the port officer at Bandra to discuss this plan. Leaders of the MMKS participated in the discussion and unanimously opposed the plan. A letter was sent to the Chief Minister on 15<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1999 demanding cancellation of the water transport plan. We propose to meet the State Minister for Ports soon.

#### CHILIKA STRUGGLE

A yatra was organized in the Chilika villages by NFF during the period from 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1999 to protest against the police firing killing 4 fishermen & injuring 22 others, with the intention of suppressing the agitation of the fishermen against the capitalists who have illegally set up prawn culture gheries in the Chilika lake, with the help of mafia gangs,. During the meetings held in 15 fishing villages, the police firing was condemned and continued support of the NFF to the agitation was promised. In the yatra which was led by Chairperson & General Secretary of the NFF, five leaders of the MMKS participated.

#### SEVERE CYCLONE IN THE ARABIAN SEA

The Arabian sea was hit by a severe cyclone on 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1999. During night hours, nine fishermen on the Sai-Darshan fishing boat from Versova fishing village showed conspicuous

courage under the circumstances of very great danger to their lives and rescued the other fishing boat "Laxman" with its crew members. A proposal has been sent to the State Govt. with a request to recommend to the central govt. the award of Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak to the crew members of the Sai-Dharshan boat. The Central Govt. scheme provides for the award of Sarvottam Jeevan Taksha Padak., Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak and Jeevan Raksha Padak for conspicuous courage under the circumstances of very great danger to the life of the rescuer in saving live from drowning, fire etc, The proposal is being followed up.

#### MALVAN MARINE SANCTUARY IN SINDUDURG DIST.

It is learnt that a fresh notification about the revised plan for Malvan Marine Sanctuary was issued by Govt. on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1999 asking for suggestions and objections from the public. The Malvan Taluka Shramik Machimar Sangh has sent in its objections to the Sanctuary project under its letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1999. On 11<sup>th</sup> October 1999, Shri M.G. Gogte Chief of Wildlife Warden discussed this matter with Shri Bittu Segal & Shri. R. K. Patil, Shri Patil, latter on visited Malvan on 29 - 10 - 1999 to ascertain the views of the local leaders.

#### CRZ VIOLATIONS IN MUMBAI

A complaint was lodged with the Environmental Dept. of the State Government & Maharashtra State Coastal Zone Management Authority on 31- 07- 1999 regarding destruction of mangroves at Mahim creek by slum dwellers. A similar complaint was lodged with the Bombay Municipal Corporation on 16- 10 1999. This matter is being followed up.

The High Court of Bomaby, on a petition filed by the Bomabay Muncipal Corporation, ordered destruction of the extension carried out by the China Garden Restaurant, since it violated, among other things, the CRZ regulations. The Supreme Court also upheld the directions given by the High court. While complimenting the corporation, we have requested them to form a special squad to locate the CRZ violations.

#### DIAMOND JUBILEE FELICITATION OF SHRI BHAI BANDARKAR ON THE OCCATION OF COMPLETION OF 75 YEARS

Shri Bhai Bandarkar, the undisputed leader of fishermen in Maharashtra, was felicitated on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1999 in Versova fishing village to mark completion of 75 years of his age. The felicitatation function was presided over by great social worker, thinker and ex-member of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, Shri G.P. Pradhan. The function was attended by a large number of well-wishers throughout Maharashtra. The leaders of fishermen Shri Manik Mehar and freedom fighter The leaders of fishermen Shri Manik Mehar and freedom fighter Shri Janardan Tambe were also felicitated on this occasion on their completion of 75 years of age. Shri Narayan Patil, leader of fishermen from Arnala was also felicitated latter on 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1999, on completion of 75 years of age.

#### HISTORY OF MAHARASHTRA MACHIMAR KRITI SAMITI

As per the decision taken in the last Annual General Body Meeting of the NFF at Dadanpatrabar in West Bengal regarding the documenting the history of the NFF, necessary material and information about the MMKS in being compiled & the work is expected to be completed soon.

## REGISTRATION OF THE MAHRASHTRA MACHIMAR KRITI SAMITI

The process of registering the MMKS as a Trade Union is in progress.

## FELICITATION OF SHRI MADHU DANDAVATE ON HIS COMPLETION OF 75 YEARS OF AGE

Shri Madhu Dandavate was felicitated in Mumbai on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1999 when a large number of his well-wishers were present. Quite a sizeable number of fishermen attended the function. Shri Madhu Dandavate has been a friend, philosopher and guide of fishermen. MMKS collected funds for the function. There was good response from the fishermen to the funds collection drive. Freedom fighter Shri Janardan Tambe made special efforts to collect the funds.

## ENCROACHMENTS BY ESSEL WORLD ON THE GORAI CREEK IN MUMBAI

Encroachment has been made by Essel World by constructing a bandhara between Gorai creek road & Essel World park obstructing fishing activities of the local fishermen. The company has also destroyed the mangrove jungle by pouring chemicals. The State Govt. has allocated a large chunk of land measuring 90,000 sq. ft. in this area for construction of a pagoda. The Govt. has also allocated land for projects of Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation. Struggles for removal of these encroachments are on Gorai Bachavo Andolan Sangarsh Samithi on 7-4-1999 in which MMKS participated. Protests morchas are being organised from time to time. Public meetings were held at Gorai & Uttan on 30-4-1999 which were addressed by Sri Thomas Kocherry amongst others. A morcha was organised at Gorai on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 1999 when the demonstrators were arrested under section 144 of the IPC & latter released. MMKS participated in this agitation.

## WORKSHOP ORGANISED BY NAPM AT NAGPUR FROM 7<sup>TH</sup> TO 10 JUNE, 1999

The workshop which covered subjects viz (i) alternative politics (ii) Globalisation – principle , practicality & our approach (iii) new direction to Agriculture (iv) clashes of religions/ castes & development (v) challenges posed to women's struggles, was attended by Shri N. D. Koli & Smt. Purnima Mehar on behalf of the MMKS.

## NARMADA BACHAVO- RALLY FOR THE VALLEY

Sarvashri Rambhau Pail, N.D. Koli & Dattaram Meher participated in the rally for the valley from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1999 & supported the agitation of the Narmada Bachavo Andolan on behalf of the MMKS & NFF. A sahayog yatra was organised by the Narmada Bachavo Andolan at Azad Maidan in Mumbai on 17<sup>th</sup> Sep. 1999 MMKS participated in this yatra.

## WORLD FISHEIRES DAY

The world Fisheries Day was celebrated at Mahim in Mumbai with active collaboration with the Greenpeace. A public rally was organised which was attended by large number of fishermen and fisher women. The meeting was addressed by the leaders of the fishermen. The World Fisheries Day was celebrated as Chilika Bachavo Day. Demands were also made for withdrawal of the Aquaculture Authority bill, acceptance of fishermen's right on water bodies, fishing implements and management of sale and distribution of fish & for protection of fishing communities. Mr. Mike Hagler of Greenpeace also addressed the meeting & expressed serious concern over the wanton destruction of mangrove jungles in the Mahim creek.

**MORESHWAR PATIL**  
SECRETARY

**MOTIRAM BHAVE**  
SECRETARY

**R.K. PATIL**  
GENERAL SECRETARY

# MALVAN TALUKA SHRIMIK MACHIMAR SANGH

## REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES

### AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

An awareness campaign organised by the Sangh from Dec 17-19<sup>th</sup> 1998 against the pollution caused by effluents thrown into the sea by a thermal power plant. The campaign covered the 3 coastal districts of Maharashtra.

A meeting of the executive committee members of the Sangh with the deputy director of fisheries regarding illegal trawling by some parties in the coastal waters was held on 1<sup>st</sup> January.

The sangh helped the sagar kanya machimar society, a group of about a 100 women to establish their society that does fish drying. Also helped them solve their salt problem by representing their case before the MoEF minister Dr. Suresh Prabhu.

