
CHILIKA BANCHAO

SAVE CHILIKA

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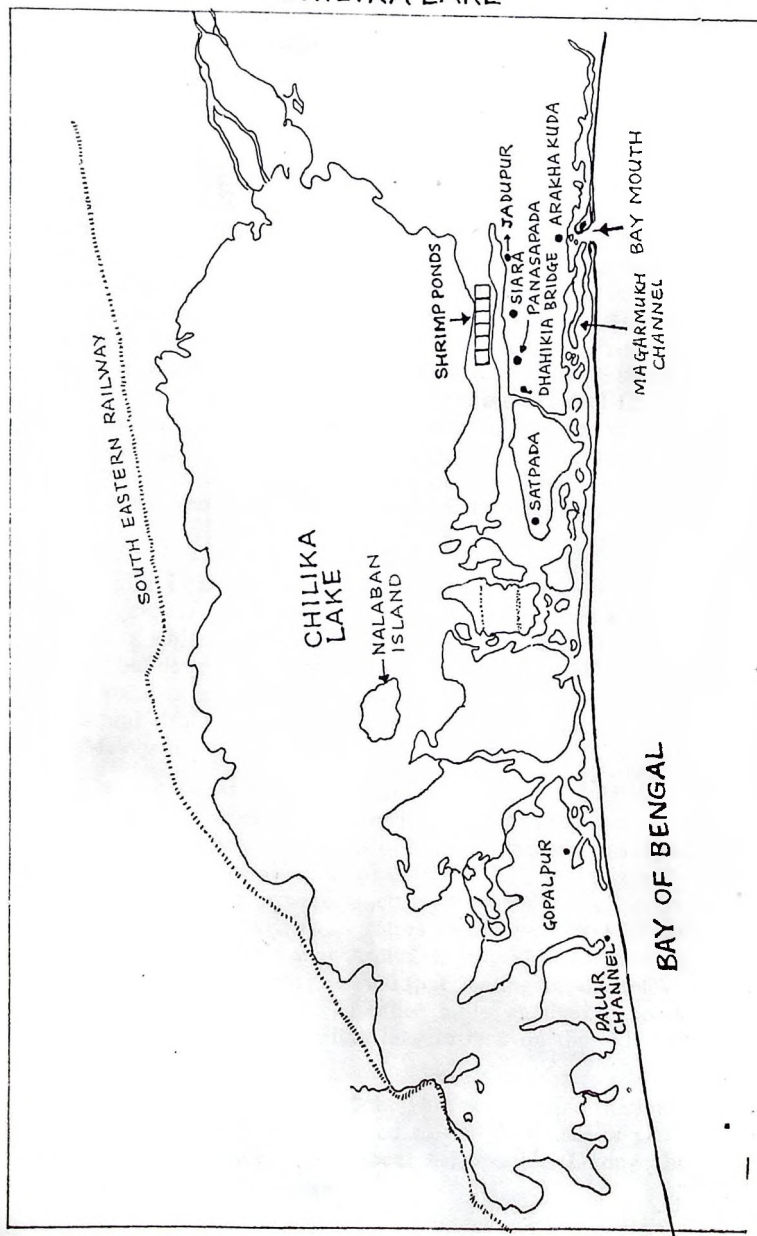
SAVE CHILIKA

PREFACE

The text of this book-let was published earlier as an issue of UPDATE from Delhi. This issue of the UPDATE was quite appreciated by, especially, the peoples' organisations working for the protection of Chilika and the rights of its people. Chilika Bachao Andolan wrote to us immediately. Kranta-darshi Yuba Sangam suggested a few corrections and asked for more copies to be made available to them. Meanwhile, we thought that there is scope for the expansion of the text keeping in mind the campaign needs of the movement in Chilika. Hence the publication of this book-let with the inclusion of a few box items. We are optimistic that the book-let will add to the strength of the campaign.

Ashok Sharma, R. Sugathan, J. John

CHILIKA LAKE



Chilika, one of the large lagoons in India, now reverberates with the call of those people who survive by it to protect it from the rapacious rape by corporate industrialists in active collusion with the State. The intense struggle is being spearheaded by peoples' organisations like 'Chilika Banchao Andolan', 'Meet The Students', 'Chilika Suraksha Parishad', 'Orissa Krushak Mahasangh' and 'Krantadarsi Yuba Sangam'. They are resisting with all their might the conversion of Chilika lake into an area for large scale commercial prawn aquaculture farming by the Tatas. The agitators say, the corporate entry would not only deprive them of their livelihood, but also destroy the natural eco-system of the Chilika lake.

