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NATIONAL FISHWORKERS' FORUM

R E P O R T S

1992

Cherureshmi Centre
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INDIA

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Foreword

Once again, I have great pleasure in presenting the NFF Report 1992 to friends and the fishworkers. Every action and reflection is historic for the organisation. Pain and joy are involved in the very process. Through such a process we grow.

This time our joint struggles created much awareness and challenges. Though our main focus was on the ban on trawling during monsoons, other issues like fish disease, the need for deep-sea fishing regulations, the implementation of Marine Fishing Regulations were also stressed.

Deep sea fishing and aquaculture are getting prominence all over India. The involvement of foreign companies, export, World Bank funding, ecological destructions—all these are going to be major issues in the future. Therefore we have to be doubly prepared such eventualities.

Our search for an alliance of different people's movements of the dispossessed to face the threats such as IMF, World Bank, and Multinational companies are meeting with a lot of positive responses. The power of the people cannot be defeated. Our common concern and solidarity should lead to a new political formation in India today.

I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Vivekanandan of SIFFS for editing and proof-reading, Mr. Aravindan of SIFFS for computerised typesetting and Mr. Ravikumar for getting the report printed. I also thank all the state level unions and the NFF General Secretary, Mr. Harekrishna, and the members of the NFF Secretariat, the executive members, and the General Body members for their collaboration and support. Through our solidarity and commitment and struggles, let us push our movement forward.

Thomas Kocherry

Chairperson

NATIONAL FISHWORKERS' FORUM (NFF) REPORT 1992

1. Introduction

We are happy to circulate the NFF report for 1992, taking off from the discussions of the last general body meeting at Malwan.

2. The Political Context

We have begun to experience the impact of the new Economic Policy announced by the Narasimha Rao Government in the middle of 1991. Although the media informs us that not many multinationals have been allured to India after the structural adjustments, the economic pressures has begun to be felt by the Indian populace. The drastic increase in costs of food production and of public transport has hit all, especially the poor. The increasing privatisation trends—even in transportation—mean that only the most paying and better off areas will be serviced in the future. Water taxes, electricity charges and communication rates have gone up everywhere. It is the poor who feel the pinch of the IMF loan.

In the business world, corruption reigns high. The deep links between the political leaders, top ranking bureaucrats and the heads of financial institutions have been revealed in the recent securities scam. The common people can have no confidence in the public banking institutions any more. On the other hand, kickbacks on any transactions is becoming the rule of the day.

The Government seems to have taken an adverse position *vis-a-vis* the working class; and the unorganised sector is the worst hit. The reluctance of the law to pursue the brutal killing of Shankar Guha Niyogi on the 28th September 1991 reveals the close ties between the political and legal systems. So where can the poor seek justice? The brutal killing of 16 workers in Bhilai shows that the law resorts to violent murder when faced with the protest of the masses—whither human rights?

3. The Marine Fisheries Scenario

In 1991 the total catch of fish was 23.25 lakhs tonnes, out of which about three lakh tonnes of fish came from deep sea fishing. There is no scope for further development in the territorial waters. So in the light of new economic policy, governments—both states and the Union—are taking steps to develop deep sea fishing. But they are not learning from the other experiences. Already the Ministry of Food Processing has given licences for joint ventures involving about 1000 crores rupees. The same ministry agreed to bring about Deep Sea Fishing legislations at the National fisheries Workshop, but so far there has been no sign of it. This means the sea is sold out to Japan and America for indiscriminate exploitation of fish wealth and the labour. The Namibian and Mauritian experiences are not taken into account. In fact there is no fisheries policy by the Centre to manage and conserve our resources. We are going to face the worst. Newspapers already reported the corruption and kick-backs involved in the high places on the issuing of licences. Our Government exchequer will further be drained out to the rich in the name of subsidies to increase export and foreign exchange.

4. The Inland Fisheries

The Inland Fisheries is facing a big crisis due to fish disease, which is on the increase. In Goa, Mangalore, Kerala, M.P and Tamilnadu the fish disease is back with greater vigour. There is no realistic approach either from State Governments or from the Centre. However many State Governments are going ahead with the development of aquaculture on a large scale. The participation of fishworkers in this is very negligible. The reports of the reclamation of wetlands are also a cause for concern. The destruction of the environment will have a serious impact on the fish resources.

5. A note of hope

The struggle of the working class all over India against contract labour, price rise, poor working conditions, environmental destructions etc., is the hope for the future. The two year old struggle of Chattisgarh Mukthi Morcha against Contract Labour, the struggles of Narmada Bachao Andolan to protect the Environment and the tribals, the joint struggle and the campaign by the unions of Fishworkers in Kerala, Tamilnadu, A.P, Orissa and West Bengal express the determination that the working class is not going to keep quiet.

There has also been a few experiences with alternatives. Fish workers have started demanding their right to manage the estuaries in W.Bengal; shrimp seed collection has been stopped in some estuaries; and fishworkers are participating in the construction of reefs and in preventing depletion of mangrove vegetation. We hope these will gain ground.

Issues for discussion regarding the changing political scenario

How are we going to challenge an export oriented fisheries policy? How are we going to respond to the fish disease that is rampant in India? How can we work towards sustainable fisheries development? What is our stand towards joint ventures and deep sea deep fisheries? How can we create inter-and intra-sector dialogues on these issues? What about continuing the discussion on no. 3.3 of destructive fishing and 3.4, the IMF and Fisheries of 1991 report?

6. 1991 NFF Training Programme

44 persons representing various state level unions participated in the 10-day programme at ISI, Bangalore, from the 18th November to 27th November, 1991. D.Thankappan stressed the need for organising the unorganised workers and the creation of a meaningful dialogue and collaboration with the organised working class. The militancy of the working class is going to determine the future of the struggle. As the argument to privatize and close units is that they are sick, the workers should create alternatives and be prepared to take them over.

John Kurien tried to place Indian Fisheries in the international context. By explaining the Indo-Norwegian Project he exposed how "development" affected the Indian fishery. Similarly, he explained how the fishworkers movement in India had stimulated the growth of the fishworkers' movement in Senegal, and therefore the need for an international perspective.

A.J.Vijayan spoke on the availability of fisheries resources and its exploitation, through different technologies.

Nalini Nayak developed different value options in fisheries by narrating different examples from the fisheries contexts in India. She placed before us the management of fisheries by the community. She further carried on the discussion on the women's perspective.

The NFF history was traced back by Xavier Pinto and Thomas Kochery.

The group was exposed to the Inland sector in India by Gopala Krishnayya from CIFRI. He also touched upon the fish disease. The history of this was effectively traced by Benedict Vincent and P.K. Sukumaran explained the scope for aquaculture in India.

Sebastian Mathew narrated Fishing Regulations in Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan and enlightened us on the issues involved. Thomas Kocherry explained the Indian context of fishing legislations; organisational strategies were discussed with special importance to Chattisgarh Mukthi Morcha.

The Socio Political discussion was led by J. John. The new political formation that is taking place is of vital importance. The Dalit-tribal axis in politics is of importance. The new economic policy can be faced by the militant struggles of the unorganised working class. Organisational skills and leadership skills were organised by Xavier Pinto. This replaced the sessions which were otherwise quite heavy for the participants who are unaccustomed to such intensive indoor work.

At the time of evaluation all the participants expressed the need for continuing the training in the coming years too. It was decided to have a 7-day programme with more participation from the participants themselves. A programme has already been worked out and the Training will take place from 26th November to 2nd December 1992. A detailed follow-up of the training was planned and the participants agreed to come with their reports for the next programme. It is hoped that all who participated in the last session will be there again as the 1992 programme will be a follow-ahead of the 1991 programme.

7. Joint Struggles

During the last general body it was decided that joint campaigns and struggles would be organised in 3 different group formations. Accordingly Kerala and Tamil Nadu worked out a campaign. It was a month long campaign. It started on 27th April in Kasaragode and ended on 21st May in Madras. It was an effective experience and during the whole campaign one was struck by the lack of fish in the traditional sector. A similar campaign took place from 20th August to 25th September 1992 beginning from A.P. to West Bengal. The details of it will be given in the state report. The demands raised were mainly the implementation of the Marine Fishing Regulations, monsoon trawl bans etc. In order to press further, many days of dharnas, hunger strikes took place in both Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In Tamil Nadu it was difficult to carry forward the struggles due to reactionary politics. In Kerala the struggle was quite militant and obtained a 44 day monsoon trawl ban. But the ban did not last due to the intervention of the Kerala High Court. The case is still pending and we are expecting some positive outcome from it. Unless there is a Marine Deep Sea Fishing Regulation Act and implementation of the same, the problems will continue both in Kerala and West Bengal. In Tamil Nadu the ban on Monsoon Trawling in Kanyakumari was struck down by the Madras High Court.

Some questions regarding the joint struggles

What were the reasons that the planned struggles of Goa and Maharashtra did not take place? What were the reasons that Tamil Nadu could not go ahead with the proposed indefinite hunger strike? How can bureaucrats be made to keep their promises particularly the promise made by the Fisheries Commissioner in Tamil Nadu? What further actions need to be taken concerning all the demands? What should be done when the High Court acts against the bans both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu? What actions should be taken concerning Deep Sea Fishing Regulations? How are we going to develop militancy in our struggles? How are we going to carry on the legal struggles in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Goa?

The Chattisgarh Mukti Morcha (CMM) Struggles and the NFF

The NFF has pursued the interaction and collaboration with different people's movements like Chattisgarh Mukti Morcha, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Kamanee workers, Naga people's Movement for Human Rights, JOHAR and AJSU. Ultimately as a common programme for action we supported the struggles of the CMM. Representatives from the NFF joined the struggles on many occasions. After the killing of 16 CMM workers on the 1st of July 1992 a fact finding team visited Bhilai and other areas and expressed solidarity with them. About 100 people participated in the anniversary of martyrdom of Com.Niyogi. Also NFF actively collaborated with the Programme for Social Action (PSA) reflecting on the CMM movement. The NFF organised a national campaign together with Asha Niyogi in support of the CMM struggles.

Furthering such collaboration

How can we attain the solidarity and militancy of CMM movement? How can we attain self sufficiency/life styles/values etc of CMM? What are the different ways in which we can collaborate and support one another?

Workshop on Development of Marine Fisheries

The Central Government organised a national workshop in Kochi with a view to arrive at a consensus on making a national fisheries policy on the development of Marine Fisheries particularly beyond 22 kms. The NFF presented a paper and it was well received by most of the scientists and bureaucrats. However there was a strong opposition from the Ministry of Food Processing Industries and Commerce Ministry because of their involvement in issuing licenses for the joint venture. NFF staged a protest against the recent agreement on joint ventures at the time of inauguration of the workshop.

Issues for discussion

How are we going to combat the uncontrolled fisheries policy of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries and the Ministry of Commerce? How are we going to struggle to obtain a Deep Sea Fishing Regulation Act?

10. Collaboration with the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)

The NFF continued its collaboration with the ICSF by participating in the seminar on Fish Disease in Trivandrum and attending a workshop in Mauritius on "working conditions of fishworkers on distant water fishing vessels". The ICSF is offering its services in developing the feminist perspective among the members of the NFF. Each state is

requested to appoint one woman leader to collaborate with this programme. We request each union to come prepared for such a decision during the general body meeting in Madras.

Issues for discussion

What are the concrete ways in which the NFF is going to collaborate in tackling fish disease in India?

What are the concrete ways in which the NFF can collaborate with the Task Force in studying the working conditions of fish workers in industrial fishing vessels?

Who is your woman leader who will collaborate with the ICSF programme?

Election

This year is the election year for electing new office bearers. The recent political changes in East Europe and the USSR teach us the lesson that long term leadership faces deterioration, corruption and lacks creativity. It is important that the NFF considers a change in leadership.

Points to consider

Each union must discuss the leadership question and come with proposals for alternatives. The Executive Committee must be representative.

Conclusion

In general it can be stated that the NFF today has gained credibility and has been able to intervene in the political and Fisheries Development processes. We have a new contact in Gujarat. Within a very short time we will be able to make a base in Gujarat. We take this opportunity to thank all the state level unions for their active collaboration. We are happy to announce that the West Bengal Union has been registered under the name of Dakshina Bangala Fishworkers' Union. There are numerous individuals and institutions who have helped us in our work. Unable to mention all by name, we take this opportunity to thank each one. The work of the NFF would be impossible without this support, which we look forward to in the future.

Harekrishna Debnath (General Secretary)

Thomas Kocherry (Chairperson)

Discussion on the NFF Report 1992

All stressed the need for an alliance of different people's movements against the onslaught of the ruling class and the rich class upon the working class, particularly the unorganised. There has been many attempts in this and the NFF should give leadership to bring about this. We should launch an offensive rather than merely take defensive steps.

We should organise struggles against corruption in high places.

The cost of fisheries inputs are on the increase because of the rupee devaluation and import policies. Fish which has been the food of the common people is now being used to produce fish meal. The conflict between the mechanised and traditional sectors has increased and the existing marine regulations have become virtually meaningless.

The common water-bodies are now becoming state property under new regulations of the inland fisheries regulations. In the name of development these water-bodies are either reclaimed or polluted and deprive the fishworkers of their material survival base.

Issues for discussion

1. *How are we going to challenge an export-oriented fisheries policy?*

The main reactions to this were that this will be a continuous struggle and we should fight it locally as well as at the national level. The NFF should explore the common issues which effect other traditional sectors and common struggles should be waged. Efforts must be made to raise these issues in the State Assemblies through friendly MLAs and MPs. Seminars and meetings should be held at various levels to highlight these issues among people who do not realise the full impact of the NE policy.

Demands should be made to stop new licences for export and the Government should classify which varieties alone can be exported. This will prevent fish which is locally consumed from being exported.

2. *How will you respond to the fish disease ?*

The pressure for compensation should be pursued. The Water Pollution Control Board should be pressurised to function actively and publish data on water quality regularly. Some pressure should also be made for the use of natural fertiliser. Greater efforts should be made in all states to unionise the inland workers and demand lease of aquaculture and for the fishworkers.

3. *How can we work towards sustainable fisheries development?*

Efforts should be made to popularise the 1990 draft report prepared by the NFF. This will help develop more awareness for a managed fishery. Greater efforts must be made within the unions to stop destructive fishing methods and to help stop the collection of fish seed. Efforts must also be made to collect information on the MSY in different fishing zones and information about the movements of shoals.

The NFF Training Camp



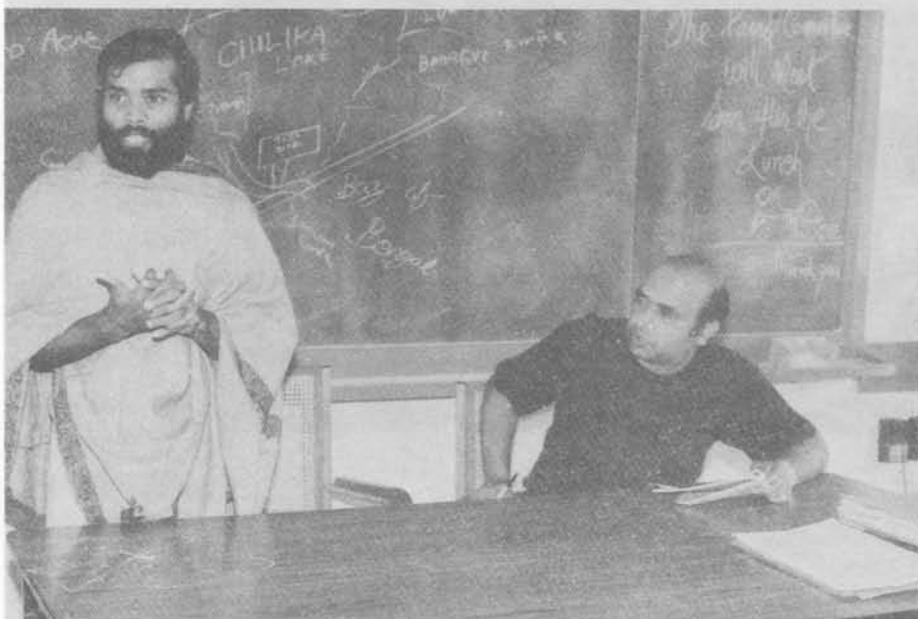
The NFF General Body



The NFF General Body in Session



andarkar from Bombay



Chitharanjan
from Chilka Bachao Andolan

The NFF Chairperson and Xavier Pinto extending solidarity and sympathy with the widows and the family members of the people who were murdered by the high caste people of Tsundur in A.P.



The NFF Chairperson with the family of Com. Shanker Guha Niyogi



Asha Niyogi with the agitating fisherwomen



Asha Niyogi and Mercy Alexander taking oath to lead the struggle to victory

4. What is our stand towards joint ventures and deep sea fisheries?

It was felt that the so-called deep sea fleets will encroach on the coastal zones. Therefore seminars should be organised between different unions of the different sectors to evolve a common strategy against the deep sea fishery.

Efforts should be made to gather signatures for the memorandum on the deep sea fisheries regulation and send to the Central ministry. The regulations should include :

- a. Demand to identify the resources in the deep sea and to determine their commercial value. The number of fishing vessels should be specified and licence given accordingly.
- b. The regulations should state clearly the rights of the traditional fishermen already working in the sea and guarantee that none of the deep sea fleet enter the 22 nautical mile zone.
- c. The deep sea fleet should not be allowed to catch the migratory species that come into the inshore waters.
- d. The new deep sea fishing regulation should strengthen the State marine acts.
- e. The interests of the workers in the deep sea vessels should be protected.

Maharashtra fishworkers stated categorically that the development of deep sea fisheries through joint ventures should be opposed. This sector should be reserved for the traditional fishing community. Facilities that help this process should be encouraged. Just as there are regulations on the use of agricultural land, they said, the coastal belt should be reserved only for the fishing community. The NFF should develop a national strategy to oppose the new tourist development policy too. There was a discussion on the areas of 'primary production' in which no foreign and multinational intervention should be permitted.