A Shramdhan was held on 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> January to clear and develop the land for the Rapan society members.

A meeting was held to solve a dispute between the Rapan and gillnet workers over use of land by organising a meeting with both the parties and the fisheries officer on 9<sup>th</sup> January.

On 19<sup>th</sup> January, General secretary of the NFF visited the Malwan region and discussed their problems.

On Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> I attended a meeting in the collectors office of the zilla salakan samiti regarding the existing fisheries act with specific regard to violation of CRZ regulations.

On February 12<sup>th</sup>, I attended a workshop in Bombay regarding the problems faced by fishermen in Konkan region due to tourism.

From February 15-18<sup>th</sup>, collected information from the MoEF regarding Marine sanctuary with N.D. Koli, Rambau Patil and Moreshwan Patil

On 25<sup>th</sup> March a delegation met the Chief Minister to represent our case on setting up of the Marine Sanctuary.

On 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> March, I attended the workshop in Bangalore of Indo Pak people forum and represented our concern regarding harrasement and capture of fishermen by coast guard.

On April 14<sup>th</sup>, I served the notice to the collector, Deputy director Fisheries and Mamtaldar to start hunger strike if fish drought is not declared.

On 1<sup>st</sup> May, About 300 people sat on a hunger strike to demand for declaration of fish drought

On 25<sup>th</sup> May, Met the representation of a fishermens sangh to help them against illegal trawling in the Vijayawada creek their traditional fishing waters.

On May 29<sup>th</sup> a demonstration was organised against the Minister of Fisheries with regard to their demand for declaring fish drought.

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, attended seminar in the collectors office on overfishing and fish conservation.

From June 10-14<sup>th</sup> Visited and studied the situation of the 5 villages affected by heavy dams

On 12<sup>th</sup> July, collected donations for the martyrs of Kargil War. A total of approximately 1 lakh was collected.

From July 20-23, made a representation to the chiplen Regional Officer regarding pollution by factories of the Dabol creek affecting 24 villages.

From 7-18<sup>th</sup> August, participated in the Chilika March to give support to the fishermen affected by police firing.

On Oct 15<sup>th</sup>, Refused an agreement to be signed for storage of fish and salt area with the government in Dandi as it would harm the interests of the women in the area.

On Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>, Prepared and submitted a petition in response to a government notice against the setting up of the Marine Sanctuary.

On Oct 25<sup>th</sup>, Held a meeting of executive committee members of MMKS and gave representation to Fisheries director and sanctuary regarding declaration of 'fish drought' and several other issues including banning of perenet fishing.

On Oct 29<sup>th</sup>, Attended Mela(fair) in Vijayadunga creek with 2000 fishermen in which Rambabu Patil and Gynash Dewalkar attended.

On Nov 6<sup>th</sup>, "Gherao" done of fisheries office due to harassment and loss of nets to the Mithban Devgad Taluka fishermen.

On Nov 9<sup>th</sup>, Dy Collector and Regional officer met the fishermen to give them assurance that action will be taken against illegal trawling and harassment of fishermen in Milnban Devgad Taluka.

On Nov 12<sup>th</sup>, Completed formalities of 25 forms for the Dandi women fisherfolk for possession of land for fish and salt storing.

**Ramesh Duri**  
Executive Member NFF  
President MTSMS.



# ORISSA MARINE TRADITIONAL FISHERPEOPLES UNION

## ANNUAL REPORT

I am presenting the annual report for 1999.

Orissa coast line is 460km and there are 6 coastal districts in Orissa. We have our organization in all the coastal districts in Orissa as we have reported last year.

Our major agitations were centered around

- 1) Restrict the trawlers coming from Andhra and West Bengal.
- 2) Ban Monsoon trawling for June, July, August.

We joined the struggle for Saving cum Relief scheme but it was partial and only 2000 persons benefited. The women are also included in the Savings cum Relief scheme. The coastal schemes like housing and other schemes are at present not being implemented in Orissa and we demand it be implemented immediately.

### OUR DEMANDS

The trawlers in Orissa are getting subsidized but the motorized traditional people are not getting the subsidy and we demand that the subsidy be given to the traditional sector also.

There is a provision of compulsory insurance for workers who go in the trawlers. We demand that all other fishworkers be also included in the insurance scheme.

Orissa fisherpeople are under the SC but marine fishermen who are Telugu fishermen who reside in Ganjam etc are not given the SC status. We demand that they be given SC status.

We demanded the implementation of SC Verdict on CRZ in Orissa. We demand to free Chilika from Shrimp aquaculturists who intruded into the Chilika lake.

The last meeting of the Executive Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> Nov has demanded that the Orissa Cyclone be declared as a national disaster.

We made a huge campaign in all districts with the full support of fishermen and placed the demand before the Chief Minister. The CM promised to consider our demands and take due action to solve the issues.

The CM failed to act. He had earlier promised action within a month and to convene a meeting with fishworkers and this has not been done. The fishworkers are frustrated and are in a struggle path.

We had our General Body meeting in Puri, Director General of Fisheries in Orissa came and supported our demands. We seized the assembly last year for Saving cum Relief scheme. The fisheries Minister said that they will implement the Saving cum Relief scheme and promised subsidy for the traditional fisherpeople. All these promises were not met. Only 200 persons were included last year, this year it was increased to 1000, but the promise to further increase has not been honored.

Chilika Matsyajibi Mahasangh started the Chilika agitation last year. People took direct action there. We were giving our full support to the agitation. The firing incident took place on 29<sup>th</sup> May and a big meeting was held on 31<sup>st</sup> May. We also took part in this meeting. We are having the fight

with trawlers coming from Andhra in Ganjam district. Last year we captured and 7 people including Aleya were kidnapped by the Andhra trawlers and an agreement was arrived at by the collectors of Ganjam and Vishakapattanam districts but even now trawlers are coming for fishing in the Orissa coast. We informed the same to the Govt. of Orissa and Ganjam district. The Govt. gave two patrol boats and we patrolled the coast and caught the erring trawlers. As there was no provision for safe custody of the captured trawlers one of them managed to escape in the absence of security personal.

All the leaders from fishing villages came together and they thought that there is no point in handing the boats to the department, so we did not allow the dept. officials to come near and destroyed the rest of the boats. After this incident, two of the fishing boats belonging to Kakinad region trawlers association and the owners went to see the Orissa Govt. and demanded compensation. The department said they were not aware of the incident and reiterated that if the trawlers come within 10kms of Orissa coast they will be confiscated. The Fisheries secretary from Andhra came to Orissa for an agreement and the Andhra trawlers were permitted to come to Orissa at times of natural calamity or engine failure else they are not allowed in Orissa waters.

Even after this understanding some fishing boats were found in the border and the villagers captured the boats but they were later released. The Department informed all harbors that the trawling boats are not allowed in the Orissa coast. The Collector also assured for a speed boat for vigilance in Dec 30th.

Two super cyclones hit Orissa Coast on 17<sup>th</sup> October and that affected the Ganjam dist.

Hundreds of houses were destroyed in the coastal districts. Out of 26 dist in Ganjam dist, many lost their fishing implements including boats and nets. People are starving and are completely dependent on relief. The eastern part of the Ganjam is the worst affected. Out of the 257 fibre boats operating, 27 are totally damaged and 211 partially damaged. Out of 18 beach landing fibre boats, 3 are totally destroyed and 11 partially destroyed. Wooden small boats: Totally destroyed 9, partially destroyed 400.

179 died in the Ganjam. There was high speed wind and no tidal uplift, so the damage is due to the felling of trees and collapsing of houses. 4 people were crushed to death in the house before any relief could reach the area.