Chilika Lake

Chilika is India's biggest brackish water lagoon with a surface area of 916 sq. kms. spread over Puri and Ganjam districts of Orissa. It is connected to the Bay of Bengal through narrow but deep channel of 35 kms., the Magarmukh channel. Fresh water is brought into the lagoon by as many as forty rivers and drains including Daya, Bhargavi, Luna, Kanya, and Malagani.

The lagoon is rich in biodiversity. The whole Chilika had been declared as a sanctuary in 1973 by the Government of India. More than 160 species of fish, crustaceans and other fauna live in it. The shallow areas of the lake and especially the island Nalabana provide sanctuary for hundreds of thousands of migratory birds from places nearby to places as far away as Northern Asia and Arctic shores, in winter as well as in summer. It has been observed that flamingoes, dabchicks, egrets, herons and a host of other birds numbering about 151 species flock to the Chilika lake to feed on the rich diet the lake offers.

The large land mass of about 1400 acres inside the lake, the area which had been allocated to the Tatas, are of great economic significance to the local fisherpeople. During the

rainy season, the entire land mass gets covered by water and the shallow waters created are ideal for natural prawn breeding. Tens of thousands of fisherpeople live by harvesting prawns from this region.

CHILIKA AND FISHERPEOPLE

Water spread area of Chilika

In summer — 906 Sq. Kms.

In monsoon — 1165 Sq. Kms.

Water depth of Chilika

In summer — 0.94 to 2.63 metres

In monsoon — 1.78 to 3.70 metres

Lake mouth — Magarmukh opening to Bay of Bengal opposite to Arkhakuda village.

Outerchannel from lake to barmouth — Magarmukh channel with a length of 35 kms.

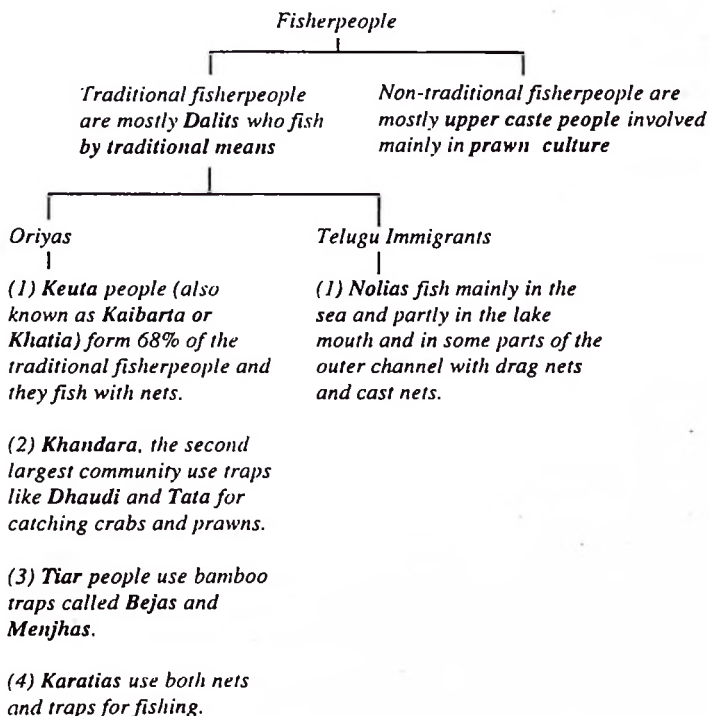
Number of rivers and drains feeding the Lake — 40 (8 of which are perennial)

Number of fishing villages around Chilika — 191 in 122 revenue villages

Strength of Chilika fisherpeople and dependants — 1,91,000

COMMUNITY SPLIT OF THE CHILIKA FISHERPEOPLE

*(Based on the paper by Rajeshwari Chandrasekhar, ORG,
Bhubaneswar, presented to the workshop of NGOs and peoples'
organisations of Chilika Lake on 3-4 Feb., 1992
at Bhubaneswar)*



The remaining six months, when water gets receded, this area witnesses the abundant growth of grass and the land mass becomes the grazing ground for herds of cattle in tens of thousands. Milk too, plays an important role in the economy of the region. The prawns and the cattle not only exist symbiotically but also provide people, especially the traditional people, with the means of their sustenance.

The traditional fisherpeople who constitute around 40% of the people in the area and numbering around 1,91,000 live in 191 fishing villages that encircle the Chilika lake. The rest, farmers and businessmen too live on Chilika and the fish caught from Chilika.