Based on this above discussions it was decided that the following issues in the following priorities should receive attention in '93.

- I. the deep sea fisheries policy
- II. export oriented policies
- III. sustainable development

The following decisions were taken:

A.J.Vijayan would be requested to make a questionnaires regarding data that could be collected by each state on the development of deep sea fisheries. He will supervise the collection of this data. By December 31st 1992 each state would send in their memorandum with massive signatures.

NFF Report 1992

Training Programme

On the last cadre training there was general agreement that it is useful and should carry on. There were suggestions that there should be consistent participation, that the working of co-operatives should be included and that the tribal-mandal-dalit axis should be further discussed.

It was decided that the training had a 2 year duration and that those who have participated for 2 years should make way for others. The training for '93 will take place from Oct 17 to 23. Each state was asked to prepare a case study on one of the main problems.

There was then a discussion on the joint struggles. Maharashtra, Goa and Tamil Nadu gave the reasons for not working as per plan. However all stressed the need for greater sacrifice and solidarity. Regarding the High Court decisions on the cases, it was explained that Shanti Bhushan had agreed to take up the Kerala case free of charge. It was decided that the High Court cases should go to the Supreme court but in the meanwhile pressure to enforce these must be kept up. Efforts must be made to develop a core of legal volunteers who can help in the process of analyzing and exploiting the clauses of the Act. Again friendly MPs should be briefed on the subject.

On sustaining militancy in the union the following suggestions were made:

- » a core of volunteers should be developed
- » the existing cadres themselves should show their commitment which alone will encourage others to commit themselves. Cadre who work more like employees cannot stimulate others to collaborate.

Good cadre should visit other people's struggles so that they can learn from other people's movements and also create their own links. One person in the NFF should be responsible for the contact with other movements and feedback of these relations and joint actions.

5. How can we develop self-sufficiency in the union?

This issue was discussed at length because state unions have been having difficulties to maintain full-timers and raise money for struggles etc.

It was felt that the salary of one full-timer at least should be raised from local contributions. Only in this way will people feel responsible for their full-timers and will full-timers feel responsible to the people. It was felt that unions should also evolve their own economic programme so they not only meet people's broader needs but are also able to generate funds locally. SEWA among women in Kerala, co-operative in Maharashtra and Kollam in Kerala can inspire other state level unions concerning linking up with economic programmes.

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TAMIL NADU FISHWORKERS UNION 1992

Introduction and short history of TFU

The Tamil Nadu Fishworkers Union is very glad to submit its annual report of 1992. "The National Fishworkers Forum" with the help of many movements like Fishermen Societies and "Mahalir Mantrams" (Women's Organisation) conducted a March on "Protect Water, Protect Life" on May 1st, 1989. More than 10,000 people from all over India, from all walks of life, participated in the March. During the peaceful procession that took place at Kanyakumari, the police opened fire at the participants and number of poor fishermen were wounded. At the same time the police department filed a case against these poor fishermen. From that time onwards, the fishermen felt the need of having the trade union to protect themselves and to demand their rights. Moreover there was a standing problem between the trawling boats and the traditional crafts. All these paved the way for starting of the "Tamil Nadu Fishworkers' Union".

The unionisation of the units and the conditions

The Tamil Nadu Fishworkers' Union had taken its full shape on October 2nd 1989, on the birth day of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of India. On October 15th, 1990, the union was registered under the trade union act. In the beginning, there were about 18 units. The responsibility of creating new units in different villages was given to the units which had already started functioning. In the following year, three more new units were created, but at the same time 4 units stopped its function. The reason was that there was not much of benefit from the trade union—in spite of the continuous struggle and agitation, the Government did not yield at all.

The Modality of its function

The executive body of TFU meets once in two months and different problems of the fishworkers are discussed in detail. There were five such meetings this year. The KSMTF, Chindanai Sirppi Singaravelu Kattamaram Union with TFU planned together a joined struggle this year as a major agitation. Accordingly demands were put forward by three unions and the joint venture was conducted on the basis of these demands.

The Nine Demands

1. Ban trawling during June, July and August.
 2. Ban trawling from 0-12 kms.
 3. Ban on night trawling
 4. Enforce all marine fishing regulations with proper and effective machinery
 5. Stop all joint ventures
-

6. Grant exception of all excise and customs duty on outboard engines which are purchased by small fishworkers.
7. Find out the causes of the fish diseases and prevent them from spreading; pay compensation to the fishworkers when they are made unemployed due to fish diseases.
8. Implement pension scheme in Tamil Nadu and pay arrears in Kerala.
9. Distribute title deeds to fishworkers who do not have own houses.

Planning and implementation (Plan of Action)

(a) The demands petition was sent to concerned government officials (b) The 1st of February was declared as "Demand Day" and it was observed meaningfully in all the respective units. (c) The jeep campaign took place from Kasaragode (Kerala) on 28th April and ended in Madras (Tamil Nadu) 21st May 1992. (d) The jeep yatra, on 11th and 12th of May was held along the coastal villages of Kanyakumari District. (e) From 22nd May till 28th May a "Relay Satyagraha" was held in Madras and Nagercoil simultaneously.

Jeep Yatra in Kanyakumari

Though there was no unit in Thoothoor, the jeep yatra in Tamil Nadu began from Thoothoor at 11 a.m. on 11th May. From Thoothoor, the yatra moved to Chinnathurai, Poothurai and Eraimanthurai, where the people and the village leaders gave a warm reception to the union leaders Tom Kocherry Chairperson, NFF, Constantine, President, TFU, Peter, KSMTF, and Ravi, BBFU. The Cultural team from Madras Union enacted a street play depicting the problems of fishermen in general.

With police protection, the leaders of the yatra proceeded to Mulloorthurai where people were waiting with blue flags for their arrival; the leaders were garlanded with currency notes. All the leaders addressed the gathering. On 12th May morning, the yatra went to Muttom. The huge crowd in Muttom gave a warm welcome to the leaders with refreshments. The women's participation was highly appreciated.

At Pozhikkarai, the yatra was received by the villages, the village committee and the union members. After lunch, the yatra left for Pallam Puthenthurai. In both the villages street plays, and cultural programmes were conducted. Fr. Arulappan, the parish priest of Mel-Manakudy together with the villagers and union members gave a very pleasant and warm welcome. The cultural team enacted the street play and rendered awareness songs.

At Kil-Manakudy, the yatra went into different streets of the village holding the banners and union flags. The people went on an impressive procession. The union members of Kil-Manakudy were very much proud of having the NFF leaders. The leaders gave speeches on the importance of yatra and explained briefly about the demands.

Enayam Puthenthurai was the next village, where the people gave a warm welcome. After the leaders' speech, lunch was provided by the union members. Then in the evening the yatra went to Kurumpanai where a public meeting was conducted. Along with awareness talks and songs, there was street play enacted by cultural team.

Around 6 p.m. the yatra reached Periyavilai. The public meeting was very effective and impressive with the full collaboration of the village people. The cultural item given by the children and cultural team was very much appreciated. The street play was enacted and the respective leaders addressed the crowd saying, "if all are united together under one union, we can achieve what we want". After supper the yatra people spent the night at Periyavilai.

From Periyavilai, the yatra proceeded to Kovalam. The union cell leaders were anxiously waiting to receive the yatra. The women union members had given practice to children who were in white costumes in welcoming the union leaders through flowers and dances. The union flag was hoisted by Tom Kocherry, the chairperson of NFF. After the tea break, the yatra left for Kanyakumari.

In Kanyakumari, the village committee, the union members and the villagers were there to welcome the union leaders. The yatra jeep alone went around the whole of Kanyakumari town announcing all the nine demands of the union. At Kanyakumari the leaders remembered the police firing that took place on May 1st, 1989.

From Kanyakumari, the jeep went around Chinnamuttom. Then the yatra proceeded to Arockiapuram. With Sandalpottu, the yatra leaders were welcomed by the union members of Arockiapuram. A big public meeting was held and the members of the union sang many provoking awareness songs. The celebration was successful with the full co-operation of the villagers. The members of Arockiapuram arranged supper for the union leaders as well as for the police and they all stayed in the village.

On 13th May 1992, around 12 p.m. the yatra left for other places like Idinthakarai, Tuticorin, Vellapallam and Nagapattanam. Three members of TFU followed the yatra till it reached Madras on 21st May.

Relay Sathyagraha

As it was planned in the joint struggle meeting, the relay Sathyagraha was held from 22nd May till 30th May of 1992.

First day

Under the leadership of Kennedy, the Vice-President of Tamil Nadu Fishworkers' Union, people from Chinnamuttom, Arockiapuram and Kanyakumari were present for the first day of the sathyagraha.

Second day

On 23rd May 1992, the people from Kovalam, Kil-Manakudy and Mel-Manakudy took up the secondary sathyagraha. About 15 members participated in it. The Kil-Manakudy union cell-president Lawrence presided over it.

Third day

People from Pallamputhenthurai, Pozhikkarai and Muttom took up the third day sathyagraha on 25th May. About 40 members participated in it.

Fourth day

On 26th May 1992, about 10 people from Periyavilai, Kurumpanai and Kodimunai sat for sathyagraha. It was presided over by Aruldass, the President of Periyavilai union cell.

Fifth day

On 27th May, people from Mulloorthurai and Enayam Puthenthurai took up the fifth day sathyagraha and it was presided over by Lawrence, Secretary of Mullorthurai union cell.

Sixth day

On 29th May the relay sathyagraha reached its climax by the 100 participants shouting slogans and singing awareness songs. It attracted a lot of people.

Indefinite Hungerstrike

From June 8th onwards, Constantine, the President of TFU and Mr. Deivasigamani, the President of Chithanai sirpi singaravellu kattumaram union were denied permission by Government to undergo fast unto death. So they started relay satyagraha.

In support of the relay satyagraha started by the Tamil Nadu leaders in Madras. TFU held a huge rally in Nagercoil, inaugurated by Fr. Vincent and a public meeting held at Railway Ground, Kottar. Both the rally and the public meet were presided over by Mr. Kennedy, the Vice President of TFU.

In the public meeting, many addressed the gathering, including the Professors of Scott Christian College and Hindu College of Nagercoil, Francis de Sales, Arulanandam, the Executive member of TFU and Ms. Sarasam of CHDP. All the speakers stressed one point very much—"Protecting sea means protecting life".

Through the jeep yatra, hunger strike and rally, the people of Tamil Nadu and the government officials realised the existence of TFU in its fuller sense. It was really an eye-opener for many to know and understand the real conditions of the poor fishermen.

The problems faced by the Union

- 1) There is a kind of slackness in all the units since the government did not implement the cancellation of the loan in Kanyakumari as it announced.
- 2) The inseparable damage caused to kattumarams, vallams and to the human lives by the trawlers had never been compensated. Such a situation cannot be overcome, in the view prevalent among the traditional poor fishermen. This makes the union inactive in many villages, e.g. Enayam, Mulloorthurai, Puthenthurai, Ramanthurai, Chinnamuttom, Arockiapuram, and Manakudy.

For example, due to the fight between the trawlers and kattumarams & vallams, the fishermen from Enayam Puthenthurai, Ramanthurai and Mulloorthurai did not go fishing for about 16 days. Then a peace talk was held in the R.D.C. office, Thuckalay. Representatives of boat union, TFU, representative of the Bishop and the government officials were present. In the peace talk, the trawlers agreed to operate 25 meters away from traditional crafts while fishing in the sea. The boat union agreed to confiscate the fish harvested by the boats that violated this agreement.

In spite of the joined agitation, still there is no official reply from the government. This once again dulls the activity of the union members.

The Union and its merits

Through the agitation, the people are aware of the existence of the Union. Even the police department and the government officials are its presence. The emergence of leaders in all the units is quite remarkable. It is only when confronted with problems and issues, that the fishermen feel the real need of the union. Struggle itself created self-confidence in the people.

New life at Pudukkadai

Pudukkadai is an interior village. The village committee here made a rule that the fish vending women should not carry fish in the buses and should carry the fish over their heads despite the fact that they are 6 km away from the market. Most of the fish vending women are widows and a good number of them are affected by filaria.

These women could not adhere the rule of the village committee for many reasons:

1. Many of them are affected by filaria.
2. While they walked to market with headload fish, they were late and men brought fish by bicycle and sold off quickly.
3. When women came late to the market they sustained greater losses
4. Most of them are already aged.

Due to the above reasons women tried to bring the fish by buses. The village committee collected Rs.10/- as fare from the women as they violated the village rule. Much more harassment was faced by the fish vending women. Some of them were beaten up and some of them were pulled down to the road with their head loads of fish.

At last, the women approached TFU to redeem them from their own people. Through regular visits of our TFU full timers, the real status and the problems of the head load fisherwomen were brought to the attention during our general body meet. With fear, Mrs. Teresammal Francis of Pudukkadai enumerated the atrocities and harassment done fish vending women at Pudukkadai.

At this juncture, all the general body members of TFU unanimously felt that this is the right moment to start the union at Pudukkadai. The full timers Sr. Nimmy and Baby Celine, the two TTS brothers Raja Manickam and Victor explained the rules and regulations of TFU, and emergence and its growth.

The Pudukkadai Union cell was inaugurated on 10th October 1992 with a big procession. At the end of the procession there was a public meeting presided over by Mrs. Teresammal Francis, Tom, Arulanandam, Francis de Sales, Miss. Mary Teresa and many other speakers addressed the gathering.

As a result, the women head loaders started to carry the fish in the buses. When the village committee saw the women carrying fish by busses, they became angry with these women and TFU. On October 1992, morning at 6 o'clock when Mrs. Teresammal Francis (a

widow) the president of Pudukkadai union cell came to the bus stand to go to the sea shore to buy fish, she was manhandled by the committee members. Mrs. Teressmal Francis was admitted and treated in the government hospital for 11 days. This was taken to the notice of the police department and still the police was inactive. So, TFU has filed a case against the goondas.

Rescue Act by TFU

Due to the recent cyclone that affected the south west of Tamil Nadu many villages were flooded. Tens of hundreds of people were not able to come out of their houses; roads were blocked, bridges were damaged, and rivers were flowing up to the brim. Not even the army was able to approach these flooded villages. But the fishermen, the members of the TFU especially Francis de Sales, Kennedy (Vice President of TFU) and Stephen daringly got into the boats and rescued families, both men and women, children and old.

The Tamil Nadu government brought out a regulation in the year 1988. It says that, "the non-mechanised fishing vessels shall be used for fishing within three nautical miles from the shore and shall go for hook and line fishing and boat seine".

Now the TFU has taken different steps to delete this clause from the regulation. First of all, it sent petitions to the concerned officials; a mass signature campaign is being carried out. At the same time TFU, is also preparing ways and means to file a writ petition to delete this clause. Moreover, the people are made aware of the present rule and its implications.

In short, amidst the trials and perils, the three year old TFU treads like a curious and purposeful child towards a hopeful future for a better life.

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SINGARAVELAR CATTUMARAM FISHWORKERS' FOR THE YEAR 1992

This movement operates presently in two districts of Tamil Nadu. It was registered under the Trade Union Act in 1986.

There are 39 branches in the districts of MGR and south Arcot. The executive meeting of the union is being conducted once every month at which a number of the problems of the villages are discussed. The general body meets once every 3 months. On this occasion, the question of communication with other unions, possibilities of co-operation, collective action and ways and means to focus together on common problems are also discussed.

Every member of the union branch contributes an amount of Rs.3 which is deposited in the nearby bank or post office. Members were admitted according to the suggestion of the NFF leaders and now we have a total of 3673 members. (949 females and 2724 males)

A dharna was conducted on the 24th of February 1992 in front of the Puvunjur BDO, by the Alikuppam, Kadalur, Pouakuppam and the Chinnakuppam members. About 267 people participated in this and also enjoyed the support of the Harijans.

A jeep rally was conducted from Kasaragode in Kerala and ending at Ennore, Madras from the 28th of April to the 21st of May 1992. The rally covered the following places: Kanyakumari, Tuticorin, Pondy, Marthandam and Madras. This was headed by Thomas Kocherry, president of the NFF. Others who took part included Constantine the president of the TFU, Ravi (Secretary SKFWV, Peter, L.Kurian and Mary. This rally was a joint venture by the (1) Kerala Independent Fishworkers Union (2) TFU, (3) Singara Velar Fishworkers union and (4) NFF.

The demands were as follows:

1. To ban trawlers during the fish breeding season.
2. To ban trawlers between 6pm and 5am (Dusk to Dawn)
3. To ban foreign ships fishing in our waters.
4. To implement fishing act.
5. To give aged fishermen a pension of Rs.100.

On the 10th March a fierce battle broke out between the police and the fishermen, during the village (Church) feast. Boats, trawlers, kattumarams, houses and fishing equipment worth Rs.20 lakhs were destroyed. The union took photographs and sent them to be published in four magazines in Tamil. A case also has been filed to claim damages.

There was a demonstration and fast conducted in front of the Marina Beach from 8th to the 12th of June 1992, putting up a 9 point demand.

The points were as follows

1. to ban trawlers during the fish breeding season.
2. to ban trawlers at night.
3. to implement sea fishing act.
4. to give the aged fishermen a pension of Rs.100 per month.
5. to ban foreign ships to fish on Indian waters.
6. to make the out board available at a lower cost to traditional fishermen.
7. to ban trawlers operating within the distance of 12 kms.
8. to have a separate constituency for fishermen.
9. to provide fishing villages with housing facilities.

Fights breaking out between two fishing villages is no uncommon phenomenon. In such a case it has been recommended to the branches of the union that such disputes should be solved by the concerned parties themselves without going to the police. We are happy that this has been successfully implemented in 8 villages this year.

On the day of Ganesh Chaturthi a clash broke out between the Ennore fisher folk and Burmese repatriates. The police resorted to firing which unfortunately claimed the lives of 3 youths of the fishing village.