The second cyclone came on Oct 30<sup>th</sup>. It was unprecedented in history, there was total damage and the Paradip area was totally destroyed. More than 10000 bodies were found dead and we cannot make a total estimate even now. 140 fishermen died, 450 others in Kendrapada died. They organized a rally to meet Chief Minister, Finance Minister demanding proper relief for the fishing community. The Govt. assured that BHEL had a program for 500 families. All the fishing villages in Ganjam district decided to boycott the general elections. The 26 villages had 34000 votes and were divided into 40 booths. Many political parties came and tried to persuade but with no success. Only 6 votes were polled in all the 40 booths. Though Janaki Patnayak wife of ex Chief Minister offered a large amount of money they, the people could not be brought over. This was the expression of the unity and the decision was strongly implemented and now the fishworkers are being taken seriously by the administration.

20 Representatives went to the Rally for the Valley and informed the narmada people about the struggle of Chilika fisherpeople and the representatives had an interaction with Medha Patkar and Arundhati Roy.

The organisation also held a protest meeting in front of the collectorite and gave petition to C.M against the attack on the Chairperson of NFF, Mr. Harekrishna Debnath.

**K. Aleya**

# SAMUDRA THEERA MATSYA KARMIKULA UNION

## REPORT

### AREA & COMMUNITY PROFILE:

Andhra Pradesh has three fishery zones and the south zone extends from Pulicat lake (Tamil Nadu border) to the Suryalanka beach in the Bapatla mandal of Guntur District. The south zone comprises of the districts of Nellore, Prakasham and part of Guntur District and has an approximately coastline of 300 kms. This zone is ecological an extension of the Madras Coast or 'Coromandel Coast' which starts from Calimere in the Tanjavur district of Tamil Nadu. It is essentially an open surf beaten coast with just few river mouths. The open beach is hospitable to almost all crafts.

While dominant fishing community in the Southern zone is the pattapu caste, who have migrated from Tamil Nadu a few centuries back, they co-exist with the Palle fishermen who have adopted many features of the Pattapu community including their fishing technology.

### PROBLEMS & ISSUES

The marine fisher folk still happens to be the exploited segments in the area. The irony of the situation is such that the fishermen go into the deep sea to catch fish, risking everything only to dispose the catch to the exploitative middlemen at abysmally low prices, which does not even ensure the fishermen a basic livelihood. The traditional fishermen have been in this line for many generations and are still below the poverty line, while the middlemen used to advance loan for the purchase of fishing crafts and gears. The crafts and gears are replaced periodically. Hence the fisherfolk are compelled to depend on some financial institutions to avail loans. It is an irony that the banking institutions are not giving loans nowadays as few fisherfolk have availed loan and not repaid the same. The cooperatives are also not having funds, as loan repayment is improper.

Due to depletion (as data show that the fish landing hit a peak in 1975 with 1.16 lakhs tonnes in A.P and then there is sharp decline) in fish resources. Utilization of hi-tech crafts and gears, seasonal profession and lack of marketing skills, and traditional fishermen fall easy prey to the shrewd money lenders/ middlemen. Due to fluctuating income and steady inevitable expenditures, they are compelled to take loan from the money lenders, both for consumption and productive purposes like purchase of nets, catamarans, etc. While paying heavy interest rates on one side they are compelled to sell the catch to these middle men at low rates.

The motorisation of traditional crafts has brought change in the fish landing but due to lack of technical know-how and lack of spare parts for the motors, the local mechanics exploit the marginal fishermen. Owing to the high debt burden and low returns of the traditional fishermen have fallen into the vicious cycle of debt-dependence-exploitation and poverty, which has brought their development to a stand still. Further adding the magnitude of the problem, the Government is not announcing the daily rates of market valuable fishes. Fishing activity is also seasonal in this area and hence the fisher folk are compelled to depend on the middlemen for lean season loans.

Even though, small quantum of fish is marketed by the women in the local markets, the income is low due to the competition among themselves and lack of organised effort. The exclusive dependence of the fishermen on the marine catch (primary produce) and the lack of alternate income among the fishing communities have increased their vulnerability to the exploitative middlemen.

The perishability of the commodity heightened in the absence of access to appropriate processing and storage techniques and the lack of alternative organised marketing channels has contributed much to their predicament, compelling them to dispose off the catch immediately, diminishing their bargaining power, disproportionately.

Despite the travails of the fishermen in profitable selling their catch there are various other externally imposed problems destroying their livelihood systems. The trawlers of the advantaged businessmen fish near the coast ( Potential Zone) frequently, destroying the nets of the traditional fishermen and dragging away even the seedlings, affecting resource renewability adversely while upsetting the marine eco balance. The main reason for trawler invasion in the coastal resource zone is due to the lack of implementation of Marine Regulation Act. The depletion of mangrove forests in the coast due to intensive shrimp culture has affected the regeneration of marine resources. Shrimp farms have also affected the marginal salt farm workers, as many salt farms are converted into shrimp ponds. Lack of environmental knowledge has resulted in the depletion of mangrove resource which has spoiled the spawning of Olive Ridley and various other flora and fauna. The coastal land, Sri Krishna boomi, even in the hands of forest department is devoid of vegetation, increasing the vulnerability of the coastal hamlets to cyclones, tidal waves, etc. Due to lack of implementation of the CRZ Bill, many shrimp ponds are constructed along the coastal belt which inturn pollutes the marine eco system. Draining of pollutants from industries has affected the regeneration of fish resources. Violation of CRZ has affected the green belt into promotion of shrimp ponds. Even though there are certain legislations for the protection of traditional fishermen like Marine Regulation Act and Aqua culture Bill, the implementation of these Acts is not effective due to lack of peoples participation at wider level.

Even though there are Government Welfare Measures for the benefit of the traditional fishermen, many of them do not have access to them.

The fishermen depend on agriculture during lean seasons and cultivate raggi and ground nut in sandy soil. For the sake of getting more profits, they use inorganic pesticides and fertilizers which has depleted the natural nutrient of the soil. Monoculture is practiced which has resulted in the decrease of soil nutrition. There is every possibility of these inorganic compounds to enter the food chain of human beings. Also these compounds enter the sea through canals and streams and in turn affects the micro organisms in the sea. Lack of knowledge on eco friendly measures has lead to destruction of coastal eco system. For the sake of timber, vast land of cassuarina near the coastal area are wiped out which has resulted in soil erosion. Usage of bore wells has resulted in depletion of underground water table and also seepage of saline water to underground water table. Lack of soil and moisture conservation techniques has added magnitude to this problem.

Even though the Government comes out with various developmental schemes, there is every possibility of diversion to other areas due to political influences. Hence these villages do lack basic needs which serve as an axe for the development of the community.

The concept of gender equity is less observed within the fisherfolk community. The women plays a major role in managing the household and the children and participating in cash income generating activities. Women are also involved as labourers in agricultural and salt farm workers. Getting drinking water and collecting firewood are crucial activities done by the fisherwomen. Women do not have much role in the village level decision making and politics. Regarding self image, most of the fisher women are not able to understand the changes in values, ideas and attitudes on gender roles, division of labour and cultural restrictions regarding mobility.

## ACTIVITIES

In the month of January 1999, a meeting was conducted on 8.01.99 for the union members at Kavali. The plans for January and February were worked out along with union representatives. It is planned to complete membership enrolment and to conduct mandal level elections for union representatives.

In the month of February 1999, a training programme on the concept of union was organised for the youth leaders of fisherfolk villages in Machilipatanam, Krishna district by the union representatives. A one day training camp was arranged in Nellore town hall by the union members to impart knowledge on mangroves. The training session started at 8.30 am. Totally there were 112 participants along with two reporters attended the training. The topics covered in the training program are

- 1) Mangroves and their importance to Marine Ecology
- 2) Mangrove propagation and Regeneration
- 3) Involving govt in Mangrove conservation (JFM) programs

The details of mangroves in different states were explained. The types of mangroves, uses of mangroves, flora and fauna, destruction of mangrove habitat, impact on marine eco systems, community participation in protection and promotion of mangroves, etc were also dealt.

On 1<sup>st</sup> of February, the Deputy Director of Fisheries visited Ongole. The union members submitted representation regarding the tax for traditional crafts, implementation of MRA and CRZ. The Deputy director told the press that the tax will be reduced and MRA and CRZ will be implemented effectively in the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh. In the month of February 1999, the mandal level federation meeting was conducted on the 6<sup>th</sup>. The union members met the leaders of the different fisher folk villages and discussed the union activities with them. The recent attempt by the A.P Govt to tax all craft and gear was the main issue raised by the leaders. The villagers expressed that registration fee was necessary as it will be a insurance for the crafts, but strongly opposed the attempt to tax the traditional occupation. Under the Government proposal even the motorised kattumaran will be taxed Rs 250/- per annum. With the declining resources the fisherfolk will be over burdened unjustly. The traditional leaders agreed to send a signed memorandum to the Chief Minister of A.P.

In the month of March 1999, with a view to conduct fresh elections of the executive body of the union and to collect membership, the union members visited different mandals of Nellore and Prakasham districts. At T.P Gudur, the mandal level meeting was organised at Venkatesapalem and representatives from 3 villages attended out of the 7 villages. There are many inter village politics which do not allow the villagers to unite. The Aqua farmers have caused the split among kothakoduru and Nadimipalem. Many attempts by the union president to bring about a compromise has ended up in futile.

In the case of Indukuripeta also the murder of 5 persons of Mupadu West has soured relations among the people of the same village. In this mandal other than Mypadu, all the remaining 7 fisherfolk villages are too small to dictate terms. The break down of the traditional kapu system as left the fisherfolk community in disarray. Even in the case of Kavali mandal the murders which occurred in Bogolu mandal and its repercussions have split the village of Kavali, with Thummalapenta going one way along with 5 villages and the other 9 pattapu villages going the other the remaining 4 pallikar villages are unconnected and remain aloof.

A meeting was arranged for madal secretaries on 30.03.1999 at the Town hall in Nellore District. Representations from many big villages did not attend the meeting. Finally a schedule for mandal level meetings was worked out and the responsibility of conducting the meeting was given to the sub committees.

On 5<sup>th</sup> April, a team was deputed by the state government to study the impact of the ship breaking yard and the team visited the area. The Deputy Director of Botanical Survey of India, Asst technical examiner of National Geographical council, Eco and water pollution control authorities and ocean zoology authority of India members visited the area as a follow up of the representation submitted to the Chief Minister by the Union members. The "Press Meet" regarding the All India Fisheries Bandh was arranged at Nellore on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 1999. Unfortunately the press did not highlight the bandh. Only the local cable T.V station gave a one minute coverage in Nellore town. The press failure led to the bandh being a very low keyed affair.

The fisher folk of Kavali enforced the bandh in the Kavali Market and the local papers reported it. In all the other villages the fisherfolk abstained from fishing. Both the bandh in Nellore and Prakasham did not have the expected impact.

The union members were involved in conducting village level meetings in the Mandals of Chinnaganjam and Vetapalem. The leaders in these villages have raised a problem. They said that they have paid their membership for two years or at least one year. But some villages have not joined the union inspite of repeated visits for two years. They say that these people must be made to pay their membership otherwise the village kapus (leaders) authority is being undermined. To do this the Thalagara Kappus of Prakasham and Nellore along with the vadagara kapu of Thatichetipalem must call for a meeting of all traditional leaders and in that meeting they must call on all villages to join the union.

The union members attended a meeting of the Forum for the Management of Sustainable eco systems at Machilipatnam. Here there was a great deal off discussion on the subject of Depletion of Mangroves and the various attempts by Government and voluntary agencies to propagate and protect mangroves.

In this connection it was decided to conduct a two day workshop at Hyderabad in the most of September or October 2000, where government officials and NGO etc could interact and evolve a programme to take up conservation measure for this it was decided to collect all available data on the Mangroves in Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore districts. Coastal area maps of Prakasam District was procured from SHADA and the details of mangrove were marked.

In the month of 10.5.1999, a bandh was organised at Nellore to implement CRZ and to reduce tax. The fisherfolk of Prakasam and Nellore districts did not go for fishing on that day.

In June 1999, there was a great tragedy in Konduripalem village, Vakadu Mandal, Nellore District. Few persons of these village were murdered on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May. This was due to rivalries which arose one year ago and led to the division of he village into two villages. The smaller fraction had settled in a open area nearby. Inspite of the separation there were many clashes frequently and it culminated in the murders. 20 fishermen who had migrated from Kanyakumari and were residing nearby was accused of the murder. The union members along with Mr. Sreenivasa Babu went to Konduripalem and prepared report. The innocence of the fisher folk from Kanyakumari was explained to the police officials. The union members conducted one day training camp for village leaders from Machilipatnam about the union concept. We had a detailed discussion on the role of the union in the fisher folk context. The outcome was that the participants said that there was need for the union among those who still engaged in marine fishing. The participants stated that there were many fisher folk villages where the residents were basically belonging to the fisher community

but have never fished from at least 2 generations. All of them are engaged in Aqua culture units and agriculture and for them the union had no relevance whereas in few villages fishing are being practiced. The "code of conduct for responsible fisheries" was translated into local language by the union members and distributed to the villages in Prakasam and Nellore districts.

In Gundaipalem, clashes occurred between the shrimp farm owners and the villagers. As the shrimp farms have violated CRZ regulations representations were handed over to the Mandal Revenue Officer and Collector to ban shrimp culture in this area. The collector promised to visit the villagers that he would personally visit the area and stop all attempts to take up aquaculture in fresh ponds. The R.D.O (Revenue Divisional Officer) visited the village and stopped the aqua farmers attempt to start work by dismantling all the pumpsets. He also warned them that he would take severe action against any infringements. He asked the people to prevent all attempts to start the farms. In the meantime the farm owners filed case against the villagers. The Union members approached a local lawyer and filed case against the farm owners under CRZ violations.

Subsequently we came to know that in addition of the case filed against 9 persons for preventing the aqua culturists police in the area have started taking people into custody based on complaints of gambling and fighting. These complaints had been filed 3-4 months earlier but had been abandoned. We told the people to write complaints against the authorities and post them to the Chief Justice of the High court and to speak to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh on his T.V. Programme every Monday.

In the month of July 1999, it was decided into make a video documentary on mangroves. This was with a view to conduct a workshop, in the month of September, at Hyderabad and to lobby towards declaring the mangrove habitats under protected area. Hence a detail mangrove documentary was filmed in Krishna, Guntur, Prakasham and Nellore Districts.

In the month of August 1999, a detailed Socio- Economic study of the fisherfolk in Prakasham and Nellore Districts was conducted. The village level problems are also identified for collective action by the union.

In the month of September, October and November 1999, the union members visited the villages of Prakasham and Nellore districts and organised village level meetings by involving the traditional leaders. The union activities for the last few years were explained and future course of action were planned by involving the villagers, the importance of membership enrolment was discussed.

Village level secretaries are also elected in mass meetings and the role and responsibilities were clearly explained.

The village level secretaries were involved in the process of selection of Mandal level secretaries. The Mandal level secretaries will be involved in the selection of the Executive body of the Samudra Theera Matsya Karmikula Union.

#### CONCLUSION

Even though the Samudra Theera Matsya Karmikula Union was formed towards the development of fisher folk community in Prakasham and Nellore districts, the achievements are not much towards the betterment of the community. In the upcoming years, the Union will strive maximum for the development of the fisherfolk community through collectivization

**P. Ramalingam**

# TAMIL NADU FISH WORKERS UNION

## ANNUAL REPORT, 1998 DEC - 1999 NOV.

We are extremely happy to present our annual report of Tamil Nadu Fish Workers Union before the General Body of NFF. We have come across the present year with sorrow and gladness. It is great pleasure to convey that Tamil Nadu Fish workers Union's first conference was very colourful. At the same time we are anxious about Mr. Lawrence's death (Ex. Vice President of TFU). At present it consists of 60 units in three districts namely Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli and Tuticorin.