A one-day fast was conducted to publicise the atrocities of the police. Other movements co-operated and extended their support. They demanded that action should be taken against those guilty. A case against the police too has been filed. The Pudupattinam fisherfolk along with those of Ealikkuppan and the Harijans took a procession, in which they shouted slogans, on the 28th of september 1992.

They demanded that the fisherfolk who had lost their houses in Kalpakkam be given job preferences. A memorandum to this effect was given to the Director of the NPC.

If the members of the union could co-operate a little better and show unity and commitment, there will surely be great amount of growth for the people and the union will also grow in strength.

President

Deivamani

Secretary

P.Ravi

JOINT STRUGGLE S



Joint Struggles



Street Play

Joint Struggles



Watching Streetplay

Meeting of Leaders in a Temple in Pondicherry



Kasinathan campaigning with his clarinet during the campaign

A BRIEF REPORT OF KERALA INDEPENDENT FISHWORKERS FEDERATION ACTIVITIES FROM NOVEMBER 1991 TO NOVEMBER 1992.

In the inland water bodies of Kerala, almost the entire fish resources were affected by an unknown disease called EUS. When government did not take any steps either to prevent the disease or to help the unemployed inland fishworkers, the Federation started the agitation raising 3 demands.

1. Give compensation to the affected fishworkers.
2. Take preventive measures to stop the disease.
3. Take steps to market the available fish not affected by disease.

In November the agitation became very powerful. It received good support from eminent social and cultural leaders of the state. Fr. Jose Kaleekal continued fasting even in Hospital. Each stage of the agitation inspired more and more fishermen. Government agreed in principle to provide compensation. When the government declared Rs.150 per fish workers family and a week's free ration the agitation was called off.

As the compensation amount given by the government was very meagre, the Federation came forward to mobilise a relief fund with the full support from the public. Since the coastal region was also under fish famine, the fund mobilisation was more centred around other sections of the society. We had very good response and support on this. The amount thus collected was then distributed among affected fishworkers, who live in the areas where the union also has a base.

Federation also planned to collect money for the state convention and the joint struggle with Tamilnadu unions under the banner of NFF. On 28th April the joint struggle campaign started from Tellicherry with seven demands which included a ban on monsoon trawling. In Kerala region, the rally ended on 8th May at Trivandrum. NFF chairperson Thomas Kocherry, TFU President Constantine and BBFU Secretary P.Ravi gave leadership to this campaign. Together with the jeep rally, a team of cultural Drama Troupe from Tamilnadu also participated throughout. On 9th & 10th of May, the state convention of the Federation was held at Trivandrum. It inspired all to strengthen the agitation further. Former governor of Nagaland Dr.M.M.Thomas inaugurated the convention. More than 250 delegates participated in the seminar and discussion meetings next day. The election general body meeting then elected the following to the state committee of 1992-94: Lal Koilparampil (President) T.Peter (General Secretary) S.Kunjikoya (Vice-president) Mercy Alexander and P.P.John (Secretaries), K.V. Raphel, Chinna Joseph, P.K.Eliyas, Thomas Kocherry, K.T.Vincent, N.V.Pankajakshan, Felix.A.P, A.Andrews, M.Ambrose, Veronica Antony, M.Alphonse, A.J.Vijayan, Prema Francis, Sr.Philomine Mary, Thomas Thazhavayil, J.Aloysious, P.V.Paithran, Usha Peter, N.Francis and Jose Kaleekal.

Agitation/Struggle

As part of joint struggle in all district headquarters we organised rallies and hunger strikes from 22nd May which continued till 30th. Indefinite fast by leaders started in each district from 1st June and it continued till 14th June. On June 15th, Lal Koilparampil, president of the Federation started indefinite satyagraha in front of the state government secretariat at Trivandrum. As this fast was continuing, various struggles took place at different fishing centres. Padayathras, Cycle rallies, dharnas, Torch light processions, picketing,

mass fasting and picketing of the National Highway were a few such. When the central government organised a National Fisheries Workshop at Kochi on 9th June, Federation conducted a protest rally towards that and were blocked by the police. It was to protest on the decision by the central government to sell out fish resources in the name of joint ventures and deep sea fishing to foreign companies, with the investment over 1000 crores of Rupees. Action council convenor A.J.Vijayan, Lal Koilparampil and Thomas Kocherry lead the protest rally. This evoked good public support also. As part of joint struggle on June 9th a group of fishworkers lead by T.Peter, general secretary participated in the TFU rally held at Nagercoil. As a result of our strong agitation the Kerala government declared Monsoon Trawling ban on 19th June for 44 days. While protesting on the shorter period of ban, we called off the agitation. An important feature this year was while we were agitating, we had many discussions and dialogues with workers in trawling boats on subjects such as conservation of fish resources. The following leaders took part in the hunger strike (fasting) at various districts: P.V.Wilson, Chinna Joseph, N.V.Pankajakshan, K.T.Vincent, Abdul Rassik, Abubacker Koya, Carmely John and Mampally Victor.

The trawl boat owners also had some demonstrations against the ban. But immediately after these we also organised our rallies in support of the ban, and demanding to extend the period upto 31st August.

The trawl Boat Owners approached the High Court and they got permission to proceed to sea beyond 22 km to do fishing. The case is still on and the federation has also impleaded in the case as an additional respondent. So the legal battle is continuing. The court is trying to look into other legal aspects which are applicable to fishing boats going beyond territorial waters. Ours is the only fish workers organisation fighting in this legal battle and now we are planning to bring a well known advocate from the Supreme Court to fight our case.

This year also the EUS struck the inland waters and in order to bring the attention of the government and the public a state level convention and public meeting was organised at Haripad district and Taluk level agitation also were held. But the government is not showing enough interest in this problem. We also were unable to raise the agitation to the realm of last year. A conscious effort is being made to study and plan and campaign on the crucial issues faced by inland fishworkers.

Other issues

When the police fired at and killed 16 workers in 1st July at Bhilai, MP, we protested in Kerala. We also campaigned about the incident and collected an amount of Rs.11,667.00 for the Bhilai Firing Relief Fund. Federation activists also went to Bhilai on the first death anniversary of Shankar Guha Niyogi and joined in their rally and other programmes.

A new perspective on fisheries is being discussed at various district council meetings and one day seminars are held mainly to discuss on the need for conservation and nature of the fish resources. Also the women-men relationship the production process as well as production of life was discussed.

The state government had introduced many regulatory measures to conserve our fish resources and to protect traditional fishermen. But in practice none of them are implemented. So district level agitations are being planned to pressurise the government to implement these. Federation will continue to struggle strongly till this is achieved. Also the state sponsored agencies like Matsyafed, Welfare Fund Board etc., are not functioning properly to help fishworkers. To protest against distribution of loans etc., only on

party-considerations and denying it to the actual needy people, we are planning struggles and agitations.

The federation is slowly extending its area of operation to new places. Two new district committees, in Trichur and Pathanamthitta were formed this year. Initiatives were made in Malappuram district.

7 state committee meetings and one general council meeting were held during last year.

T. Peter,
(General Secretary)

KALINGA FISHERMEN UNION Report 1992

Contents

1. Report of KFU involvement in 1992.
2. March 8, 1992 women's day celebration.
3. Memorandum submitted to collector.
4. Women's rally against alcohol
5. March 14, 1992 rally and public meeting by KFU before collectorate.

The involvement of Kalinga Fishermen Union in Coastal Regions of Orissa and Srikakulam-1992

March 8th, International Women's day celebration 1992

The women of Gopalpur-on-sea and ten surrounding villages took up a rally and public meeting on the occasion of international women's day and submitted a memorandum of grievances and demanded redressal of these on this occasion.

Some demands were:

1. To arrange the transport facility for fisherwomen to go and sell the fish elsewhere.
2. Prevent harassment by military personnel.
3. Ban illegal distilling and liquor shops.
4. Open a lady police cell in Gopalpur-on-sea.

It was a first of its kind in this area where women courageously presented their grievances and demands before the public authorities. Cultural programmes depicted the importance of literacy, and the evils of alcoholism.

March 14th

The members of KFU of coastal Orissa decided to take up a rally and present the memorandum to the district collector of Ganjam district at Chatrapur. Accordingly 400 women union members of coastal Orissa organised a rally in Chatrapur on 14.3.92 and submitted memorandum of their grievances. They are:

1. Compensation to fishermen during the testing of Air Defence and guided missiles (ADGM).
2. To stop displacement of fisherpeople in coastal area.

3. Ban of trawl and mechanised fishing in Orissa coast.
4. To declare the community as scheduled caste.
5. To extend the scope of application of social beneficial laws that are enacted for both tribals and harijans.

Result: The demand 4 is being looked by the concerned authority. As for the rest of the demands they are not complied with.

May 1992: Panchayat Election

Village level meeting was held to choose accepted and eligible candidates in all the coastal villages of Orissa. The whole fishing community in these villages have gone through a process of education in preparing themselves to involve fully in the forthcoming elections. The whole group was ready to face the election in a democratic manner. Though they have participated in many elections at various levels, the Panchayat election of 1992 was historical as the fisherwomen contested the election for the first time. Fearing there may be a threat to peace and tranquillity of the villages, the women approached the collector and DSP to give them protection and to ban the sale of liquor three days prior to the election and on the actual day of election. Immediate action was taken by the government authorities.

The result of the elections was beyond the expectation of the community. It gave them tremendous joy and created confidence that when they are united they can achieve greater things. The KFU is proud to announce the results of the elections as follows

Sl No.	Designation Councillors/ Sarpanch/ Samiti member	Name	Place
1.	"	Ms.Kondama	NAC- Konark
2.	"	Mr.K.Sathayam	Municipality Puri
3.	Vice-Chairman	Mr.A,Viswanatha Rao	"
4.	Councilor	Mr. Jaganatha Rao	NAC,Gopsalpur-on-sea.
5.	Sarpanch	Mr.B.Narayana	BrahamagirimArkudha
6.	Sarpanch	Mr.J.Viswanath	Golabandha
7.	Sar.in charge	A.Narsamme	Gokurkuda, Ganjanm
8.	Samiti memeber	P.Syamma Rao	Sonapur

Ward Members: Ladies - 3 Gents - 15

ALL ORISSA FISHERMEN MEET AT COLLEGE OF FISHERIES RANGAILUNDA WITH FISHERY MINISTRY (13th June)

On the occasion of valedictory function of college of fisheries, representatives of K.F.U were invited to participate in the day's function. The meeting was organised to discuss the problems faced by the fishing community. Two hundred K.F.U members took active part in the discussion.

PREPARATORY MEETINGS FOR AWARENESS CAMPAIGN TO BE HELD IN SEPT' 1992.

Village and zonal meetings were held to prepare the people for the forthcoming awareness campaign in the Districts of Cuttack, Puri, and Ganjam districts of Orissa and Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. People were conscientised about state of their lives, exploitation, lack of basic necessities, displacement, and denial of social laws.

Programmes were chalked out. The need to use cultural media to depict their problems was felt. People of the whole coastal area of Orissa got ready to participate in the "Matsya Karula Chaichnya Yatra" with the support of National Fishworkers Forum.

The campaign was undertaken from 5th-15th Sept. The core-team members of KFU and the General Secretary of NFF, Mr. Harekrishna Debnath and Freedom fighter Mr. Hiralal with the local people conducted rallies and public meetings, cultural programmes and highlighted their problems on socio-economic and political issues and demanded justice to be done in their favour.

Programme

5.9.92	Paradeep
6.9.92	Konark
7.9.92	Puri
9.9.92	Gopalpur-on-sea
10.9.92	Sommapur
11th - 15th	Srikakulam (AP) (Akupalli Onkulure, Metture & Others)

October 2nd

KFU COMMITTEE MEETING

Representatives from Orissa and Andhra met at Konark, to pressurise the Government to look into their issues and do justice for their legitimate demands. It was decided to hold a demonstration in all the coastal districts of Orissa on the same day. October 24th was to be the day of demonstration. But it had to be postponed to 1st week of December due to the strike by the private transport owners.

October 11th, 12th & 24th 1992

KFU WORKERS MEET AT GOPALPUR-ON-SEA

The purpose of this meeting was to evaluate the activities, movement, and team function.

Content

- » Evaluation of K.F.U
- » Achievement and Constraints
- » Involvement with P.R.E.M
- » Team spirit and commitment
- » Future Plans

Sixteen members of KFU met at Shanti Rani Bhavan to evaluate the work done so far and to plan for the future. The meeting was free and frank. It asked certain soul-searching questions and sought reasons for failures on certain fronts in all honesty. The group was realistic while evaluating its strengths and limitations. Team spirit and commitment were found lacking though they were ready to rededicate themselves for the cause of not only the fishing community but also the other depressed classes of society. The group decided to re-organise and renew its contact with villages where their presence was not felt. It drew up the programmes of action for the year as follows:

1. Awareness building
2. Leadership training
3. Increasing the membership of union
4. Formation of the cultural team
5. Establishing documentation and publication dept.
6. Collaboration of Cooperative society
7. Re-organisation of Co-operative society
8. Building up a Resource Team

The members felt the need of becoming self-reliant and proposed to raise funds for the union in the form of local contribution, fund raising programmes and donations.

Union representation at various levels

- Village
- Zone
- District
- State
- National
- International

Future Plan

1. Strengthen men's, women's and children's wings of K.F.U.
2. To give innovative skills to the youth for managing the fish economy.
3. To accelerate the struggle of fishermen against the exploitation by middlemen, businessmen and the liquor merchants.
4. To initiate self-help groups for sustainable economic activities, especially in women's wing.
5. To gain more and more political power through active participation in grass root level democracy and democratic institutions.

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY THE WOMEN RESIDING IN GOPALPUR AND TEN SURROUNDING VILLAGES TO THE CHIEF MINISTER OF ORISSA AND TO THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR OF GANJAM ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (8th MARCH 1992)

From

Women of Gopalpur area,
Ganjam District
Orissa.

Respected sir,

On this auspicious occasion of International Women's Day, we the women of Gopalpur and ten surrounding villages beg to state the following grievances for your kind consideration and immediate redressal.

For years, we have been silently suffering various injustice inflicted on us on account of gender difference. As you know the majority of our women of the area belong to the fisherfolk, and are poor and depend entirely on fish-vending. Because we are fisherwomen and on account of our trade we are faced with many problems. On many occasions our grievances have been made known to the authorities and it is high time that these reasonable demands of ours are met with a sympathetic ear. Once again we put forward the following demands for your immediate action.

1. Arrange Transport facility for fisherwomen and others:

At present, the transport facility between Gopalpur and Berhampur is very limited and Trekkers which ply between Berhampur and Gopalpur extort more money from the fisherwomen. Many times we are denied entry into these vehicles. Let this exploitation be ended and the Government authorities put more buses in this route for the convenience of travellers and a reasonable charge taken. All the Trekkers carry many more passengers than the permitted number and this way of carrying passengers like luggage amounts to attempted homicide.

2. Prevention of harassment by military personnel:

We the womenfolk of Gopalpur and nearby village are living contently in fear, tension and insecurity due to many outrageous acts of harassment by certain military personnel from Golabande cantonment area. Therefore we demand this type of harassment be stopped and women of this area are specially protected and the authorities have special protection force for this area to look into all such cases.

3. Kindly Ban Illegal distilling and liquor shops:

If one looks into all these 10 villages, one will find a number of vendors who are distilling and selling liquor illegally. The children and women are most affected due to these malpractices. We live in constant fear, starvation, malnutrition and ill-health. We are unable to educate our children. Therefore we request the Government authorities concerned to ban all these illegal practices and save our families.

4. Please open a Lady Police cell in Gopalpur:

A Lady Police cell in Gopalpur is to be opened to protect women and get the complaint of women, as women are afraid of approaching the police station managed by men only.

Respected Sir, As you are the primary person responsible for the welfare of the people, especially the exploited and the suffering segments of the community, we the most neglected people of your district request you to protect our rights so that we can live with dignity.

Thanking you,
Yours sincerely,

From

Secretary
Kalinga Fishermen's Union
VIII/Po: Venkatraipur
Via: Gopalpur-on-Sea
District : Ganjam (Orissa).

To

The Hon'ble President
Government of India
NEW DELHI

Sir

We the members of KALINGA FISHERMEN'S UNION of Coastal Orissa beg to submit this humble mass representation as follows:-

Grievance No.1 : Compensation of fishermen during the testing of Air Defence Guided Missiles (ADGM).

In the first week of February 1992 the military authorities of ADGM station at Golabando, through the fisheries department, asked the people of about 16 fisherfolk villages along the coast from Pati Sunapur to Gopalpur to abstain from fishing from 4th to 7th February for carrying out the ADGM testing. Around 20000 people belonging to fishing communities who completely depend on fishing for their daily food had to remain hungry for four days and many became debtors to money lenders.

The financial loss and the human misery caused by the inhuman activity of missile testing along the thickly populated coastal area are beyond compensation. Though we protested against the order, nobody listened to us as we are poor and politically powerless. The missile-testing will continue forcing us to die of starvation.

We therefore urgently request the concerned authorities to put an end to the missile testing or provide all the affected fishermen with adequate compensation during testing periods.

Grievance No.II : "To stop displacement in Coastal Areas"

We the fishworkers, since generations, are living on the coastline and now due to tourist development activities and defence projects that are coming along the sea-coast, we are often disturbed and displaced from our livelihood. We being people who live by catching fish in the sea and are not accustomed to undertake any other profession, if disturbed and displaced like this (especially in the District of Ganjam and Balasore) in the long run we will be totally displaced from our traditional living source i.e. catching fish in the sea. Hence we request you to be sympathetic towards poor people like us and ensure peaceful living to us.

Grievance No.III : "Ban of Trawl and Mechanised Fishing in Orissa Coast"

The marine fish workers class is a community of poor fishermen predominately settled in coastal Orissa stretching from Balasore District to Ganjam District since generations. We and our people by nature are very simple and poor. We are, since generations, living in poverty stricken conditions with no education or social development. Since we are placed at the bottom level and are treated as vulnerable groups of society, we are often subjected to various kinds of social oppression and exploitations just as that of tribals and harijans of the state. We, at present, are leading miserable sub-human life below poverty line. In spite of such social odds, we could sustain ourselves with our simple life style and culture and could preserve our identity as a Marine Fish Workers Class locally known as "NULIAS". We earn our livelihood by fighting with the waves of the sea as there is no other alternative source of living to change our lifestyle in the existing social situation.