### EXECUTIVE AND GENERAL BODY MEETINGS OF T. F. U

TFU conducted 11 executive meetings and six general body meetings during the year, The main topics discussed were the following.

- 1 Deep Sea Fishing Vessels
- 1 Murari committee Recommendations
- 1 Coastal Regulation Zone
- 1 Shrimp Industries
- 1 First State Conference
- 1 All India Strike
- 1 Koodamkulam nuclear plant
- 1 Organisation of women in processing plant.
- 1 Ramanthurai Fishermen in Andhra jail
- 1 Tamil Nadu Fishermen in Pakistan Jail
- 1 Attack on Harekrishna Debnath
- 1 Thengapattanam Fish Landing center
- 1 Problem of kerosene and diesel
- 1 Separate village Panchayat
- 1 Inland fishworkers problems
- 1 A.V.M. Canal

### THE FIRST STATE CONFERENCE 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1999

The first state conference of the fishworkers has taken place on 10.05.99 at 1.00 am in Nagarcoil at Koottar. The flag was hoisted by Thomas Kocherry who is the coordinator of the World Fishworkers, following which a symposium was conducted. There was a rally in the evening under the leadership of Peter Das, the president of TFU. About 3000 people participated in the rally. At the end of the rally, there was public meeting where many spoke on various issues affecting the Fishermen community. The issues and demands raised were:-



1. Both Coastal and Inland people are socially, economically & culturally backward. They should be given all the facilities as Malival people.
2. We demand to cancel the licenses for foreign vessels and to implement the Murari Committee Recommendations.
3. The Government should withdraw the activities of the coastal management to reduce the 500 meters distance
4. The Government shouldn't forbid the fishermen to build the houses.
5. All the facilities should be given to inland people as coastal people.
6. Pension should be given to all fishworkers who are above 60.
7. Koodamkulam nuclear plant is very dangerous. It affects the fisherfolk, farmers and so on. We never allow it to be established.
8. Women who are working in processing plants should be brought to the notice of the Labour commission.
9. 500 litre kerosene should be distributed as in Kerala for Rs. 3.00 for a month
10. Diesel is given for Rs 2.59 in Karnataka and Maharashtra for fishing vessels.
11. "Karnat" sand was taken by the miscreants illegally. There was a bus picketing to prevent it. Police put a case against the innocent people. This case should be recalled.
12. Taking water from the perchiparai Dam to Koodamkulam should be stopped.
13. Innocent people who are in Sri Lankan Jail should be released
14. When the fish workers are lost in the sea while engaged in fishing, Search boats and Helicopter should be used to save them.

### THE STRUGGLES

About 20,000 people living in Enayam Puthenthurai, Chinnathurai and Ramanthurai had to travel 10kms to pay the electricity bills. Even after repeated requests to make facilities in the vicinity, there was no response. A protest Dharna was organised and then the demands were granted.

### TO SUPPLY GOOD QUALITY THINGS AT RIGHTEOUS WEIGHT:

The ration shop in Kuttapuli was supplying sub-standard goods and not in correct quantity, the fishermen protested under the leadership of Mr. Alexander. The officials finally came and set things right.

We claimed to maintain the road in thengaipattanam Milloorthurai and to put more pressure to erect a transformer in Mullor thurai which belong to K.K District. As there was no change we made bus strike on 13.04.99 in the leadership of Mr. Lawrence there after the officers came and our proposals have been performed.

## ALL INDIA STRIKE

The All India fishworkers strike took place on 10.05.99. The demands were (i) To withdraw the plan of coastal management authority to reduce the 500 mts distance. (ii) The Coastal Management Authority should not restrict the building of houses by fisherpeople within 500 mts. (iii) Implement the recommendations of the Murari committee. There was a dharna in front of the collectors office under the leadership of Peter Das. The Dharna was inaugurated by Fr. Thomas Kocherry. Thousands of people participated in it and there was protest for one day in Tamil Nadu with the exception of one or two places.

## THE ANGLERS WHO ARE FROM TAMIL NADU IN PAKISTANI JAIL

The anglers in Pakistani Jail now had gone to Saudi Arabia for angling and they belong to Kanyakumari, Thirunelveli, Ramapuram, and Kadaloor. Due to the cyclones they were carried to Iran where they were imprisoned for 77 days there after they handed over them to Pakistan, while the Kargil war was taking place (on June 5<sup>th</sup>). Now they are being persecuted in Pakistani Jail. This issue was taken up and a protest march was organized to the collectors office on 19/12/1999 where thousands of people participated. As there was no response, they decided to ghero collectors office, then the collector came and negotiated with the people and promised to take action.

## ATTACK ON HAREKRISHNA DEBNATH

The National President Mr. Harekrishna Debnath was attacked by some anti social groups on 6.07.1999. The Tamil Nadu Fishworkers Union held a march & solidarity meeting in front of the collectors office. Mr. Peter Das President of TFU presided over the meeting. The meeting demanded the government to take quick action and arrest all responsible for the incident.

## RAMANTHURAI FISHWORKERS IN ANDHRA JAIL

The forty seven fishworkers who belong to Ramanthurai in Kanyakumari District is now living in Nellore (Andhra State) and they fish there. They were arrested on last June 1<sup>st</sup> by the police without any default. Later the police released 27 fishers and put 20 fishers in the prison. The fishers are unknown persons. The TFU opposed this action. The TFU picketed the buses on 21-06-1999. Mr. Swaminathan led the struggle. 5 Buses were picketed by the agitators. RDO of Padmanabhapuram, SP of Kanyakumari District, Govt officers came to the spot and discussed the issue with the agitators and then only the 5 buses were released.

## WORLD FISHERIES DAY

The World Fisheries Day was celebrated by the Tamil Nadu Fishworkers Union on 21.11.1999. On that day, a rally was started from Kazhuvanthittai junction. Mr. Thomas Kocherry flagged off the march. Mr. Kennedy, the treasurer of the union inaugurated the march and the march was led by Mr. Vedha. The rally ended in the Marthandam Gandhi Ground and the public meeting started at 6 pm. Mr. Peter Das presided over the meeting. The General Secretary Ms Isabel Cyril, Kanyakumari District Secretary Mr. Alexander, Nellore District president Mr. C. Jerold V Chandra, Kanyakumari District president Mr. John Bosco, Advocate C. Emilius, Munchirai Union president Alvaris, State Treasurer S. Kennedy, Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary professor David Rajendran, and Ex Tamil Nadu Minister Mr. Lawrence spoke on the occasion. The Madurai Tamil Nadu Theological college

Nitharsanam kalaikuchu entertained the public with their cultural programs. About 500 people took part in the rally.

### DISCUSSION WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

The Fish Workers Union discussed with the Govt. Officers for several demands which was noted in the conference on 11.05.1999. The District Collector, Superintendent of Police, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Asst Director of Fisheries and the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Union representative participated in the discussion. Fr. Thomas Kocherry, spoke with the officers about the demands of the union and they promised to take actions with in three months. The government have not responded yet.

### CHILIKA STRUGGLE

In view of the Supreme Court verdict to close down industrial aquaculture farms, NFF organized agitation from Aug 11 to 15 at Chilika, Orissa. TFU was represented by General Secretary of TFU Ms. Isabel Cyril, Ms Mary Stella and Mr. Gerald John.

### EXPOSURE TO NORWAY

WFF organized an exposure trip for fishworkers representatives to Norway Fisheries. On behalf of TFU, Mrs Isabel Cyril, General Secretary, participated in the exposure trip to Norway from 24<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1999.

### PROBLEMS OF INLAND FISHERIES

TFU organized struggles demanding the implementation of the schemes viz Saving Cum Relief Scheme, housing scheme etc. As a result of the struggles organized by TFU, the Director of the Department Fisheries agreed to implement the same. He had discussion with us in this matter on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1999 and 30<sup>th</sup> July 1999. Subsequent to this discussion, the department introduced housing scheme for fishermen, supplied nets etc at subsidized rates, two wheelers and four wheelers at subsidy and also agreed to introduce saving cum relief scheme. This year onwards six cooperative society for inland fisherwomen was organized by the government.

### NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PEOPLES MOVEMENTS

Till last year, NAPM activities in Tamil Nadu had been under the auspices of TFU. This year, TFU could not activate the NAPM due to communication gap. This matter was brought to the notice of state coordination committee. They agreed to avoid such problems in the future.

TFU took part in the NAPM struggles on Koodamkulam issue on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1999 and the seminar on the Koodamkulam Nuclear plant held at Thoothukad on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1999.

### ANTI NUCLEAR MOVEMENT

In order to facilitate anti nuclear activities, an anti nuclear movement was initiated with the joint effort of TFU, NAPM, Farmers Organisation etc.

## INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF TFU

Apart from the active role in organizing fishworkers, TFU is not free from internal challenges and threats. As the fishworkers in TFU area belong to Christian religion, the undue influence of catholic priests and nuns badly affect the organizing activities of TFU. The voluntary organizations functioning under the religious groups are implementing various welfare programs, thus attracting most of the fishworkers. This forms major threat to empower fishworkers through unionization process. TFU is not self- reliant in respect of finance. Even to meet the expenses on various agitations, TFU depends on external personal/ bodies. This economic dependency sometimes causes external controls on TFU's internal matters, thus resulting in internal clashes and tension.

## FUTURE PLANS OF TFU

- 1) Take part in the activities of NFF, WFF, NAPM, and ANM
- ✓ 2) Organise struggles to implement CRZ and to ban industrial aquaculture
- 3) To organize struggles and pressurization for the release of Tamil Nadu Fishermen in Sri Lanka/ Pakistani Jails.
- 4) Struggles to include inland fishermen and fisherwomen under the ambit of savings- cum – relief scheme.
- 5) Protest against the koodamkulam Nuclear power plant.
- ✓ 6) Campaign and struggles for applying labor laws to women working in the fish processing plants.
- 7) Celebrate WFF Day
- 8) Fund raising programs for the economic self reliance of TFU.
- 9) Organising Seminars/workshops/conferences at district and state level on contemporary issues
- 10) Struggles to implement Venugopal commission recommendations.
- 11) Struggles for fish landing centre in Thengapattanam
- 12) Dialogue with Fisheries department officials for realizing various issues.
- 13) Struggles demanding coastal link roads drinking water facilities etc.
- 14) Struggles to ban monsoon trawling
- ✓ 15) Formation of a cultural group and organize leadership training.

**Peter Das**  
Tamil Nadu Fishworkers Union.

**WORLD FORUM OF FISHER PEOPLES**

**(WFFP)**

First General Body Report

October 6, 2000, Loctudy, France

REPORT OF THE FISRT GENERAL BODY MEETING OF  
THE WORLD FORUM OF FISHER PEOPLES (WFFP)

October 6, 2000, Loctudy, France

**Member Organizations Present:**

1. National Fishworkers Forum, India
2. Bangladesh Jele Federation, Bangladesh
3. National Fisheries Solidarity, Sri Lanka
4. Women's Development Federation Hambantota, Sri Lanka
5. United Federation of Labour, Sri Lanka
6. National Union of Fishermen, Sri Lanka
7. All Pakistan Fisherfolk Federation, Pakistan
8. Fishing Community Network, Pakistan
9. Rongomaiwsine Trust Inc., Aotearoa, Pacific
10. Union Nationale Des Pecheurs Artisans De Guinee, Guinee
11. Artisanal Fishers Association, South Africa
12. Penang Inshore Fishermen Welfare Association, Malaysia
13. Confradias Firmantes Carta De Cedeira, Spain
14. Collectif National des Pecheurs Artisanaux Senegal, Senegal
15. Association Familiale Maritime, Martinique
16. Bigkis Lakas Pilipinas Inc., Philippines
17. Association des Pecheurs et Pisciculteurs du Mali, Republic Du Mali
18. Union des Professionnels de la Peche Artisanale, Benin
19. Katosi Women Fishing Group, Uganda
20. Uganda Fisheries and Fish Conservation Association.(UFFCA), Uganda.
21. Collectif des Organisations Maritimes Malgaches, Madagascar

*(21 Member organizations from 16 countries were present)*

**Chairperson:**

Pauline Tangiora

**Interpreters:**

Brian O'Riordan (Spanish)

Beatrice Gorez (French)

**Resource Person:** Victor Menotti

**Rappoeteur:** Savarimuthu Santiago

## **Agenda:**

1. Adoption of the Constitution
2. Elections
3. Resolutions
4. Plan of action
5. Any other matter

The Assembly discussed the name of the Organization and adopted the following name unanimously:

### **Decision 1:**

**It was unanimously decided to name the organization as “THE WORLD FORUM OF FISHER PEOPLES”. The Short form for the name shall be “WFFP”**

The Assembly discussed the draft Constitution of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) article by article. After discussions and changes made to the draft, the following text was adapted unanimously as the CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD FORUM OF FISHER PEOPLES (WFFP).

### **Decision 2:**

**It was unanimously decided to adapt the following text as the Constitution of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).**

## **PREAMBLE**

We, the Fisher Peoples of the world,  
United under the banner of  
THE WORLD FORUM OF FISHER PEOPLES (WFFP)  
With the aim of protecting our livelihood,  
Upholding fishing rights, human rights, fundamental rights,  
social justice and community responsibilities,  
And preserving and promoting our culture,  
Affirming water as the source of all life,  
Committing ourselves to sustain fisheries and aquatic resources  
for the present and for future generations,  
Gathered in Luctody, France,  
Solemnly bind ourselves to abide by this Constitution.  
We adapt on this day, the sixth of October 2000.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **Article 1: Objectives**

The objectives of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) are:

- a) To protect, defend and strengthen the communities that depend on the fishery for their livelihood.

- b) To assist member organizations to secure and improve upon the economic viability and quality of life of Fisher Peoples and their communities.
- c) To recognize, support and enhance the role of women in the social, economic, political and cultural life of the fishing community.
- d) To create an understanding of the resource as a common heritage of humanity and, through sustainable fishing practices, conservation, and regeneration of the marine and inland resources and ecosystems, to ensure that it is passed on to future generations.
- e) To protect fishing communities, fish resources and fish habitats, such as coastal zones, watersheds and mangroves, from land-based, sea-based and air-based threats. These include displacement by tourism, pollution (including the use of the sea as a dumping ground for toxic waste), destructive industrial aquaculture, over-fishing and destructive fishing practices.
- f) To establish and assert the rights of fishing communities to their customary territories in the coastal zone under their national jurisdiction for fishing and habitation.
- g) To promote a legal regime that will ensure the traditional and customary rights of fishing communities to the fishery under their national jurisdiction.
- h) To promote the primary role of fisher-peoples' organizations in managing fisheries and oceans, nationally and internationally.
- i) To protect food security, both locally and worldwide, by sustaining fish stocks for the future, and by preserving fish for human consumption.
- j) To promote equitable representation of fisher-peoples' organizations in all relevant regional and international fora and advocate their recognition.
- k) To play an active role to ensure that states and transnational corporations comply with relevant international agreements and to oppose any trade agreements that threaten the livelihood of fishers.
- l) To prevent the export of resource collapse crises and of technologies and practices that lead to these crises.
- m) To provide support for national and international struggles that are consistent with the objectives of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).
- n) To encourage, assist and support Fisher Peoples to organize themselves where they have not already done so.
- o) To promote the right of Fisher Peoples to social security, safe working conditions, fair income and safety at sea, as well as their recognition as seafarers.
- p) To improve the communication between Fisher Peoples and the scientific community through the exchange of knowledge and science.
- q) To acknowledge and enhance the unique culture of fishing communities.
- r) To restore our access to the rights and powers originally granted to us in the charter of the United Nations.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

### Article 2: Member organizations

- a) Organizations which comply with the objectives set out in Article 1 of this Constitution may be members of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP). Subject to article 3, only one national organization per country may be a member. Such organizations must be democratically



constituted and may include, but not be limited to, trade unions, associations, federations of cooperatives and aboriginal nations dependent on the fishery for their livelihood. They must represent one of the groups set out below:

- 1) Fish harvesters, i.e. any person directly engaged in fishing, known in different countries as:
  - I. Subsistence fishers;
  - II. Artisanal fishers;
  - III. Aboriginal or indigenous peoples who are customary fish harvesters;
  - IV. Traditional coastal and inland fishers;
  - V. Independent small scale owner-operators;
  - VI. Crew members in this sector.
- 2) Crew members of fishing units other than those mentioned above and who are presently members of organizations listed under subsection a) above.
- 3) Broadly based (mass-based) organizations of fishing communities and women engaged in work in support of the fishery.
- 4) Fish workers who are engaged in activities related to the processing, direct sale (excluding merchants) or transport of fish.

b) Corporations, transnational companies and allied affiliates owning fishing vessels and engaged in harvesting, processing and distribution of fish and those carrying out destructive fishing or industrial aquaculture cannot be members of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).