We, such miserable people, are at present, located in a critical situation and are victimised and deprived of our traditional living source i.e. catching fish in the sea by the repeated onslaught of clandestine fishing vessels. The Government, to our misfortune, have implemented the above antihuman mechanised fishing scheme which in other words can be called as our destroyers and killers. Had the Government been keen to take note about the poor population of our Fish Workers Community who traditionally live upon the sea, it would not have opted for this anti-human project. No doubt, hypothetically, the planners estimate that vast resources concerning the marine side are available and are expected to be exploited as much as possible to increase the production for earning big chunks of foreign exchange may seem to be attractive and worth encouragement in commercial point of view but actually in practice we can openly say that the said industry is to grow at the cost of we the poor Fish Workers Class. We fear that if this dangerous industry is allowed to be continued, we are destined to starve and become unemployed which will ultimately lead to social unrest and chaos. At present in the present condition, we are destined to starve and become unemployed which will ultimately lead to social unrest and chaos. At present, we are not sure of our younger and future generations. We the poor fish workers class are belonging to self-employed sector and Government is not investing any amount towards preservations of our living source. Hence none should deprive us from such self-employed tradition which has immense relation with nature. In fact, we the poor Fish Workers Class are rendering immense service to the society by supplying cheap and nutritious diet but nobody is mindful about conserving this class. Hence we earnestly pray that you are kind enough to take up this case and pass necessary orders for banning the mechanised fishing once for all.

Grievance No.IV : "To declare the community as Scheduled Caste"

We the Marine Fish Workers Community of Orissa is stated above are known as "NULIAS" which of course practically carries no meaning. It is notice that in our State all the Inland

Fisher Communities, though educationally, socially and economically much more advanced than we, the poor Nulias, are all recognised as Scheduled Caste. In our community there is hardly 2% literacy growth and 70% people are living below the standard of living and there is practice of untouchability against us. We too are confronted with multi dimensional social oppression and exploitations as that of Tribals and Harijans. Unless our community is declared as Scheduled Caste, there is hardly any possibility of our basic development.

Grievance No.V : "To extend the scope of application of Social Beneficial Laws that are enacted for both Tribals and Harijans"

It is seen that our Government has enacted number of Social Beneficial Legislations to Tribals in order to save them from Social Exploitations to which they were subjected to earlier. Our case is also as similar as that of Tribals and Harijans. We are also entitled to such social benefits that are being facilitated to both tribal and harijans. In fact our community and our people also are confronted with many social problems and exploitations. We for number of times requested the Government that ruled us in the past but no action has been taken in this regard to rescue us from the present situation.

We sincerely believe our Hon'ble President of India and repose all our confidence on him that he will be kind enough to take up our case and stand by our side as our saviour and shall promptly take necessary action to eradicate the above problems and for such act of your kindness we shall remain thankful to you.

Yours faithfully

(K.TATAYYA)
Secretary

Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samithi

Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samithi, which was established in the year 1964, has been looking after the interests of fishermen throughout the Maharashtra State especially on the coastal belt covering 720 Kms and also striving to solve the problems and grievances faced by the fishermen.

Achievements Of The Samithi (Union)

All villages on the coastal belt have been covered by fishermen's cooperative movement in that primary, district and state level cooperative organisations have been established throughout the Maharashtra State.

As a result of the work done by the Samithi, the State/Central Government has sanctioned following facilities and concessions.

- a. Sales tax exemption on all the fishing requisites and gears.
 - b. Loans and subsidies under the NCDC scheme for purchase of boats, engines and nets etc.
 - c. Loans and subsidies for building ice factories and for purchase of trucks for transport of fish to various markets.
 - d. Exemption in electricity rate to the extent of 40 paise per unit for the cooperative fishermen's ice factories.
 - e. Exemption in excise duty to the extent of 35 paise per litre to the fishermen who purchase diesel from the fishermen's cooperative societies.
 - f. Lands around fishing villages have been reserved only for fishing industry, such as, drying of fish, repairs to boats and nets keeping the boats on the seashore during monsoon, fishermen's housing societies etc.
 - g. If the fishermen dies during the fishing operation, his family is given financial assistance of Rs.25000/- from the Fishermen's Relief Fund of the State Government.
 - h. Outlay for the fishing industry in the 8th Five year plan has been increased.
 - i. Grant of 15 paise per litre of diesel as subsidy by the State Government, limited to Rs.1000/- per year per boat.
 - j. 50% subsidy for purchase of non mechanised fishing boats limited to Rs.30000/- per boat.
 - k. 25% subsidy to the individual boat owner for purchase of boat and engine limited to Rs.70000/-.
 - l. Maharashtra Fishermen's Regulation Act, 1981, has been passed for protecting the interests of the small fishermen.
 - m. Recovery of Government outstanding loans to the extent of Rs.10000/- has been waived, from those fishermen who are incapable of repaying them.
-

- n. The District Fisheries officers are authorised to grant exemption.

What is necessary to be done in the interest of fishermen as a whole.

1. Even though the fishing is treated on par with the agriculture, there is no proper implementation by the state and central Governments as non-fishing and big traders and companies have been entering the fishing industry. It should be reserved for traditional and bonafide fishermen i.e. for those who have no other means of livelihood other than fishing. Accordingly Government should provide all the facilities which are available to the agriculturists at present, to the fishermen.
2. The entire fishermen community should be treated as scheduled tribe as they are educationally, financially, socially and politically backward.
3. All fishing gears like engines, ropes, boats, diesel, oil etc., should be exempted from sales tax and excise duty throughout the country as is done by the Maharashtra Government.
4. There is a dire and urgent need for modern ports for fishing purpose at every district on coastal belt. A well equipped harbour should be developed and allowed to be used by the fishing boats of the traditional fishermen and not by other traders.

In Maharashtra, only two ports i.e. Sassoon dock and Mirkarwada are in operation. The port at Agar Danda is being opposed by us because it is meant for big boats owned by big industrialists like Tatas and Birlas.

5. Proper dredging should be carried out after making expert survey and after the design is examined by the competent marine engineers.
6. All fishermen employees should be covered under the State Insurance Scheme or Government Insurance Pool. The Government should establish proper authorities for taking care of accidents and other eventualities on the sea during fishing operations.
7. After the age of 60 years, the fisherman worker who has worked all his life on the fishing operations, would be granted periodical pension by the Government as a matter of right, like the labourers engaged in other industries or Government service and not as helpless and supportless individuals.
8. Fishing Regulation Act to protect the small traditional fishermen from intrusion into their fishing area by small and big mechanised boats should be promulgated in the State on the lines of the legislation made applicable by the Maharashtra State Government. This legislation however needs to be properly implemented in Maharashtra also.
9. The industry other than fishing, such as chemical should be banned from operating in the area around the fishing villages so as to guard against the pollution of water, thus saving the rich and nutritious food.

This is very essential for the two reasons

- a. Fishing industry provides employment opportunities to lakhs of fishermen and also earns for the country valuable foreign exchange and

- b. Handling of fish catch, processing and sales should be with the fishermen organisations, such as, Fishermen's Cooperative Societies without allowing the intermediaries to do these operations, so that the fishermen get adequate remuneration and reasonable price.
10. In Maharashtra state, the insurance rate for fishing boats has been raised from more than 2% to 3%. The insurance premium should be brought down to 2% and "No Claim Bonus" facilities should be given at reasonable rate as in case of vehicle insurance.
11. Budget allocations for fishing sector should be increased in the 8th Five year plan. In the 7th plan, meagre outlay was earmarked for the fishing sector.
12. All other State Governments should provide, loans and subsidies of the recommendations of the fishermen organisations and protect small and bonafide fishermen on the lines of the regulations of the Maharashtra State Government.
13. Villages on the coastal belt should have fishermen cooperative societies for helping bonafide and traditional fishermen to get all the facilities at reasonable rates and at local level.
14. Purse-seine net fishing should be banned throughout the country. In Maharashtra state, it has been banned but there is no proper implementation.
15. All District and States Cooperative Banks should have fishermen's representatives in proportion of their population.
16. Recovery of all Government loans outstanding against the fishermen who are incapable of repaying them should be waived.
17. For protecting the environmental balance, reclamation on the seashore and on the banks of rivers and creeks should be banned by the Central and State Governments by undertaking suitable legislation.
18. Western Bombay Freeway is proposed to be constructed on the sea by the Maharashtra State Government connecting Bandra to Nariman Point. Fishing operations will be adversely affected, if this scheme is implemented, as the movement of boats and nets will be rendered impossible by silt and mud that would be created thereby. It would also adversely affect the environment and create pollution.

Well known Chowpatty where people of Bombay come for enjoying fresh air would be deprived of much needed facilities if the freeway is constructed. We have lodged a strong protest with the State Government and also organised morchas on the seas to register our protest against the scheme.

19. A Marine park is proposed to be constructed at Malvan in Sindhudurg District of Maharashtra. If this park is constructed, fishing operations will be adversely affected resulting in unemployment of lakhs of fishermen and other workers who depend upon the fishing business. But the scheme is being pushed through just to meet the enjoyment needs of a few rich people.

Malvan Taluka Shramik Machimar Sangh

Following is the report-cum-letter addressed to the Honourable Chief Minister Mr. Sudhakar Rao Naik of Maharashtra State in connection with the setting up of Oceanic Industrial Centre in the periphery of Malvan coast.

ESTABLISHMENT OF OCEANIC INDUSTRIAL CENTRE IN THE PERIPHERY OF MALVAN COAST

Sir,

It is learnt that the government of Maharashtra has proposed to set up a Marine Sanctuary at Malvan coast in the Sindhudurg district. This, however, will have a direct effect on the livelihood of fishworkers in the area.

These views were exchanged in the meeting held in the presence of Mr. Untawala, the scientist-cum-project officer. The memorandum to this effect was submitted to the concerned authorities of fishery departments of the government. The government, however, has not paid any heed to the proposal. On the contrary, they have had planned to set up the Marine Sanctuary in place of the Marine Park. The fishworkers in the area have been served with the notice accordingly. Our Shramik Machhimar Sangh with more than 5,000 fishworkers took a peaceful march and submitted the memorandum to the Collector of the Sindhudurg district on 7th January 1992. The sangh also registered its protest on 19th January, 1992 with the special officer detailed for the purpose we regret to mention here that the concerned authorities have not taken any note to our protest till date.

It is further informed sir, that the Malvan Shramik Machimar Sangh in its protest rally on 7th September, 1992 rejected the government's proposal as regards setting up a sea sanctuary in the area and took a decision to support the establishment of Oceanic industrial centre instead.

The following is the outline of our proposed industrial centre which is being put up for your perusal.

THE SALIENT FEATURES OF THE OCEANIC INDUSTRIAL CENTRE

1. Malvan is a well protected natural harbour. The coastal area of the Sindhudurg district is full of various fishes in the sea water.
2. Our demand is that the proper utilisation of this natural resources be made and that marine estate be set up.
3. Advance fishing centre to be set up in the centre.
4. Facilities such as important training to fishworkers as regards use of modern fishing techniques and apparatus be made available to them in the centre.
5. Arrangement to be made to make a well equipped laboratory with the schemes of fish production and its implementation. Naval technical school is also to be set up in the centre.
6. Causes of deterioration of various kinds of fishes are to be found out and necessary remedial measures taken up to protect fish.

7. Chemical process of curing be carried out on the procured "catch" and the scheme of storing the fish be brought into practice.
8. Causes of pollution in the sea water be found out and preventive measures to that effect be taken to solve these problems.
9. The definite information as to the fish reservoir and the various currents in the sea and their direction be made available to fishworkers for their knowledge.
10. Maharashtra fishing regulation Act 1981 be scrupulously followed and implemented to protect these sea resources.

Various Sea Trades

Trades complementary to fishery need be set up.

- i. Cold-storage rooms for preserving fish be set up and facilities of Ice factories are also to be made in the sea.
- ii. Curing process on the fishes be made and scheme of keeping the fishes in air-tight containers be carried out.
- iii. Factories in the area be set up to extract oil from the fishes.
- iv. Shipyard in the area be set up so that carpenters and various other technical personnel may get jobs.
- v. Many businessmen and co-operative societies will help fishworkers to get various implements, nets, ropes, oil paint etc. for use in ship building.
- vi. For transportation, fish truck drivers will get jobs.
- vii. Constant use of engine spare parts, engine repair etc., will fetch jobs to the people in the area.
- viii. Small industries connected with fishing business will flourish.
- ix. It will be easy to get the foreign market with collaboration of commercial and co-operative institutions. Many skilled, unskilled workers, will get jobs.

Thus, the establishment of the industrial centre in the area will fetch jobs to the people in Malvan. A tremendous change in coastal area of Deogad, Vengurla and Malvan will take place because of this industrial centre.

We, therefore, request your honour sir, to render preference in establishing the centre as early as possible.

Thanks.

Yours faithfully

Shri. Ramesh R. Dhuri

Copy to:

- 1) Hon. Minister for fishing and shipbuilding
- 2) Director of Fisheries
- 3) Asst. Director of Fisheries
- 4) Collector, Sindhudurg Dist. Maharashtra
- 5) Forest Office, Kankavali, Maharashtra.

Sub:- Restriction on any construction within 500 m from high tide.

The centre vide it's notification dated 19th February 1991 have stated those sea Restricted zones as regards to construction in the sea. No construction within the above mentioned zones be carried out without the prior permission from the central department of Environment and Forest at the centre. Secretary of the environment and forest have issued the notification to this effect to Tahasildars through, collectors or the districts of the concerned coastal areas.

The orders are to be strictly followed.

DAKSHIN BANGA MATSYAJIBI FORUM (DMF) ANNUAL REPORT - 1992

Taking off from where we ended last year, the main thrust of the organisational activities of the union this year was (i) to register the union (ii) to consolidate the bases and the expand it (iii) to carry on the fishworkers' struggles at the local, state and national levels.

1. We took up the task of registration of the union as No.1 priority. For achieving this target we had to divert most of our energy and attention towards this for the first few months of this year. We are happy to say that the West Bengal Union has been registered (under the Indian Trade Union Act, of 1926) as Dakshin Banga Matsyajibi Forum (D.M.F).

2. Most of the bases in all the districts have been further strengthened and the old bases in the Sundarbans have been consolidated. In addition, DMF has expanded its organisation further in five new coastal villages and now covers the whole of the estuarine fisheries of the Sundarbans. The new villages are Amlamethi, Mathurakhand, Pakhirala, Sukumari, Satjelia and Choto Mollahkhali all in the district of South 24 Parganas.

3. In the continuation of the activities of the previous years constant efforts were made to carry on the campaign and create public opinion against trawling, through posters, leaflets, mass rallies, Dharnas, Workshop, group discussion and public meeting. This propoganda was at its peak and attained a state wide shape during the Joint Action Struggle campaign programme from 20th August to 25th September. It will be narrated later.

4. We had Smt. Nalini Nayak in West Bengal from 8th to 15th February when she visited Kakdwip, Mamkhana and Jharkhali units of the union. In all the above mentioned places we organised group discussion, workers meet and exposure programme.

5. The NFF Chairperson Mr. Thomas Kocherry had been to West Bengal from 6th to 11th March. During the visit he initiated the joint struggle programme as per the decision of the last General Body. We had a mass Dharna on 7th March in front of the BDO. During the discussion with the BDO the DMF delegation was lead by Mr. Thomas Kocherry.

A similar Dharna was organised in front of the office of the Director of Sundarban Tiger project at canning on 10th March. The delegation to and the discussion with the authorities was lead by Thomas Kocherry.

5.2. In the memorandum to the BDO. Kakdwip our demands were:

- i) Complete ban on trawling
- ii) Enactment and implementation of Marine fishing regulation act in West Bengal.
- iii) Issuing Ration Cards and Identity Cards to the fish workers without discrimination against refugees.
- iv) Tubewells for drinking water in the fishermen villages.
- v) Subsidy on diesel and other fishing inputs, etc.
- vi) To bring back the Indian Fishing boats taken away by Bangladesh authority.

5.3. To the Director of the Tiger project our demands included:

- i) Complete ban on prawn seed collection by mosquito nets in the estuaries.
- ii) Issuing the fishing passes from offices in the field areas instead of Canning, Head Quarter.
- iii) Issuing B.L.C.s to actual fishermen instead of the absentee owners.
- iv) Compensation for the loss of job of the fishworkers due to ban on fishing during the honey collection in March-April and May every year.
- v) To involve the fish workers in the process of management of the mangrove forests.
- vi) To protect the fishworkers from pirates.etc.

5.4. Results: The B.D.O. of Kakdwip expressed his sympathy for the struggle during discussion and assured that he would forward the demands to the relevant authorities with his opinion. Specifically he assured that he would provide with tubewell and also his office would work out the methodology of out letting diesel to the fishing boats on a subsidised rate. In fact he allotted 2 borewells for two of the fishermen's villages marked by us. But unfortunately the local leaders of the Panchayat compelled the officials to sink these borewells in two other villages on the plea that the people of our marked villages were newcomers from Bangladesh and so did not have the right to enjoy any facility here. To our utter frustration similar is the case with the identity cards of the fish workers. Bangladesh refugee fisher people are totally denied of these identity cards on the same plea.

Although these refugees constitute almost whole of the fishing workforce at Kakdwip, the attitude of the Central and state governments towards the B.D.refugees has further aggravated the situation and paved the way of whole sale exploitation of these poor refugee fishworkers by every interested quarter. This point need separate and fuller discussion as an issue.

5.5. In the Tiger Project the authority has responded and implemented total ban on use of mosquito nets in the project area. They agreed to issue fishing passes from places suggested by us - which is under process. The transfer of the B.L.C.'s from the absentee owners to the actual fishermen is also in progress though we have received some instances of malpractice by some powerful political groups and individuals.

6. We conducted a motivational camp at Jharkhali on 25th and 26th June 1992 as a follow up of the decision of the last NFF General Body. Our activists from all over Sundarbans participated the camp. Total no. who participated were 42.

7. We had a deputation to the Director of State Fisheries in Calcutta on 3rd August and submitted a memorandum with our demands. The main demands included stopping monoculture of prawn, ban on trawling and mosquito nets, enactment and implementation of Marine Fishing Regulation Act, bringing back the fishing boats stranded in Bangladesh and implementation of housing schemes pension and identity cards without discrimination.

7.1 Result: The director of fisheries was supportive of our demand of a comprehensive fishing regulation Act also he assured that he would work for bringing back the stranded fishing boats, and also look into the proper implementation of housing and pension schemes. But he clearly expressed his differences from our stand regarding the trawling and prawn policy. It is an ironical coincidence that the state government negotiated and settled a Rs. 1300 crore prawn production oriented project with a Thai based multinational company on the same day.

7.2. Memoranda were submitted to union Agriculture Minister, Union External Affairs Minister, Fisheries Commissioner, Government of India, West Bengal Fisheries Minister on different occasions. Among the major demands were (1) complete ban on trawling (2) Introduction of a comprehensive fishing regulation act (3) Abolition of export oriented fisheries policy (4) Ban on mosquito nets (5) Regeneration of mangroves to protect fish resources. (6) To involve fisherpeople for the management of mangroves (7) compensation for fishermen during honey collecting period restricting them fishing in the Sundarban, (8) proper compensation to the fishermen who received bullet injury by deep sea vessels (9) Rescue of the fishing boats taken away by Bangladesh authority (10) Subsidy on fishing inputs etc.

No positive result or even any response in the matter has been received as yet.

7.3. As a part of the joint struggle programme drawn up in the General Body meeting 1991, we organised a campaign programme throughout the estuarine areas of the Sundarban and also in Kakdwip from 20th to 24th August, 1992. The programme began from Chotomollakhali, a fishermen village close to Bangladesh border. the central team consisted of the General Secretary of the NFF, Harekrishna Debnath, Hiralal Das Roy (Freedom Fighter), Treasurer of DMF, Nirmalendu Das and Shyamal Kumar Mandal, President and General Secretary of DMF respectively and leaders of social unit of DMF. We covered 5 islands and as many as 10 fishermen villages around the Sundarbans, the programme included padayatra, processions, poster campaign, public meetings, rally, dharna etc. On 20th August a procession, mass rally and public meeting was organised at Chotomollakhali from morning to noon. In the afternoon we went to Satjelia Bazaar in a procession covering 12 kms. The procession went around the neighbouring fishermen villages and a public meeting was held at Satjelia Bazaar in the afternoon. On 21st morning we went to Sukumari village in the procession covering a distance of 7 km. After holding a procession in the locality a public meeting was held there. There we started for Rangabelia in a procession covering a distance of 5 kms. and from there the procession proceeded to Pakhirala, a fisherman village close to the Sundarbans and reached there at noon covering a distance of 7 kms. A public meeting was held at the camp of the Range officer of Tiger Project. A memorandum was submitted to the Range Officer highlighting the principal demands of the estuarine fishermen. On the 22nd the central team along with fishermen and women reached the neighbouring island in a procession and reached Amlamethi village covering a distance of 12 kms. The procession went upto Mathweakhanda, another fishermen village group meetings were held and in the afternoon a public meeting was held at Amlamethi. On the 23rd the team went to the neighbouring island and reached Gharkhali at noon in a procession. In the afternoon there was a big procession that paraded the entire village of Gharkhali and the neighbouring localities and public meeting was held. In all the meetings and procession fishermen and women took active part with great enthusiasm. On the 24th August there was a mass rally in front of the office of field Director of Tiger Project at Canning. Fishermen from Gharkhali, Amlamethi, Mathweakhanda, Pakhirals, Sukumari, Satjelia and Chotomollakhali took active part in the rally. A memorandum was handed over to the Director with the demands like- (i) Ban on mosquito net every where in the Sundarbans, (ii) compensation

to the fishermen for restricting their fishing during honey collection period. (iii) Regeneration of mangrove to protect fish resources (iv) to involve fisherpeople for the management of the mangroves (v) promulgation of a comprehensive fishing regulation act (vi) protection of fishermen from the pirates etc.

Similar campaign programme were organised at Kakdwip in the form of procession and public meetings under the leadership of Gadadhar Das, Dilip Chakravorty, Sakti Sarma and other fishermen leaders on the 23rd August.

Fisheries Status

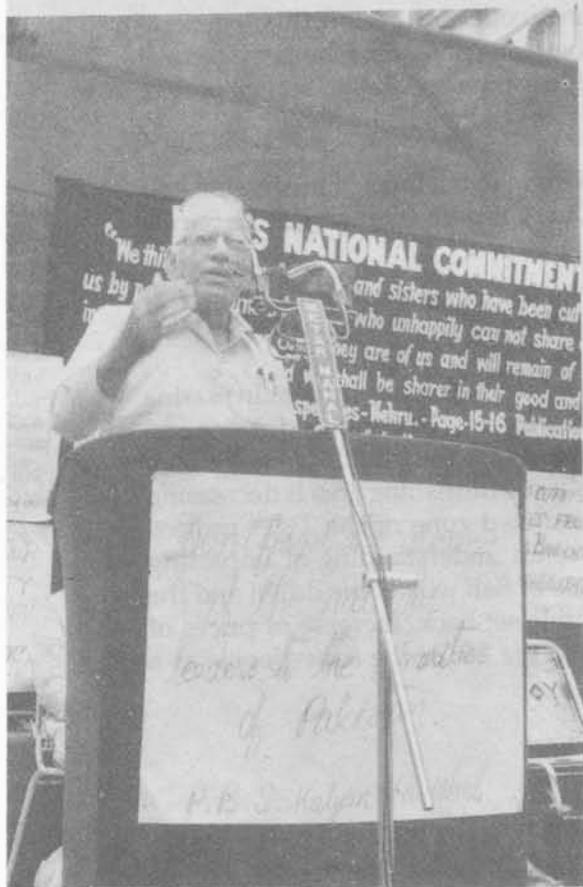
The condition of the fisheries sector in West Bengal is deteriorating day by day. In marine sector has been serious decline in catch for two successive years. Increasing violence and atrocities by trawlers in the sea have become so rampant that the traditional fishermen are frightened to go the sea for fishing. In estuarine fisheries the fishing area is decreasing day by day as the Government is expanding the restricted zone of the Tiger project. Recently the government of West Bengal has come to an understanding of importing Hilsa fish from Bangladesh as result of which the price of fish will come down and the fishermen of west Bengal will suffer a serious economic set back. Increase of prices of fishing inputs has increased the economic problems in the life of the fisherpeople as a whole.

Future Planning

1. This year we have planned to expand our organisation to the northern part of West Bengal and to cover the entire areas of the state.
2. We have taken up a programme of exploring the possibilities of conducting net weaving work among the fisherwomen of Kakdwip. Preliminary work in the form of a survey is in progress in collaboration with ICSF.
3. This year we shall organise bigger movement specially for the complete ban on trawling, ban on mosquito net in the entire area of the Sundarban, promulgation of a comprehensive fishing regulation act and other zonal and local demands.
4. This is the Bi-centenary year of Rani Rasmoni who created history for the protection of fishing right in the river Ganga as well as the right of the working class as a whole during the company's rule. We have a plan to observe the bi-centenary celebration of the great lady in a befitting manner.

The National leaders support the refuge

Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer



Ms. Medha Patkar



Mr. Sunderlal Bahuguna

NFF takes up the refugee issue in West Bengal



The Freedom Fighters

NFF takes up the refugee issue in West Bengal



in Calcutta

RANI RASMONI

Rani Rasmoni was born in a small village named Kona near Haliashahar on the eastern bank of river Ganga about 60 Kilometres north of Calcutta on 24th, September 1793 in a very poor Kaibarta family. 'Kaibarta' is one of the traditional fishing communities of Bengal. She was the youngest of the three children and the only daughter of Hare Krishna Das and Rampriya Das. "Rani" was her nick name in childhood which was spontaneously refined to the name "Rasmoni" by the people as a token of love, respect and recognition of the elegant and dignified character, uncompromising and struggling attitude for the protection and upliftment of the poor downtrodden and women and for her matchless charity and services for the people. At the age of seven she lost her mother and was looked after by her widow aunt who lived in their family. Rasmoni's life took a miraculous turn when she entered in to the booming city of company's Calcutta from a poor remote village like Kona as the third wife of Raj Chandra Das the son of a new rich and flourishing businessman's family in 1804 at the age of eleven only. It was an unimaginable match for the daughter of poor Hare Krishna Das. The two other wives of Raj Chandra died immediately after the marriage of each one and he was not willing to marry any more. But it was merely by chance that Raj Chandra chose to marry Rasmoni whom he saw on the bathing ghat of the Ganga while passing that way by boat. His decision to marry again was due to the earnest desire of his parents but his choice of such a socio-economically uneven match was promoted by his spirit of breaking the customary practice of matches between equal status with dowry. It was the budding period of Renaissance of Bengal and the thinking of the new generation of Bengalees in the city of Calcutta immensely influenced Raj Chandra.

In spite of her rural background little Rasmoni nicely fitted herself with the then rapidly growing urban life and within a few years became the guiding spirit of the Janbazaar estate. When most of the Bengali elites in Calcutta, specially the new rich, were rapidly westernising themselves in every walk of life indiscriminately renouncing their traditions, it is due to Rasmoni that the Janbazaar estate uniquely synthesised the traditional practices and modern thinking and took a leading role in social welfare and social reforms. Raj Chandra was 20 years older than Rasmoni and died at the age of 53. Until the death of her husband Rasmoni seldom came out in public. There is no denying that in most of activities of her benevolent husband she had an active initiative, support and inspiration. During this period the family accumulated enormous wealth through business and was established as a big landlord by purchasing zamindaries. (During this period Raj Chandra established an old age home like a palace at Nimtala ghat in Calcutta, took an active part in establishing the first bank in Calcutta in 1829 as one of its founder directors, set up two bathing ghats in Calcutta, donated huge amount to educational institution, dug out tanks for drinking water of their subjects, arranged for free education for a number of students in the city including the erstwhile Babu Road presently renamed as Rani Rasmoni Road and constructed the famous Babughat in 1830, opened a gruel kitchen for feeding the flood-victims of 1823, donated Rs.10,000/- to establish a library in Calcutta and offered his land free of cost for constructing the bridge over the Beliaghata canal. He built up the Janbazaar palace (presently known as Rasmoni House) at the cost of Rs.25 lakhs on one hectare of lands at the heart of the city. It took 8 years to complete the construction works in 1821) Ignoring the disapproval of the Hindu society the couple supported the movement of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in all respects for abolishing Sati system (burning of the widow with her deceased husband).

After the death of her husband the Rani assumed the leadership of the Janbazaar estate. She not only kept the business and property intact but also increased it manifold absolutely in her own capacity. Besides continuing the social welfare works initiated by her husband she involved herself in many more activities. The gravity of this leadership

of Rani Rasmoni needs to be judged at the backdrop of the then conservative, caste ridden and Brahmin dominated Hindu society. Slightest involvement of the widows in any outdoor socio-economic and even religious activity was totally taboo at that time.

She had an inherent zeal to work for the liberation of women and protection and upliftment of the poor and toiling masses. Among her innumerable benevolent activities, we mention a few here:

- 1) For the prevention of the cruel "Sati" system e.g. burning the wife with the diseased husband, she together with her husband gave all out support to and took active part in the movement of Raja Ram Mohan Roy.
- 2) At that time child marriage, especially of girl children under nine years, was a prevailing custom of the Hindus. In many cases the difference of age of the bride and groom would be very big resulting in the widowing of a large number of very young women in the society. Widow remarriage was taboo. But there was no restriction for the male on marrying any number of girls—no matter whether he was a bachelor or widower or having spouse. Rani Rasmoni was greatly pained at this plight of the women and wanted to break away this custom. She was an ardent advocate to allow the girl children to grow up before marriage and also to reduce the difference of age between the bride and groom as far as possible. Ignoring the very strong opposition of the orthodox Hindus she stood firmly and settled the marriage of her 13 year old grown up daughter with a person who was only two days older than the bride.

She took a strong position in favour of enactment of a law providing widow marriage and supported Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's efforts in this direction which ultimately met a success in 1856. In the same year Rani Rasmoni involved herself in a fresh movement to stop the polygamy of the Hindu males. She submitted a draft bill for enactment to the Board of Directors of the Company, the then law makers. It was printed and published by Mr. Calbyl, a member of the Board.

- 3) In addition to the vast and fast-flowing Ganga there were a number of rivers, rivulets, lakes & lagoons with plenty of fish surrounding Calcutta at that time, and there was a big community of fisher folk in many areas which has been eaten up by the growing city over the last 2/3 centres. Still there are many areas which resembles the names of different fishes such as Beliaghata, Tengra, Chingraghata, Topsia, Putiary, Kaikhali and bears the memory of heydays of the fisherpeople of Calcutta. For increasing its income the company imposed taxes on different activities of the people that affected many and there was a growing dissatisfaction among the masses. In the meantime Rasmoni also was well known for her fighting spirit specially for the cause of the people and over the years she did hit the head lines of the then news papers many time for her activities.

Suddenly the Company imposed a tax on fishing in the Ganga. When the fishers declined to pay the taxes and demanded their traditional right of fishing without any hindrance, the company used force and did not allow the fishermen to fish without paying taxes. Many were beaten and their nets were destroyed. The poor fisherfolk failed to resist. They approached Rasmoni for redress. She assured them of all possible efforts for their struggle for rights and also provided with some immediate relief materials for their survival. Rasmoni knew that it was not possible to resist the rulers by force. So she chalked out a different strategy. Through her men she cleverly managed to get the lease of about 5 kilometre lap of the Ganga from Ghusuri to Metiaburuj e.g. from the northern to the southern end of the city covering both the

port and the fort. In the meantime all fishing activities in the Ganga was completely halted. As soon as she got the lease document in hand she ordered her men to put strong iron chains across the Ganga at both of the ends of her lease area overnight. Also she ordered all the fish workers to go for fishing in the leased area with their crafts and gears. A thousand fish workers went to the river with their boats and nets in a festive mood. To their utter surprise the city dwellers and administrators saw that the river was chained at both of the ends of the leased area. Together with the iron chain of Rasmoni the fishermen put their ropes along the river and virtually it looked like a fencing of ropes on the Ganga preventing the movement all kind of vessels in the area. Many fisher people were guarding the fence with their boats while others were fishing with great enthusiasm. The news spread far and wide very quickly. Thousands of people flocked to the bank of the Ganga and admired the courage and intelligence of Rasmoni. It was the first organised people's resistance against the British. The rulers summoned Rani by the Supreme Court and asked her to remove the barrier and facilitate the movement of Cargo and other ships. Rani argued that as a lease she had the right to manage the area according to her convenience and that she did not allow the ships and other vehicles for the protection of fishing right of her people. In reply to the request of the authority to allow the passage for ships through the area she reiterated that it is against the interest of the fishermen because these ships not only destroys their nets but also frightens the fish resulting in drastic decrease in catch. She also mentioned that she had no intention of taking lease of the river but it is the company's imposition of taxes and restrictions on the traditional fishing right of the fishermen which forced her to do so.

At last the authorities surrendered unconditionally and lifted all restrictions and taxes on fishing right of the fisherfolk for ever by an agreement and refunded the entire amount of ten thousand rupees lease money to Rani Rasmoni. As per that tradition fisher people do not need to pay any tax for fishing in the Ganga till to day and there is no 'panidari' system in the Ganga in Bengal whereas the same Panidari is still in practice in Bihar and some other places. This heroic act of Rani Rasmoni spread all over Bengal and made her the undisputed champion of the fisherpeople. Still one can hear ballads about Rani Rasmoni in a remote fisherfolk village.

Even today one can see the gigantic iron pillar with a piece of chain by the side of the Adi Bhutnath Temple near Nimtale Ghat in north Calcutta with which the iron chains were tied for the blockade of the Ganga. This also can give one the idea about the breadth of the Ganga 150 years ago and the area reclaimed in the mean time.

- 4) Whites were given the right to purchase and cultivate land in India by the Chartered Act of Lord Bentick. By dint of this many whites either acquired lands or advanced loan to poor farmers and compelled them to cultivate indigo instead of food grain and other cash-crops. Export of indigo to Europe was a lucrative and monopoly business of the whites and within a few years most of the fertile lands went under forcible indigo cultivation, resulting in a famine situation in Bengal. When farmers declined to cultivate indigo, they were tortured, jailed and even killed. The white indigo merchants created a reign of terror in rural Bengal. The poor victims did not get justice because all of the judges and magistrates at that time were whites and also there was racial discrimination in the law itself. Rasmoni was fully aware of this situation through the farmers of her Jamindari areas. The poor cultivators of Makimpur Parganas under Rasmoni's ownership came to her with the complaint of atrocities by the indigo merchant lead by one Mr. Donald. Rani decided to enter into a straight fight and sent the farmers back to the villages with a written order to her manager in that area to teach Donald a good lesson and also send group of 50 'lathials' (Private

guards) to help the farmers in the fight. The farmers backed by Rasmoni punished Donald and his men seriously. They turned out the indigo merchants from the area. This created an instance and spread far and near. By the year 1859 lakhs of cultivators joined in a country wide struggle known as the great indigo revolt. In 1860 in famous Bengali drama "Nil Darpan" about the plight of the indigo cultivators was written by Dinabandu Mitra. The drama was translated into English by poet Michael Madhu Sudan Dutta and printed and published by Rev. James Long. This drama was staged everywhere by the people and it kindled fire along the length and breadth of the land. Rev. James Long was fined and imprisoned. The crown had to set up the historic Indigo Commission in 1860 which ultimately led to the establishment of peace and freed the farmers from the grip of the indigo merchants. Once again Rasmoni became the part of the history of a gallant struggle of the toiling masses.