#### Article 3: Admission of Members

Only the Coordination Committee may admit member organizations. In exceptional cases, the Coordination Committee may, while respecting the objectives set out in Article 1 of this Constitution, admit as a member organization more than one national group per country if the organization represents a significant proportion of the groups or one of the groups listed in subsections 1) to 4) of Article 2 of this Constitution.

#### Article 4: Commitment

Every member organization of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) must formally accept and abide by this Constitution.

#### Article 5: Withdrawal of Members

Any member may withdraw from the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) by giving three (3) months notice to the Coordination Committee.

#### Article 6: Fees

The fee schedule as well as the method of payment shall be fixed by the Coordination Committee. In very exceptional circumstances, the Coordination Committee may waive the payment of fees by a particular member for a period of time.

## Article 7: Suspension of Membership

- a) The Coordination Committee may, after two reminders, suspend a member for non-payment of fees. Such suspension will be removed upon payment of the outstanding fees.
- b) The Coordination Committee may suspend a member for actions detrimental to the objectives of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), provided that the Coordination Committee allows the member reasonable opportunity for a hearing before any decision concerning a suspension is made.
- c) No suspended member may take part in the work of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) or vote at the General Assembly.
- d) Any suspension may be appealed to the General Assembly

## Article 8: Expulsion

The General Assembly may expel a member organization for cause provided that:

- a) Expulsion has been recommended by the appropriate Continental Council.
- b) The Co-ordination Committee has given the member reasonable opportunity for a hearing into the actions giving rise to a consideration of expulsion.

## **STRUCTURE**

### **ARTICLE 9: FORUM COMPOSITION**

The World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) shall consist of:

- a) A General Assembly
- b) A Coordination Committee
- c) Five Continental Fora

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

### Article 10: General Assembly

The General Assembly constitutes the highest authority of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).

The General Assembly shall be composed of all of the delegates representing member organizations who attend that meeting. The Coordination Committee may permit organizations that are not members to send observers to the General Assembly.

### Article 11: Functions of the General Assembly

The functions of the General Assembly are:

- a) To officially interpret and to amend the Constitution of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).
- b) To discuss issues of common interest and adopt resolutions on subjects on the agenda, and to do so in a spirit of cooperation and exchange of ideas.

- c) To decide on the action required to implement decisions and fulfill the objectives of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).
- d) To assign tasks or duties to the Coordination Committee.
- e) To conduct elections as per the provisions of this Constitution
- f) To ratify, annul or sanate actions and decisions made by the Coordination Committee and the Continental Councils.

Article 12: Member Representation at the General Assembly

- a) Each country with at least one member organization shall be entitled to representation at the General Assembly by two delegates, one of whom shall be male and the other female.
- b) Each member organization shall be entitled to nominate observers / alternate delegates to participate at the General Assembly with the right to speak.
- c) The nomination of auditors, observers and alternative delegates must be approved by the Coordination Committee.
- d) The out-going members of the Coordination Committee shall be delegates to the General Assembly in which the new officials take charge

Article 13: Designation of Delegates

- a) Member organizations shall name their delegates in writing to the Coordination Committee not less than 90 days before the General Assembly takes place.
- b) In the case of a country with more than one member organization, the organizations in the respective country shall try to agree on the delegates representation. In the event that the member organizations in the respective country are unable to agree on the delegates representation, they may refer the matter to the Coordination Committee for a binding decision.

Article 14: Decision Making Process

The World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) shall seek to make all decisions through consensus.

Article 15: Location of the General Assembly

Subject to any decision taken at a previous General Assembly, the General Assembly shall take place at a location to be fixed by the Coordination Committee.

Article 16: Frequency of the General Assembly

The General Assembly shall take place at least once every 3 years.

**COORDINATION COMMITTEE**

Article 17: Composition of the Coordination Committee

The Coordination Committee shall be composed of two Coordinators, one of whom shall be a woman and the other a man, the General Secretary, the Treasurer and Continental representatives as per the provisions of Article 18.

#### Article 18: Designation of Continental representatives

The Continental representatives of the Coordination Committee shall be designated in the following manner:

Two representatives (one female and one male) from each of the following Continents: Africa, America, Asia, Europe and South Pacific.

#### Article 19: Functions of the Coordination Committee

The Coordination Committee acts under the authority of the General Assembly and represents the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).

Other than the duties that may be delegated by the General Assembly, the functions of the Coordination Committee are as follows:

- a) Facilitate the creation of Continental Fora.
- b) Plan and manage the activities of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).
- c) Organize the General Assembly.
- d) Propose recommendations to be put to the General Assembly.
- e) Implement measures decided upon by the General Assembly.
- f) Represent the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) in dealings with other organizations.
- g) Admit members in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.
- h) Report on its activities to the General Assembly.
- i) Maintain close links among members of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) during periods when the General Assembly is not in session.
- j) Take care of preparing a budget and managing finances of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) in accordance with Article 29 of this Constitution.
- k) Generally, take any measures deemed necessary to attain the objectives set out in this Constitution.

#### Article 20: Term of Office of Coordination Committee Members

The mandate of Coordination Committee members shall be for the period until the next General Assembly. Normally the mandate will be for a term of three (3) years.

#### Article 21: Vacancies in the Coordination Committee.

a) If an member organization notifies the Coordination Committee that a member of the Coordination Committee no longer holds the position that provided the political base for his or her election to the Coordination Committee, this matter will be referred to the appropriate Continental Council. If the Continental Council determines that this notification is valid, the Continental Council shall be authorized to declare this position vacant.

b) If the circumstances described in a) or b) above involve a Coordinator, the General Secretary or the Treasurer, the Coordination Committee is authorized to take appropriate action.

c) The Coordination Committee is authorized to fill a vacancy in the position of Coordinator, General Secretary or Treasurer.

d) In the event of a vacancy in the position of Continental representative in the Coordination Committee, the appropriate Continental Council is authorized to fill the vacancy.

#### Article 22: Procedures

The Coordination Committee shall establish its own rules, decide on its own procedures and determine how often to meet. The Coordinators shall convene a special meeting any time when a two thirds of the Coordination Committee so request in writing.

#### Article 23: Functions of the Coordinators

- a) To make all decisions jointly.
- b) To convene the General Assembly and the Coordination Committee.
- c) To preside over the General assembly and the Coordination Committee.
- d) To coordinate the activities of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) according to this Constitution, the decisions of the General Assembly and the Coordination Committee.
- e) To facilitate new membership to the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).
- f) To represent the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) at other national and international fora and to delegate others to do so.
- g) Generally, to take any measures deemed necessary to attain the objectives set out in this Constitution, to be reported to and to be ratified by the Coordination Committee.

#### Article 24: Functions of the Treasurer

- a) To handle all financial matters of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).
- b) To act according to the decision of the Coordination Committee.
- c) To spend money as per decisions of the Coordination Committee on written instructions from the Coordinators collectively.
- d) To have the accounts of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) independently audited every year.