- 5) Once again Rasmoni shook the entire administration and society by an unique action. The usual annual procession of the Puja festival from the palace to the Ganga with bands was stopped by the company's soldiers. Rasmoni reacted promptly and arranged for a bigger procession the next day. She was served with a show-cause notice by the authority which she tore and threw into the dustbin in front of the officer who served it. She was fined Rs.50/- for non-compliance of the government order. She paid it quietly. But within a few days everyone was astonished to see that Rasmoni fenced entire lap of 3 kilometres of Road from her place near new market to Babughat with strong wooden logs which blocked the city's three main thorough fare from north to south. Virtually the entire city traffic came to a stand-still. Government went to the court and Rani Rasmoni established there that she enclosed only the area owned by her family and fenced the road built by the family and that the government violated her right. She won the suit. Ultimately the government surrendered to her, refunded the fine of Rs.50/- and assured uninterrupted celebration of the traditional practices of the people of the city and the blockade was removed.

Though she was very much against the oppression of the foreigners Rasmoni did not support the Sipoy Mutiny of 1857. She expressed that the British rule was undoubtedly bad and undesirable but the victory of the mutineers would be a worse situation because the revolt was based on religious fanaticism. She referred to the issue of hog and bovine tallow in cartridges.

Rasmoni built a road from the western bank of the Subarnarekha to Puri, dugout many tanks for drinking water, cut a connecting canal to join the Naba Ganga with the Madhumati for irrigation and sewage and a number of bathing ghats, roads and markers. But the gorgeous Temple complex at Dakshineswar about 6 kilometres north of Calcutta stands on the bank of Ganga as a symbol of uncompromising fighting spirit of Rani Rasmoni against the unjust religious dictums.

Lower castes of the Hindu society were debarred from establishing from any religions institution for public use. Rules for the women of the lower castes were most stringent. The decision of Rasmoni to construct such an institution was itself an act of great courage and she had to face the opposition of almost the entire higher caste people and was virtually boycotted by them. But she was undaunted and completed the construction and every other bit of rituals properly. For the whole affair she had to spend Rs.12 lakhs at that time. This institution served as the order for Swami Vivekananda the great revolutionary monk and social reformer and also became an alter for preaching religions harmony.

In the words of Margaret Elizabeth Noble (Sister Nivedita) "from human point of view had there been no temple at Dakshineswar we could not get Sri.Ram Krishna; had there been no Sri.Ram Krishna, Swami Vivekananda would not have come; the entire matter depended on the establishment of a temple complex in the mid nineteenth century on the Ganga to the north of Calcutta and that also is the result of the devotion of a rich women of the lower caste".

Rasmoni died on the 19th February 1861 at the age of 58.

One can see the marble statue of Rani Rasmoni in the Curzon Park near the long distance Bus Terminus at Esplanade in Calcutta. 1993 will be bi-centenary year of Rani Rasmoni.

(Nirmalendu Das)

(Shyamal Kumar Mandal)

President

General Secretary

CHILKA BACHAO ANDOLAN

Annual Report

Crisis in Chilika Lagoon and Initiation of a People's Movement

Chilika is bedecked with natural beauty and pregnant with natural wealth. It is famed as the largest lagoon in India. Geographically three sides of it are encircled by a chain of villages (more than three thousand) of Ganjam and Puri district. At the another side it meets the Bay of Bengal at two points.

40% of the people in these villages live by fishing prawns from Chilika. The remaining 60%, though not a fishing people, eke out a living by doing small businesses relating to fish of Chilika. In toto, fish of Chilika directly is the mainstay of the economy for nearly 98% of the people of that locality. As fish of Chilika is the mainspring of their earning it plays a vital role in the social life of both fishing and non-fishing people. It is seen that there is always an antagonism between the fishing group itself due to distribution of area for other reasons. For this sort of atmosphere Government policy and political machination are chiefly responsible.

Legally the entire area of Chilika has been leased out to a CENTRAL FISHERMEN MARKETING CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY Ltd, BALUGAOM. The Council distributes different plots to different village-level council. Once again the village-level-council distributes its own area among villagers in form of lease. Sometimes, the villagers lease out their plots to big businessmen for higher value.

The fish business at Chilka is rife with complexities. Here the Government earns a lot in form of royalty by leasing out lands. At a rough estimate it gets six hundred crores of foreign currency. Different agents and middle-men earn lakhs of rupees by taking resort to unfair means. But those who are actual fishing people (locally called NoliaA) are economically worse off and lead a life of suppression.

In 1986 a new thing happened in history of land of Chilika—the Orissa Government signed a treaty with Tatas to lease out 1,400 hectares of land of Chilika for prawn cultivation project. It was fixed that the Government would get 49% of the total income. But the present Government, keeping the treaty intact brought about change in economic terms. Now it is decided that the Tatas will give 834 rupees annually for each hectare of land. For this project a long embankment of 13.7 kilometres has been constructed from Barkudi village of Brahmagiri block to village Gambhari of Krusnaprasad block, with a width of 40 feet and height 30 feet. It will create 90 vast tank-like areas for cultivation of prawns.

Grievances Of Local People

1. Within the leasehold land given to the Tata (1400 hectors), there is a comparatively high land. At that place people anchor their canoes for fishing. More so when the water recedes from that place, people use that for grazing their cattle and buffaloes. Now people are getting terribly affected as it has been leased out to the Tatas.

2. Now Tatas have started constructing a dam across it. Naturally fish will get confined to dam area only. They can not come to other side of it. It also closes the way of Chilika. It also closes the access of boats to Chilika for fishing. Obviously it will affect their economic conditions.
 3. The rain water of that area and also water of river Luna, Bhargavi and Daya are being drained to Chilika. Because of the construction of an embankment the drainage process will stop. Consequently cultivatable lands of more than 35,000 hectares in 80 panchayats of Kanas, Bhahmagiri, Sakhigopal and Krunaprasad Block area will be submerged under water for longer period. And it will render the land uncultivable. Regarding this water logging and drainage problems, the Chief Engineer of Irrigation department, Sri. Banambara Das in his report has sounded a warning to the Government of Orissa.
 4. Now the situation in Chilika has become critical. Officials of the Tatas have won over some local agent by giving bribes. These people work as musclemen for the Tatas. They have started terrorising the common village folk. They try to entice, some people by promising jobs in their concern. But in reality only 480 people will get employment in this project and out of it 80 posts are technical in nature. Locally technical personal are not available to be employed there. 200 persons functioning on the ponds can be employed from the locality. As it often happens a few people will be employed as class four employees. Barring a few, approximately 15000 families will suffer a tremendous economic loss directly. Many will be forced to leave their home land.
 5. Once the Tatas enter the process of production, they will try to have a monopoly over it. Ultimately it will decide the price for prawns in Chilika. Small fishing people and businessmen will sustain a terrible loss.
 6. After the take over by the Tatas, a different social culture will emerge. Liquor and flesh trade will go on increasing. Goondaism will enjoy its best days. Consequently, smooth easy life of the village will be violently ruffled.
 7. Now it is seen in the area that prices of essential commodities have started rising after Tata's takeover. Naturally the cost of living of that area will become unmanageable for common people.
 8. It will also create an environmental problem. Different prawn processing factories will be set-up. Huge amount of garbage will heap up in the nearby places. Polluted water will be drained into Chilika. All these will render the area inhabitable for human beings. The land of this area is salty which will lose productivity due to calcium shortage.
 9. Prawns take 80 to 90 days to grown up to 50 grams (highest) in natural process, modern artificial prawn project of Tatas will take 30 to 40 days to make it 250 gm to 300 gm. Even if may make bigger than that, production per season per hectares will vary form 6 tones to 10 tones. So heavy use of pesticides fertilizers and chemicals will help to achieve the target. The internal contaminated water from prawn ponds will be emptied into Chilika. It will help polluting the water to a large area causing death to the fish in Chilika and prevent birds to land on water. Every day 150 water lifting pumps of 200 H.P. will work for 18 hours to empty the toxic water into Chilika (according to project report of Tatas).
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10. As the water passage is being blocked, the process of sedimentation will be speeded up. Presently 13 million tones of sediments is being deposited in the Chilika lake. A survey report of the then Chief-irrigation Engineer Banambar Bas says that at least 35000 acres of cultivable land will be submerged due to the Tata embankment. Now as the water of the rivers like Daya, Bhargavi, Luna & Cania are unable flow out through Dahikhia Channel into sea, due to the Tata embankment. Thousands of acres of land in Kanas Brahmagiri and Krushnaprasad Block is submerged this year causing immense loss to the farmers.
11. It is customary that Government should serve notice to the people about the lease of the land. But this has not been done. Lands of different fishing societies like Mangala Society of Barakudi. Society of Baudapada and Society of Harada are coming under the leasehold land of Tata and primary co-operative society.
12. It has been fixed that the Tatas would give 834 rupees per hectors of land annually. But people are ready to give same amount if they will be provided with same facilities. Now people are asking in what respect they are inferior to the Tatas that the Government invited them to enter Chilika.
13. If the Government feels that people are not acquainted with modern technical knowledge on cultivation of prawn, they could have been given training about it. But what is the real motive of the Government to lease out Chilika when it will add grist to the mill of exploitation ?

Besides these major grievances there are 57 other points for which people of Brahmagiri and Krushnaprasad block are opposing entry of the Tatas into their area. People are quite unhappy with this policy of the Government. If timely steps are not taken to redress the grievances of the people, it may take a turn of REVOLUTION.

Past Action Plan

The worsening condition of Chilika and the Chilika people has compelled sensitive activities, to think seriously and to act dynamically. The situation with total perspective in view, needs a value based movement to bring the total management back to the people of Chilika who live on it. Now it is going to be snatched away from them by the Tatas with the support of Government. This necessitates that we act with a purpose and determination to build up a people's movement to stop Government's anti-people policy and to wrest Chilika from the clutches of imperialists and compradors. Before it, let us look at the existing problems there and those who stand on our way to build up a people's movement.

Major Hindrances And Organisation Pattern

1. The Tatas hold the bait of job opportunity before young people of the locality to nip the movement in the bud. But facts run contrary to it. Most of the jobs are of technical in nature. Local people won't be able to avail it. And quantitatively, it is quite meagre.
2. The situation is grave due to rivalry between fishing and non-fishing community. And also among the fishing community itself. It goes against the spirit of unity which is most essential for a movement. The antagonism persists because of the Government policy and also caste sentiment is being exploited by some wily people for their own interest.

3. The Government policy regarding Chilika is not clear. It is so framed that it will breed conflicts naturally and will weaken people's unity. For example, lease-hold lands are not clearly demarcated. It creates the problems of ownership. In this situation only the rule of the jungle prevails.
4. Providing security to lease holders.
5. The basic criterion for a movement is the faith of people in themselves to spearhead a movement. But unfortunately at Chilika people lack faith due to their disunity and due to the machinations of politicians and the Tatas. The Tatas have spread a reign of terror there. Professional goods are employed to terrorise people. It has also gained over some local people by greasing their palm. Fear has paralysed people.

In order to overcome those shortcomings we have built up a strong organisation with one aim but multi-faceted in terms of activities. A brief sketch of the Organisation pattern.

1. The fishing community has an organisation named "Chilika Banchao Andolan". It is functioning under the guidance of honest and dedicated leadership. Now our duty is to energize it, infuse new blood into it by renovating the organisation patten. This "Chilika Banchao Andolan" is leading the movement.
2. A vibrant youth organisation has been formed to give a solid support to the movement, under the name of Krantadarsi Yuba Sangam mobilisation of students all around Chilika and outside, is essential. In the universities and colleges "Meet The Student" is being organised to make the students understand that Chilika's paradise is in peril. The intention is to realise anti-people stands of the Govt, Tatas and destruction of Chilika.
3. A dynamic wing is working to outwit the imperialists. It is working diplomatically. Its action is to spread the news, and to collect information from different sources.
4. It is informed that goondas are being hired from Puri wrestling houses(Aksharagharas). At Puri people's opinion is gradually getting momentum to stop it there.
5. An "intellectual forum" and "citizens forum" have been formed to fight for human rights and justice.
6. A lobby is to be formed in the Assembly and secretariat of the proper persons to pressurise Government to yield to the demands of the people.
7. Nation wide contacts should be exploited to raise the issue at higher level forums and also mobilise opinion in favour of the people.
8. A lobby of eminent intellectuals at Delhi and other metropolitan cities all over the country are needed to highlight the issues more sharply and to extend a moral pressure on Government.
9. Local people are contributing something towards the entire expenses. But the agitation ought not to be burdensome to the people. More and more persons, forums and organisations should come forward for financial help.

Strategy For Action

Keeping the above mentioned things in mind, a strategy had been devised to take effective and tactful moves to achieve the goals. Action has started from different angles.

1. A case should be lodged in the Supreme court to safeguard the interests of the people and protect their rights.
2. People should be educated about their problems. Not only college students but also different eminent personalities should go to that place to make the people aware of the gravity of the problem.
3. Revolution should be launched for a short-term aim-removal of Tata from Chilika. A long term aim is to give power to the hands of people. i.e., management of Chilika should be in the hands of a committee formed by people who live on Chilika. That will be like an Apex body over the village level co-operative societies. Village autonomy should be kept up.
4. Vigorous steps should be taken to create harmonious conditions between the fishing and non-fishing community and also within the fishing community itself.

Action Taken So Far

When "Meet The Students" got to know about Tata's entrance into Chilika, immediately it started for a fact finding mission. From 5th-11th August of 1991 some students from "Meet The Students" Utkal University led by noted social activist Sri.Chittarajan made massive but deep contacts with the people of Chilika. They covered 62 villages which are going to be directly affected due to Tata's entrance. Now people there, were prepared to raise their voice against Tata.

On 12th August 1991 a meeting was arranged inside the University campus to make other aware of the situation. There they resolved to launch a long-term fight against the imperialists. Here also it was decided to arrange a meeting of intellectuals and to seek their support.

As per the decision, on 13th August 1991 a meeting with intellectuals was arranged, and people like Dr.Bhabagrahi Misra, Pradyamna Bal (editor Pragatibadi) Banka Behari Das (Kisan Leader) A.K.Dash, Prof.Indarnil Chakraborty, Prof.Chittaranjan Das (Eminent Thinker) and Gangadhar Panigrahi (Eminent Advocate) and others graced the meeting. These intellectuals took an unanimous decision to form a platform "Chilika Surakshya Parisad". A.K.Dash and Sri.Chittaranjan were its convenor. Here also "Swadhikar" and GASS (Ganatantra Adhikar Surkashya Samit) pledged to support the issue and work for a resolution.

On that day a press conference was also arranged. People from Chilika area had come to that conference. Before the reporters they aired their views and feelings. Both intellectuals and press people assured them to visit their areas and asses the situation.

On 14th, 15th and 16th August a wide range of contacts were made with people from different strata of the society. They pledged their support to the movement.

On 17th August 1991 an urgent meeting of Chilika Mastajibi Mahasangh was contended. For the first time more then 100 people had come from 62 villages to participate in it. A

heart to heart discussion was made. Sri.Chittaranjan was also invited to that meeting. The meeting unanimously took the following decisions.

1. 20 volunteers came forward to spread the message to different villages. They are prepared to solve their own conflicts.
2. They are determined to raise voice against the faulty policy of the Government. They will also take the matter of expiry of date of leasing on 20th September. It is going to be like that Government will no longer lease lands to fisherman as before.
3. A meeting was convened on 29th August. At least 10 responsible members from 106 fishermen villages of that locality came to that meeting. In that meeting they took some serious decisions regarding the future course of action.

Sri. Chittaranjan and Nirakar (a member of Meet The Students) along with president and secretary of "Matsyajibi Mahasangh" went to village Kumarpur, the schedule caste village which had been burnt (500 houses) by the upper caste village people of Brahmanedeos. Their property had been looted and women raped. The Government had sent seven bags of rice to that village which had 700 houses! Police did not taken any effective steps against culprits. There they met the women, who with tearful eyes narrated their tales of woe and misery.

A press conference was arranged in Bhubaneswar, basically taking these affected women to give vent to their sorrows and views. And also to exert a moral pressure on the Government to take redressal measures.

Action oriented group discussions were convened among college students and teachers. In that way on 7th Panaspada College, on 9th Baghamunda College and finally on 19th is S.C.S College were covered. In response to which a large number of students from Chilika area were organised.

From 20th to 25th a group of University students concentrated on organising the students. As a result of which on 25th at the affected area and on 26th at Puri there was a large gathering of students who took the view to stand by this process of revolution to establish people's power. In between these days a philanthropic venture was made to unite 273 fisherman villages in Chilika in one thread by-passing their internal conflicts. In response to the incessant working, on 29th for the first time in the Matsyajibi Mahasangh meeting there were around 500 delegates from 140 villages not only participated but resolved unanimously to initiate the movement. The resolution came into effect on which the movement is based.

1. Outside dominance over Chilika, more particularly in fishery production is to be resisted. The Tatas or any such big industrial houses are to be totally ousted from Chilika area.
2. Since the tenure of lease of waterlands in Chilika for prawn culture is maturing on 20th September, Government has a mind to auction out all the 315 sources so that instead of Rs.20 lakhs which Government was getting on leasing to the fishermen co-operative societies, it would get Rs.5 crores approximately on sale per years at the rate of Rs. 1000 per hectare. No doubt that would increase the Government fund. But that would deprive about Rs.2 lakhs fishermen and non-fishermen families from their traditional livelihood. A resolution has been passed that the Government should be prevented from making auction sales. Because in that case almost all the waterlands

would go the hands of big business houses. In lieu it should be released to the primary fishermen co-operative societies maybe with an increased price. Meanwhile the sources which come around 20,200 hectares of the waterbody need clear demarkation and exact allotment to the fishermen and non fishermen groups. That would minimise the cold war between the fishermen and non-fishermen communities.

3. A clear and pro-people act should be formulated to maintain harmony between the interests of people who live on Chilika on one side and revenue of Government on the other side.
4. Law and order situation should necessarily be maintained.

With these ideas in view to shape the movement, a management committee was formed with members. This committee was going to meet the intellectuals at Chilika Surakshya Parisada on 2nd September, 1991 to seek their guidance direct involvement. It was hoped that it would result in a joint venture against the defective state policy. On 5th September the Matshya Jivi Mahasangh convened its own meeting and decided to go to Bhubaneswar en mass to show people's power and awareness and to have a dialogue with state power. Accordingly, on 20th September more than 18 thousand people came to make a seige of the legislative assembly demanding the stoppage of auction sale and to give permanent rights to the fishermen.

The fishery minister Sri.Suryanarayan Patra received the memorandum on behalf of the Chief Minister and assured the mass that not an inch of Chilika would be leased out to the Tatas. Then the delegation committee went and talked on different aspects of the problem. Finally a committee was formed under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister (including MLAs of Khdra. Brahmagiri Chilika. Chhatrapur and representatives of Chilika "MATSYAJIVI MAHASANGHA" to solve the problem.

Mobilisation Of Fishermen In Chilika

It was a historical event when 8000 people from Fishermen community around Chilika lake reached Bhubaneswar for the first time. Fishermen from 121 villages were united under the banner of MATSYAJIBI MAHASANGHA (Fishermen Federation). It was largely funded by 65 primary fishermen cooperative societies (about 1.2 lakhs). This mass mobilisation was against the anti people policies of the Government say it giving lands to the Tatas or declaration for open auction sale of Chilika Water lands for prawn culture. They all mean entrance of big business houses to make high profit out of International trade of prawn, which costs Rs.300/-Kg (per Kg). The mobilisation could only be possible due to incessant labour of "Meet The Students" group of Utkal University, Bhubaneswar.

Although the mobilisation has already awaked fishermen community, still it needs reformation and re-orientation at the grassroots level to that faith can be resurged among themselves to manage their own affairs without depending on corrupted Government agencies and to fight boldly against injustice with courage and vigour.

The concentration was on youths, particularly speaking, it was planned to organise local youths clubs and college students. They would be at the forefront of the struggle. But they need wide education about the relatives. Then only they can for go the dreamy attraction of jobs and other development programmes as has been assured by Tata executives and local Government officials.

Primary importance is needed to be given for amicable settlement of prolonging conflicts in among the villagers, whether between fishermen and non-fishermen or even within fishermen community. That needs continuous education of both the parties. That will have two effects.

1. It will bring them under one platform to fight for their fights on Chilika.
2. Continuous drainage of lakhs of rupees to urban sector to the pockets of lawyers, policemen, politicians, touts and even judges, will be checked.

A successful management of this inter-village disputes affairs will provide too fold solution. Firstly it will strengthen their economic condition. Secondly, a sizeable portion of the saved funds can be channelised to strengthen the revolution process in Chilika and the other places in the state.

There were four students working day and night. At the end of December, 1991 it was twelve in number who moved from village to village around in 372 fishermen villages and about more than one thousand non-fishermen villages who live on Chilika and on the rivers falling into Chilika in 80 panchayats in six blocks like Brahmagiri, Krush-naprasad, Kakhigopal, Kanas Tengi and Balugon.

They arranged panchayat wide meetings and gatherings and encouraged them to resolve unanimously to fight. Such meetings and one mass gathering was held once in week. So in a month there were 25 such panchayat meetings attends by some representatives from villages and 4 to 5 gathering attended by some intellectuals from state and outside who extended their support directly. In December 1991 and January 1992 there were two large gatherings near the area taken over by the Tatas and some symbolic actions were taken.

The activist group made meetings of 391 youths clubs around Chilika and students of 18 colleges. One Youth Club was asked to arrange a meetings of 20-25 clubs of side by areas. After that executive committee members meetings, they had youth conference similar to the people's gatherings.

The movement proceeded as per the planning. On 16th February, people took possession of the land, unauthorisedly taken over by the Tatas and hoisted their own flag. It was a direct action of the common folk against Big Bosses of the society. A challenge to their autocratic behaviour. Side by side the activist group flashed on the news paper that the Tatas have not got the lease of the land that it had taken over and started prawn culture.

It was for the first time that the people could know the truth, the injustice being done upon the fishermen folk. It created a furore in the state legislative Assembly vide The Statesman newspaper dated 16th Feb. The Tata's had only one document for advance possession which does not permit any physical constructing which they had already made. That too we got stayed on an appeal to R.D.C (Revenue Divisional Commissioner) vide annexure.

The foot march between 29th Feb to 14 March was well organised with a good number of activist youths. On 7th there was a women's rally, which marched towards the Tata site to break the dam. On 15th March there were about 6,000 people from all over the area with digging instruments on their shoulder. All day long they worked hard to break the dam. The Tatas took all help of police and goondas to resist us. But the activist group told police if they come in their way without proper legal documents, then journalists present at the site will take care of them. That way agitations could check mate their move. Of

course goondas did their best by threatening and physically assaulting to prevent people from breaking the embankments. But people were unbudging.

On march 23rd a check gate was put up at Gopinathpur by the people to deny entry Tata vehicles inside the Chilika area. That aroused the fury of the administration. Police atrocities were on its peak. Villagers including women and children were beaten severely. Some of them lay on the ground for a long period. On 26th the arrest festival started with 4 persons. On 27th March, 43 persons were arrested. On 8th there was a mass rally to the Tata spot. To foil it police arrested these 43 persons on the previous day. On the day of rally they arrested another 22 persons. In total, they arrested 69 persons including 33 women and 6 children. S.D.Magistrate with Addl.S.P of Puri were on the spot with 11 platoons of police force. Those officials had batons on their hand. In spite of this, police could not prevent the mass from reaching the embankment and demolishing it. Those arrested, were in jail under false allegations for 14 days. To get them on bail was too difficult. The Judiciary is under pressure of the Government, said Mr.Sadangi S.D.J.M of Puri.

The Tatas also tried to bribe the movement leaders as they could win over the administration for unlawful sanction by bribing. They also tried to defame the movement by alleging its relations with mafia and antisocial elements. The activist group challenged them to prove it.

Then started the second phase of the movement when 21 M.Ps cutting across the parties signed a memorandum and appealed to the Prime Minister and Environment Minister to stop the project on environment grounds. A good number of environmental organisations and human rights organisations, experts from all over the country gave their support to the movement and appealed to the Central Government. The result was that the Central Government ordered the State Government to hold off the project until environment clearances are obtained.

Accordingly the project work is stopped and the Tatas have withdrawn. But this is a temporary victory of the people. Even now the huge embankment of 13.7 km long 40 ft wide and 30 ft high stands in Chilika restricting the waters of Luna, Kanasa, Daya and Bhargavi to pass on to sea through Dahikhia Channel. It has resulted waterlogging of 35,000 acres of land in 4 blocks of Puri district. Besides it has deprived fishermen from going to Chilika for fishing. The Tatas will soon try to present their environment report before the environment Ministry and get clearance.

Unless there is a strong voice from the local people to not to permit the Tatas' entry, they will get the permission. Because they are the controllers of the Government and their wish is the law in this country. Of course those National and International organisations would like to start their resistance as they did last time. But for all that grassroots organisations are a must.

Meanwhile, Dr.J.J.Irani of TISCO after a two and half hour long discussion has agreed to stop the project if he is convinced that it is really a people's problem. He would come to the site in the near future. As per latest reports, there has two padayatras have been completed; one padayatra started 29th September to 12th October and other started on November 10th and ended in 20th.

Thanks'to all

Chilika Bachao Andolan

ICSF meeting in Mauritius



NFF Chairperson with the fishworkers from Kenya, who are victims of ill-treatment and injustice in deep sea fishing vessels.



A Philippino, working in a Taiwani deep sea fishing vessel. His hands got injured in the winch while fishing.

**Memorandum On The Need For The Fishing
Regulations Beyond The Territorial Waters Of India
from The Point Of View Of National Fishworkers'forum.**

It is heartening to learn that the Government of India is introducing in the ensuing parliament session a comprehensive legislation to regulate fishing beyond the territorial waters (beyond 22 kms) within the EEZ of india. In this context, on the basis of our long association with the fishworkers, their day to day problems, conflict in the sea and struggles we would like to place before you the following suggestions for immediate consideration while formulating the draft legislation to be presented before the parliament.

The Central Marine Fishing Regulation (Beyond 22 km) should be complementary and supportive for the effective implementation of State Marine Fishing Regulation Acts too.

In our experience many legislations enacted by the state governments to regulate certain types of gears like purse seine, trawl etc. in the territorial waters were defeated in purpose by the operators of these gears taking advantages of some loopholes in the laws. For example on two occasions when government of Kerala banned purse seining totally and trawling in certain seasons in the territorial waters aimed at conservation of resources, they approached the court of law that they should be allowed to go and fish beyond the territorial waters.

But actually in the pretext of going beyond the territorial waters, they were invariably fishing within the territorial sea. When thousands of boats violate the law in the wilderness of the ocean the state machinery become absolutely helpless and hence the purpose of the legislation defeated resulting in the destruction of the marine wealth as well as conflict between small scale artisanal fishermen and the mechanised boat operators.

Hence whenever a state government regulates or restricts certain types of fishing in the territorial waters the central government may also issue supportive legislations in the adjacent offshore waters of that state to avoid much loopholes.

✓ *Vessel specifications and safety measures to be spelt out:*

The specifications of the vessels such as overall length of hull, horse power of engine, gear used, fish hold capacity, sea worthiness, crew pattern, safety measures installed etc. should be clearly spelt out. No craft which do not satisfy these requirements shall be licensed to undertake offshore and deep sea fishing.

Enforcement machinery to be spelt out:

The success of the legislation will not merely on the merits of it but also on the machinery in charge of implementation.

There would be about 2000-3000 large deep sea fishing vessels, when the operations are in full swing spread along the vast expanse of the EEZ.

These vessels will fall under the provisions of the Act. To supervise the vast expanse of the EEZ outside the territorial waters would be a yeoman task and a powerful machinery would be required for this- powerful both in number and facility wise. The cost will be the major limiting factor.

The following suggestions are made in this regard.

- a) A proper machinery like fishery guard with sufficient man power and equipment should be set up to implement this law. The fishery Guard should work closely with the coastal state governments for implementing the regulations within the territorial waters too. Preference should be given to appropriately qualified persons from the fishing community when recruiting personnel for the fishery Guard.
- b) The assistance of the Coast Guards, Navy and customs may also be sought whenever warranted to prevent foreign vessels from encroaching the Indian EEZ.

Trawling and purse seining to be banned in the offshore and deep sea waters as well.

As trawls and purse seine are destructive gears their operations in the offshore and deep seas must be totally banned. Otherwise these would tend to affect the resources in the territorial waters adversely, for a part of the off shore resources migrate seasonally to the inshore areas.

- ✓ *Indiscriminate boat construction and operation of unregistered/unlicensed boats to be prevented:*
Our experience in the territorial fishing shows that indiscriminate boat construction and operation of unregistered and unlicensed units go on in a large way in some of the states. Once offshore/deep-sea fishing proves to be a profitable venture, there would be a tendency to construct large number of bigger boats for offshore fishing and they would go for fishing even without licences and proper certificates. These fissiparous tendencies should be curbed. Hence necessary provision may be envisaged in the legislation to eschew such tendencies.

- ✓ *All offshore/deep sea fishing vessels operating in the EEZ should fly national flags:*
It is learnt that some of the small scale artisanal fishermen engaged in shark fishing in deep water regions in the west coast were harassed by coastal guards navy/customs officials. Protective measures may be incorporated in the legislations to safeguard the interests of the fishermen fishing in the deep sea waters.

Marketing Infrastructure

Special marketing infrastructure shall be envisaged to dispose the offshore/deep sea fish landings without affecting the fish economy of the traditional fish workers. In this regard, fishworkers' organisations shall be taken into confidence and consulted.

State to strengthen their monitoring cell

The states should be provided with additional funding assistance to strengthen their monitoring cell to monitor the progress of the implementation of the Marine Fishing Acts both in the state and centrally sponsored scheme.

The existing conflict between 45-foot gill netters from West Bengal and the deep sea vessels coming from Vishakapatnam should be resolved. There should be some provisions to safeguard the interests of small scale deep sea vessels.

Make sure some provisions to safeguard the interests of the resources and fishing in the territorial waters. And make sure that the deep sea fishing vessels should not encroach into territorial waters.

Ms. Premolla Issar
 Joint Secretary,
 Ministry of Food Processing Industries,
 Panchaseel Bawan, Asiad Village,
 New Delhi - 110 049,

Sub: Memorandum as per your request through the Telegraphic Request concerning Deep Sea Fishing Regulations.

Sir,

It is heartening to learn that the government of India is introducing in the ensuing parliament session a comprehensive legislation to regulate fishing beyond the territorial waters (beyond 22 kms) within the EEZ of India. In this context, on the basis of our long association with the fishworkers, their day to day problems, conflict in the sea and struggles, we would like to place before you the following suggestions for immediate consideration while formulating the draft legislative bill to be presented before the Parliament. I therefore request you to speed up the process as you promised during the Kochi Fisheries Workshop.

1. Annual Fisheries Management Plan

Every year the Fisheries Authority of India should declare the Indian Fisheries Management Plan. This provision in the act should contain the following aspects. The following is taken from the New Zealand Fisheries Act of 1983.

Purposes of Fisheries Management Plans - The purpose of any fishery management plan under this part of this act is to conserve, enhance protect, allocate and manage the fishery resources within Indian fisheries waters having regard to the need for :-

- a) Planning, controlling and implementing such measures as may be necessary to achieve those purposes.
- b) Providing for optimum yields from any fishery and maintaining the quality of the yield without detrimentally affecting the fishery habitat and environment.

The Indian Fisheries Management Plan - where any fishery management area has been declared, the Indian Fisheries Authority, as soon as practicable after the declaration, consult and have regard to the views and responsibilities of appropriate public authorities, traditional fishworkers' Trade Unions, Owners' Association, CMFRI, Fisheries Survey of India, and other interests in fisheries as they consider appropriate and prepare a proposed plan for the whole year or any part of that fishery management area for the purpose specified in the Act, and the need for the co-ordination of inter-related fisheries.

2. The composition of the Fisheries Authority of India.

It should consist of following members, Fisheries Development Commissioner, a competent person fisheries each from the ministries of Commerce, Environment, food

processing industries, shipping, and Export, Director of CMFRI, Director General of Fisheries Survey of India, an elected representative from the Regional Fisheries Authority, an elected person from the registered owners' associations, an elected person from all the registered trade unions of fishworkers, who have members in all the Fisheries Regions and having a membership of 5000 or more. The term of office shall be for 3 years unless on is re-elected or re-nominated. The chairperson of the Fisheries Authority of India shall be appointed by the Ministries of Agriculture, Commerce, Food processing Industries, Environment, Shipping and Export collectively. The Chairperson should be qualified in fisheries management and should not have any financial interest in fishing. The finalising of the Indian Fisheries management plan should be done in public and with a 2/3 majority vote. The Fisheries Authority of India shall co-ordinate the implementation of the Indian Fisheries Management Plan.

3. Regional Fisheries Authorities.

There shall be 4 Regional Fisheries and they are the following:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Fisheries Region 1. | includes Gujarat and Maharashtra |
| " 2. | includes Goa, Karnataka and Kerala |
| " 3. | includes Tamilnadu, Pondicherry and Andhra pradesh |
| " 4. | includes Orissa and West Bengal |

Each region should a Regional Fisheries Authority and they should prepare 3 respective Regional Fisheries Management Plan in consultation with the Fisheries Authority of India.

The members of the Regional Fisheries Authority shall be the following a competent person each from the ministries of Agriculture, Environment, Shipping, Commerce, Food processing industries and Export, a Scientist from CMFRI and Fisheries Survey of India, Fisheries Directors of the Region, an elected representative from all the Registered Association of owners and another person from all the registered Trade Unions of Fishworkers. A competent Chairperson shall be appointed by the above ministries collectively. He should be a competent person and should not have any interest in fishing.

4. The Licensing Authority

The Licensing Authority is the Regional Fisheries Authority. Every deep sea fishing vessel should obtain annually a fishing licence based on the Regional Fisheries Management Plan. This licence can be used only within that Region only. In the issuing of licence first priority goes to fishworkers and their co-operatives, second Indian National and then only to the Foreign vessels.

5. The conditions for issuing licence.

- » each vessels should have certificate of Registration and inspection as per Merchant Shipping Act of India.

- » the class and classes of fish to be caught
- » the rate at which the fish is caught
- » the methods, the equipments used to catch fish

6. Fixing quota

The regional fisheries authority should specify quota for each vessel and each vessel should keep a record of daily catch figures and it should be given to the Regional Fisheries Authority.

7. Penalty

Any violation of the Act by any vessel leads to cancelling of licence and confiscation.

8. General Spirit of the Legislation

In general the Deep Sea Fishing Regulation of India should follow the spirit of New Zealand Fisheries Act of 1983.

9. The Maritime Zones of India (Regulations of Fishing by foreign Vessels) Act 1981 should be amended.

The act should come under Deep Sea Fishing Regulation Act.

10. The Working Conditions of Fishworkers

The Act should clearly spell out the conditions by giving due respect to all the ILO conventions and labour legislations in India. Concerning Recruitment follow Convention No.9, Articles 1 to 7 Concerning Agreements follow Convention No.22 Articles 2 Concerning wages follow convention No.58 Articles 2 and 4.

Concerning Accommodation convention No.126 Articles all

Concerning Welfare Convention No.163 Articles all

Concerning Social Security convention 165 Articles all.

11. Exemption of Traditional Crafts.

Traditional crafts should be exempted from all norms for fishing within 24 nautical miles. All deep sea fishing vessels should operate beyond 24 nautical miles.