#### Article 25: Duties of the General Secretary

- a) To work under the direction of the Coordinators
- b) To maintain an office of communication, animation and documentation
- c) To keep official records of the WFFP
- d) To carry out tasks assigned by the Coordination Committee

#### Article 26: Term of office

The term of office for the Coordinators, Treasurer and General Secretary shall be for a period of three years unless the timing of the next General Assembly dictates otherwise. No individual may be elected for more than two consecutive terms to any of these offices.

### **CONTINENTAL FORA**

#### Article 27: Establishment of Continental Fora

- a) The World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) recognizes five Continental Fora in accordance with the provisions of Article 18 of this Constitution.
- b) Member organizations of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) in each of the continents mentioned in Article 18 form the respective Continental Forum.
- c) Each Continental Forum shall decide upon its own structures and mode of operation respecting the Objectives contained in Article 1, and in accordance with other directives and spirit of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP). Such statutes are subject to the approval of the WFFP Coordination Committee.
- d) The Continental Fora shall designate their representatives to the Coordination Committee.

#### Article 28: Continental Councils

- a) Each Continental Forum shall have a Continental Council as its governing body with a Continental Coordinator and other officials deemed necessary.
- b) The functions of the Continental Councils shall be to ensure the coordination and the consultation of member organizations in their respective continents, and the implementation of the programme of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).

### **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### Article 29: Financing

- a) Revenues for the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) shall derive from:
  1. Members fees;
  2. Donations or grants deemed acceptable by the Coordination Committee;
  3. Any other source deemed acceptable by the Coordination Committee.
- b) The Coordination Committee shall not accept funds from large corporations or any other body acting in a manner which is contrary to the objective of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).

#### Article 30: Quorum

The quorum for the purpose of the meetings of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) shall be as follows:

- a) General Assembly – Two thirds of the delegates
- b) Coordination Committee – More than 50% of members of the Coordination Committee

#### Article 31: Dissolution

The World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) may be dissolved by a consensus.

#### Article 32: Offices

The offices of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) shall be located as determined from time to time by the Coordination Committee.

Article 33: Official Languages

The official languages of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) shall be English, French and Spanish.

Article 34: Interpretation

Between General Assemblies the Coordination Committee has authority in matters concerning the interpretation of this Constitution.

Article 35: Status

The World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) is an independent organization.

By authority of the General Assembly, the Coordination Committee may undertake any measures deemed necessary to confer on the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) a juridical personality in accordance with the applicable laws of a country in which the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) carries out its activities.

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**2. Elections**

The following persons were unanimously elected:

a) **Election of Office bearers:**

- 1. Coordinators: Pauline Tangiora (Aotearoa)  
Dao Gaye (Senegal)
- 2. General Secretary: Harekrishna Debnath (India)
- 3. Treasurer: Kamuturaki Seremos (Uganda)

b) **Election of other Members to the Coordination Committee:**

- 1. Africa: Andrew Wilfred Johnston  
Fatoumata Diawara
- 2. Europe: Robert Alvarez  
Marie Ademar
- 3. Asia: Rosario Nazu  
Mohamed Ali Shah
- 4. South Pacific: To be chosen later
- 5. America: To be chosen later

From this point, the newly elected Coordinators jointly chaired the Assembly.

Pauline Tangiora proposed that Thomas Kocherry be a permanent invitee to the Coordination Committee and the house unanimously accepted the proposition.

With this, the Assembly was adjourned and resumed after dinner.

#### 4. Decisions

##### Decision 3:

It was decided that the WFFP should join the International Forum on Globalization and Peoples' Global Action against WTO in their struggles against Globalization.

##### Decision 4:

It was decided that WFFP should organize large level struggles and actions to celebrate World Fisheries Day on 21<sup>st</sup> November every year. This is a campaign to establish the right of the fishing communities to own water bodies, fishing implements and to manage the distribution of their catch. It is an on-going struggle against industrial fleets in the world.

##### Decision 5:

It was decided to have the first WFFP Coordination Committee meeting in India February/March 2001 and the exact date would be announced later.

##### Decision 6:

It was decided to adopt two resolutions one by Pouline to ban Toxic and atomic pollutions and the other by Alvarez Roberto to ban trawlers. The two resolutions are given as annexures.

### RESOLUTION 1

#### A. **Resolution on Toxin, Heavy Metal and Radioactive Pollution in the Pacific**

That this Forum(WFFP) request the United Nations to implement a study of the Pacific Ocean (both North and South) to identify the high rate of toxin and mercury and other poisons. WFFP will select the researchers.

This should be incoming CC immediately as people of this area are experiencing the early onset of many types of cancer in young children.

#### B. **Resolution on shipment of Radioactive waste**

That this Forum (WFFP) demand a cessation of mining of uranium on the lands of the indigenous and tribal peoples and that all further transfer of spent uranium and other radioactive wastes across oceans, for example between Japan and France.

We are concerned that this transfer puts the coastal and fishing people at a high risk. Rather than waiting for an accident to happen, we urge countries to act more responsibly and to seek alternative uses of naturally renewable resources, such as solar and wind energy.



## RESOLUTION 2

### **PROPOSAL OF THE SPANISH BRANCH (ITSAS GEROA) ASSOCIATION AND SIGNATORIES OF CEDEIRA CHART)**

Resolution proposed for voting during the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers, Loctudy, October 2000.

Pursuant to the objectives of article 2 a), 2 d), 2 l), and 2 m) of the constitution Chart, the World Forum denounces the use of four fishing methods which are imposing at sea to a majority of fishermen "the rule of the over exploiter". These four methods are pelagic trawlers, "naveran" trawlers, rock hopper trawl and "perches" trawlers. The Forum's desires the prohibition of these four methods:

- in all areas frequented by those fishermen who are using less aggressive methods for the marine environment.
- and for all stocks exploited by those fishermen who are using less aggressive methods for the marine environment.

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Call to the objectives of article 2 a), 2 d), 2 l) and 2 m) of the Constitution chart of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish workers.  
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#### *Articles 2: Objectives*

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" *The objectives of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers shall be:*

a) *To protect, defend and strengthen the communities that depend on the fishery for their livelihood.*

d) *To create an understanding of the resource as a common heritage of humanity and, through sustainable fishing practices, conservation and regeneration of the marine and inland resources and ecosystems, to ensure that it is passed on to future generations.*

l) *To prevent the export of resource collapse crises and of technologies and practices that lead to these crises.*

m) *To provide support for national and international struggles that are consistent with the objectives of the World Forum"*

#### **Some other reasons to justify the petition of prohibition**

The Code of Conduct for a Responsible Fishing (FAO) confirms on article 6.1 that the right for fishing implies the obligation to do it in a responsible manner.

The aforementioned four fishing methods during the present resolution (pelagic trawlers, "naveran" trawlers, rock hopper trawl and "perches" trawlers) had demonstrated in various European areas a terribly hard impact on the marine environment and, consequently, on other fishermen and their families. Taking into account the characteristics of these methods there is no way to use them in a manner which could be considered responsible, in disagreement with the affirmation of some ship-owners, fishing organizations and science bodies.

In Europe the scientific organizations are directly linked with the lobby of the non selective fishing and economically powerful fleets. This union marks the origin of the well known diminishing of the European halieutic resources. Therefore it is necessary to denounce it from Southern Fishermen.

The proposed measures of prohibition in this resolution seek for a preventive effect in Southern seas and in their fishermen. These measures may also contribute to the regeneration of certain stocks in Europe, and to give back hope and trust for many Northern fishermen.

There is no reason to disappointment on the affected ship-owners due to the proposed prohibitions, because the European Union has important budget incomes for fisheries and it has been always supporting the ship-owners, particularly for changing the fishing methods.

SPANISH BRACH BEFORE THE WFF, Loctudy, October 2000

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