12. The central marine fishing regulation (beyond 22 kms) should be complementary and supportive for the affective implementation of State Marine Fishing Regulation Acts too

In our experience many legislations enacted by the state governments to regulate certain types of gears like purse seine, trawls etc. in the territorial waters were defeated in purpose by the operators of these gears taking advantages of some loopholes in the laws. For example on two occasions when government of Kerala banned purse seining totally and trawling in certain seasons in the territorial waters aimed at conservation of resour-

ces, they approached the court of law that they should be allowed to go and fish beyond the territorial waters.

But actually in the pretext of going beyond the territorial waters, they were invariably fishing within the territorial sea. When thousands of boats violate the law in the wilderness of the ocean the state machinery become absolutely helpless and hence the purpose of the legislation defeated resulting in the destruction of the marine wealth as well as conflict between small scale artisanal fishermen and the mechanised boat operators.

Hence whenever a state government regulates or restricts certain types of fishing in the territorial waters, the central government may also issue supportive legislations in the adjacent offshore waters of that state to avoid much loopholes.

13. Vessel specification and safety measures to be spelt out.

The specifications of the vessels such as over all length of hull, horse power of engine, gear used, fish hold capacity, sea worthiness, crew patten, safety measures installed etc. should be clearly spelt out. No craft which do not satisfy these requirements shall be licensed to undertake offshore and deep sea fishing.

14. Enforcement machinery to be spelt out.

The success of the legislation will depend not merely on the merits of it but also on the machinery in charge of implementation.

There would be about 2000 - 3000 large deep sea fishing vessels. When the operations are in full swing spread along the vast expanse of the EEZ.

These vessels will fail under the provisions of the Act. To supervise the vast expanse of the EEZ outside the territorial waters would be a yeoman task and a powerful machinery would be required for this—powerful both in number and facility wise . The cost will be the major limiting factor.

The following suggestions are made in this regard.

- a) A proper machinery like fishery guard with sufficient man power and equipment should be set to implement this law. The fishery guard should work closely with the coastal state governments for implementing the regulations within the territorial waters too. Preference should be given to appropriately qualified person from the fishing community when recruiting personnel for the fishery Guard.
- b) The assistance of the Coastal Guards, Navy and customs may also be sought whenever warranted to prevent foreign vessels from encroaching the Indian EEZ.
- c) Satellite monitoring of fishing vessels to minimising conflicts.

15. Trawling and purse seining to be banned in the offshore and deep sea waters as well.

As trawls and purse seine are destructive gears their operations in the offshore and deep seas must be totally banned. Otherwise these would tend to affect the resources in the territorial waters adversely; for a part of the offshore resource migrate seasonally to the inshore areas.

16. Indiscriminate boat construction and operation of unregistered/unlicensed boats to be prevented.

Our experience in the territorial fishing shows that indiscriminate boat construction and operation of unregistered and unlicensed units go on in a large way in some of the states. Once offshore/deep sea fishing proves to be a profitable venture, there would be a tendency to construct large number of bigger boats for offshore fishing and they would go for fishing even without licences and proper certificates. Those fissiparous tendencies should be curbed. Hence necessary provision may be envisaged in the legislation to eschew such tendencies.

17. All offshore/deep sea fishing vessels operating in the EEZ should fly national flags.

It is learnt that some of the small scale artisanal fishermen engaged in shark fishing in deep water regions in the west coast were harassed by coast guards, navy/customs officials. Protective measures may be incorporated in the legislations to safeguard the interests of the fishermen fishing in deep sea waters.

18. Marketing infrastructure.

Special marketing infrastructure shall be envisaged to dispose the offshore/deep sea fish landings without affecting the fish economy of the traditional fish workers. In this regard, fish workers' organisations shall be taken into confidence and consulted.

19. States to strengthen their monitoring cell.

The states should be provided with additional funding assistance to strengthen their monitoring cell to monitor the progress of the implementation of the Marine Fishing Acts both in the state and centrally sponsored scheme.

20. The existing conflicts between 45-foot gillnetters from West Bengal and the deep sea vessels coming from Visakhapatnam should be resolved. There should be some provisions to safeguard the interests of small scale deep sea vessels.

21. Make sure some provisions to safeguard the interests of the resources and fishing in the territorial waters. And made sure that the deep sea fishing vessels should not encroach into territorial waters.

Memorandum Submitted By The KSMTF To The Ministry Of Food Processing, The Ministry Concerning Deep Sea Fishing Legislation

0.00 Kerala Independent Fishworkers Federation's suggestions to Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India on Provisions to be included in the proposed Legislation on Regulation of Deep Sea Fishing:

0.01. Kerala Independent Fishworkers Federation wish to appreciate the initiative taken by the ministry of Food Processing Industries to prepare a draft legislation on regulation of Indian Fishing vessels in the Indian EEZ. We hope the legislation will come about soon in order to solve many problems already arising in this sector.

0.02. We have mainly suggestions on the following four aspects to be included in the proposed legislation.

1.00. Ensure that living resources in Indian EEZ are not endangered by over-exploitation, and for that government should have power to enforce proper conservation measures.

1.01. According to Fishery Survey of India (FSI) the Fishery potential of Indian EEZ is assessed as 3.92 million tonnes. At the same time the annual marine fish production in the country is in the order of about 1.84 million tonnes per annum. So this indicates an additional harvestable yield of about 2 million tonnes.

1.02. In order to exploit this untapped resources which lie largely in the off-shore and deep-sea region, in recent times many large industrial houses on their own and with foreign collaborations have started entering the scene. Many chartered foreign fishing vessels are already fishing in our deep seas and their annual production is estimate at about 50,000 tonnes per annum.

1.03. Though we have a fairly large quantity of untapped fish resources remaining in deep seas, serious questions have been already raised regarding the commercial value of these species and so also the viability of such fishing. Bose committee had pointed out that much of our deep sea fish resources are of low-value species.

1.04. The provisional summary report of an FAO Mission for the Department of the Deep Sea Fishing Fleet at Visakhapatnam also states that " the commercial potential for the Deep Sea Fishing is much less however". This Mission made an estimate of this available potential of species which have a good demand on the export market and which can guarantee an ex-vessel value of about Rs.35 per Kg. Their assessment of these species below the 50m. isobath and in the Oceanic water comes out with only a total of 260,000 tonnes per annum (just 1.3% of the additional harvestable yield assessed by FSI.

1.05. The FAO Mission specifically recommends that considering the constraints of fishery resource potential, the already existing deep sea fishing fleet based in Visakhapatnam should be availed of in preference to further investments for the acquisition of new units. The report says "there is no need for bigger boats.

1.06. At the same time we also come across with lot of news appearing in our media on new entries into our deep seas for fishing. The government of India has already cleared as many as 17 projects all of 100% EOUs and most of them with foreign equity participation. These projects include 3 factory trawlers, 3 stern Trawlers, 48 mini liners and 12 multiliners. The proposed total investment is estimated at 8448 million Rupees. It seems this is only a beginning and many such vessels are going to enter our sea in the near future.

1.07. We all know that just contrary to our coastal fisheries which is mainly engaged by traditional fishing communities, the Deep sea fishing involve highly capital intensive, large-scale fuel consuming technologies with very active gears and naturally they are of more profit and export-oriented.

1.08. In this background there is every possibility that all the fishing vessels which enter into our deep sea will concentrate on the commercially valuable species which are of less quantities. So any unregulated entry into our deep sea fishing will have disastrous results. It will result in the depletion of valuable species faster and unhealthy competition among various fishing vessels.

1.09. In order to avert the emergence of such a pitiable situation, a comprehensive enactment of legislation which give powers to the government to enforce proper and scientific management measures to ensure that the living resources in Indian EEZ are not endangered by over-exploitation is a must.

1.10. Such an enactment should contain the following provisions for fisheries management.

- » A Registration and Licensing System to check the number, size and capacity of fishing vessels in operation.
- » Eligibility for registration and licence should be preceded by compliance of these vessels with all the requirement under Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 and its subsequent rules.
- » A system to assess the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) or Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of different important species every year and an Authority to regulate the issue of fishing permit/licence on an annual basis in accordance with the MSY/TAC.
- » Structure of Enforcing/Implementing Agencies and Penalties for violation. Existing agencies like Coast Guard, Navy etc. should also be given powers to implement the regulations.

1.11. The Act should give the government enough powers to :

- » Prohibit either at all times or during a specified period, catching of any fish or fishes specified in any specified area.
- » Prohibit in any specified area, catching of any fish or class of fish, which are
 - i. less than a size specified.
 - ii. not greater than a size so specified.

- » Prohibit in any specified area, catching of any fish or fishes by a method or equipment specified.
- » Prohibit a person/persons from having in his/their possession or in charge a fishing boat/vessel in any specified area with fishing gears or equipments of a specified kind or quantity of equipments of a specified kind or quantity in excess of a quantity specified.

2.00. Protect the interests of small-scale fishworkers, especially traditional fishing communities from the possible onslaught or encroachment by industrial fishing fleet into the areas of operation of the former.

2.1. India has a substantially large number of small-scale, traditional fishworkers who are wholly dependent on fishing in the coastal waters (0-50m). They operate in about two lakh fishing units and their crafts and gear are being improved and motorised over the period.

2.2. In many states/regions of the country these small-scale fishworkers are facing stiff competition in their areas of operation from the growing number of mechanised boats. At present there are about 25,000 small mechanised boats and a large majority of them are trawling boats. In Kerala State these trawling boats which number over 3000 has resulted in an overall decline in the total catches and especially that the traditional fishermen. It has also resulted in the depletion of certain commercially important species.

2.3. For traditional fishworkers fishing is their way of life and they depend on it for their subsistence living. While they are already threatened of losing their source of living by the menace of mechanised boats which are mostly owned by non-fishermen, the growth of industrial fishing fleet should not result in further deterioration of their life.

2.4. The new Act must have provisions to strictly prohibit fishing by vessels above certain size or length (may be 43 ft. plus) within 24 nautical miles from the coastline.

2.5. It must be clearly stated in the Act that, when the government uses its powers to regulate, restrict or prohibit fishing in any specified area one important criteria for such an action shall be to protect the interests of different sections of persons engaged in fishing, particularly those engaged in fishery using traditional country crafts such as catamaran, country crafts or Canoe.

2.6. It is also a known fact that some important species of fish migrate from deep seas towards coastal waters during certain and many of our traditional fishworkers depend much on these varieties. The new legislation shall have provisions to prohibit catching of such varieties of fish by the Deep-sea fishing fleet.

3.0. It should be complimentary and strengthen the existing Marine Fishing Regulation Acts of various State Governments which have powers to regulate fishing only within the territorial waters (22 kms. from the coast line).

3.1. Many maritime states of India have already enacted legislations for more than ten years now to regulate fishing in their territorial waters. But due to lack of proper enforcement machinery to implement the regulations as well as lack of political will most of the state governments have failed in managing the fish resources properly and to solve the growing conflicts between different sections engaged in fishing.

3.2. Even in a state where the government wanted to save an important fishery through restricting any particular type of fishing, it could not be done due to the loopholes in the law. One important loophole arise from the fact that at the moment there is no law to restrict fishing by Indian boats beyond 22 kms.

3.3. For example in Kerala almost all the fishing regulations imposed by the state government are ignored by the owners of the mechanised boats with the argument that they do fishing only beyond 22 kms. But the fact is that these boats do fishing only within the territorial waters as the prawn resources are more available only there. Since the state government do not have sufficient and proper machinery to patrol the territorial waters, the trawl boat operators easily violate these laws continuously.

3.4. The new Central legislation should be able to provide effective measures to curb these kind of violations with complimentary provisions to strengthen the existing state legislations. Here this issue also raises the question about how to manage a particular fishery (for eg. shrimp fishery) in waters adjacent to that state or those states and often overlap between the territory of a state and that of centre or between the territories of two different states or together with that of the centre. Here it has to be decided whether that fishery is to be managed either in accordance with the law of the state alone, or of the centre alone or by a joint authority.

3.3. Thus the new legislation shall have provisions to make arrangements to deal with such a fishery in either of these following ways to be decided accordingly:

- » the fishery to be managed in accordance with the law of the centre.
- » the fishery to be managed in accordance with the law of the State.
- » the fishery to be managed by a joint authority with representation of concerned states and the centre and rules framed by that authority.

3.4. There should also be provisions to delegate the power of the Centre to any State to manage the fishery of a specified area or a particular fishery of a specified area. It will be convenient for the Centre to delegate the powers of fisheries management upto 24 nautical miles (i.e. contiguous zone) and also fishing vessels upto a certain length and size. (upto 43 ft.)

4.0. Ensure Protection of Interests of fishworkers involved in Deep Sea Fishing.

4.1. With the emergence and growth of deep sea fishing a new set of fishworkers are also going to emerge in our country. We understand that the workers in deep sea fishing fleets in so many other countries are treated very badly and they are deprived of all basic rights of workers. Similar situation should not arise here.

4.2. Our Merchant Shipping Act does not consider the workers in fishing vessels as 'Seamen' and so they do not get any protection or benefits provided in that Act. Since they always work at sea they can not avail the protection of our labour laws too.

4.3. So the proposed Deep Sea Fishing Act should contain provisions to protect the basic interests of the workers involved in Deep Sea Fishing.

4.4. Regarding recruitment of labour for Deep Sea Fishing, the new Act should have following provisions:

- » The business of finding employment for fishworkers shall not be carried on by any person, company or other agencies as a commercial enterprise for pecuniary gain nor shall any fees or deposits be charged directly or indirectly for finding employment.
- » There shall be organised and maintained an efficient and adequate system of public employment offices of recognised agencies under government supervision and inspection, for finding employment without charges so as to safeguard the rights of all concerned
- » Freedom of choice of fishing vessels shall be assured to fishworkers and freedom of choice of crew shall be assured to owners of fishing vessels.

4.5. Regarding Contracts of Agreement and Registration of Fishworkers, the new Act should have the following provisions:

- » There shall be a contract of agreement between the owner of a fishing vessel and every worker employed in it and a copy of the same must be given to the worker concerned.
- » The contract of agreement should clearly spell out the working and service conditions including the wages and other monetary benefits payable to him.
- » When annual fishing licence/permit is issued to an owner of the vessel, it must be made mandatory for the owner to provide a statement of details on the workers employed in the vessel together with a copy each of all the contracts of agreements of those workers.
- » There should also be a provision for registration of the workers employed in Deep Sea Fishing vessels.

4.6. Regarding facilities and other welfare measures on Board, the new Act should have the following provisions:

- » All Articles of the Accommodation of Crews (Fishermen) Convention, 1966 (ILO Convention No.126) shall be made applicable for all fishing vessels above 45 ft. length.
- » All Articles of the Seafarers' Welfare at Sea and in Port Convention, 1987 (ILO No.163) and the Health Protection and Medical Care for Seafarers Convention, 1987 (ILO Convention No.164) shall be made applicable.

A.J.Vijayan,

for and on behalf of
Kerala Independent Fishworkers Federation

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2. Sri Dulal Das,
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Phone 06752 3151.
11. Sri. Jaganadha Rao,
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12. Sri. K. Tatayya,
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13. Sri Ramakanta Mandal, LLB,
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Tamilnadu

14. Sri. Christu Raj. E.,
Periyavilai,
Manavalakurichy. p.o.,
K.K. Dist. Tamilnadu. 629 252.
15. Sri. Constantine,
Kil Manakudy,
Manakudy P.O.,
Kanyakumari Dist.,
Tamilnadu.

16. Sri.Francis De Sales,
St.Lawrance Thope,
Thengapattanam.P.O.,
Kanyakumary Dist.
Tamilnadu. 629 173.
17. Miss. Mary Therese,
Kodimunai.P.O.,
Via Colachel (via),
Kanyakumary Dist.
Tamilnadu. 629 251.
18. Ms.M.Jancy Rany,
Samugam No.5.,
Kodimunai.P.O.,
Colachel (via)
Kanyakumary Dist.
Tamilnadu. 629 251.
19. Sri.P.Ravi,
Secretary B.B.F.U.,
Sadras,
Kalpakkam Post,
Changai MGR Dist.
Tamilnadu. 603 102.
20. Mrs.Suloksana.S.,
Ekkiyarkuppam, Marakkanam P.O.,
Tindivanam, S.A.District,
Tamilnadu. 604 303.
21. Sri. Deivasigamani.C.A.,
Chettinagar, Kunimedu.P.O.,
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South Arcot Dist., Tamilnadu. 604 303.
22. Mrs.Mercy Alexander,
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23. Ms.Nalini Nayak,
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Kerala. 695 039.
24. Ms.Philomine Marie,
Medical Mission Sisters,
Anjengo - 695 309,
Thiruvananthapuram.
25. Sri.P.P.John,
Puthen Purayil,
Parumala P.O.,
Pathanamthitta Dist.,
Kerala - 689 626.
26. Sri. Thomas Kocherry,
41/1771, Veeekshanam Road,
Kochi - 682 018. Kerala.
27. Sri.Ravi Kumar,
Chandrika Bhavan,
Ookodu, Nemom,
Thiruvananthapuram.
Kerala. 695 020.
28. Sri.P.P.John,
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30. Sri.Ravi Kumar,
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Kerala. 695 020.

Goa

30. Sri.Xavier Pinto (NFF)
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Goa. 403 521.

Maharashtra

31. Sri.Bhai Bandarkar,
Maharashtra Machhimar Kriti Samiti,
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Kerala

22. Sri.A.J.Vijayan,
T.C.27/757,
Reshimangalam,
Vanchiyoor,
Thiruvananthapuram
Kerala. 695 035.
23. Sri.Lal Koilparampil,
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Alappuzha,
Kerala. 688 012.

32. Sri.Neville Fernandes,
St.Antonys Road, OLPS High School,
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33. Sri.Ramesh Ramachandra Dhuri,
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Machimar Sangh, Dhuri Wada,
Malwan (Sindhudurg Dist.),
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34. Sri Rambhau Patil,
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Maharashtra. 401 402.

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