From time immemorial there existed this symbiotic relationship between all life forms that live by Chilika lake. Tata's entry into this forey is going to irrevocably destroy the tranquility of this ecosystem and the survival of all living forms including human beings.

The Project

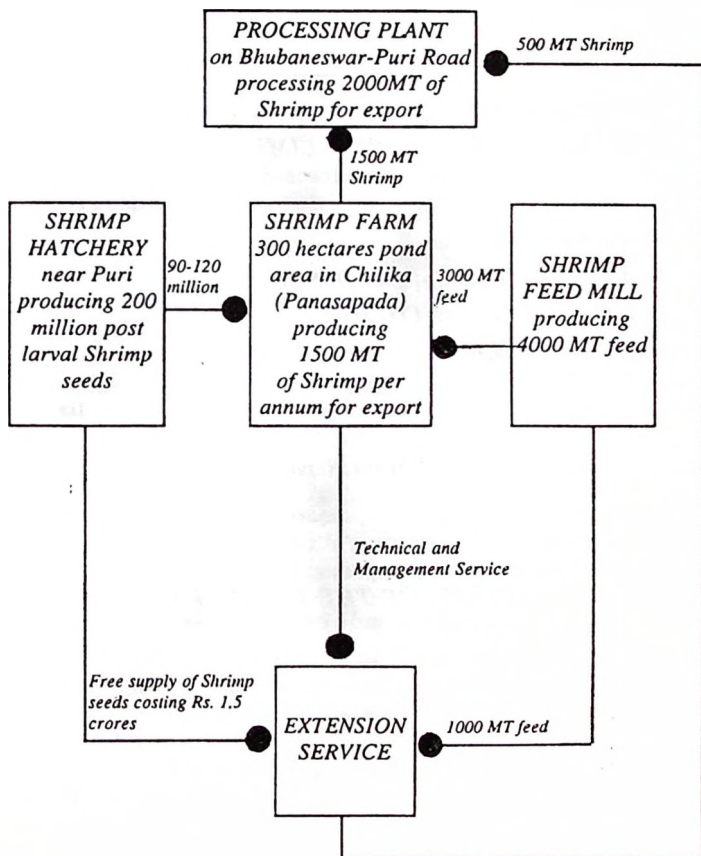
The Project envisages the creation of an artificial lake inside Chilika by enclosing the 1400 acre land mass mentioned above with a 13.7 kms. long ring embankment. This artificial lake is to be divided into a number of ponds in which the prawns are to be nurtured and reared commercially.

In 1986, the then Orissa Government through Orissa Maritime and Chilika Area Development Corporation (OMCAD) had entered into a deal with the Tatas to lease out 600 hectares of land to the Tata Aquatic Farms Ltd for 15 years. The present Janata Dal government reopened the negotiations and revised the terms in which this 20 crore project becomes a joint venture, Chilika Aquatic Farms Ltd. Now the Government of Orissa claims that they own 49% of the shares while 48% goes to the Tatas through Tata Steel and Tata Oil Mills. The Revenue Department has already leased out 400 hectares of the land in Panasapada village to the Chilika Aquatic Farms Ltd for prawn culture.

Chilika's saline water is to be pumped into the artificial lake by 150 water pumps of 200 horse power each, every day for 12 to 16 hours, as the culture needs brackish water. While the prawns grow up to 50 grams within 80-90 days, Tata's

CHILIKA AQUATIC FARMS LIMITED

Flow chart of the various units



project intends to grow prawns of 250 grams to 300 grams within 30 to 40 days. As the water gets polluted with the heavy use of high protein feed, fertilisers, chemicals and pesticides, the highly toxic effluent water from the artificial lake will be drained out through shutters with the help of another set of high power pumps to the Bhubania water channel which is part of Chilika lake system.

PARTICIPATION AND EQUITY PATTERN OF THE CHILIKA AQUATIC FARMS LIMITED (CAFL)

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Government of Orissa</i>	— 49
<i>Tata Iron and Steel Co. Ltd. (TISCO)</i>	— 30
<i>Tata Oil Mill Co. Ltd. (TOMCO)</i>	— 18
<i>Otto India Pvt. Ltd.</i>	— 3
<i>Total:</i>	— 100

Source: Tata's Project Report on CAFL.

FUNDING PATTERN OF THE PROJECT OF CAFL

	<i>Rs. in lakhs</i>
<i>Equity</i>	— 350
<i>Term loan</i>	— 1050
<i>Short term loan/</i>	
<i>Over draft with Bankers</i>	— 600
<i>Total:</i>	2000

Source: Tata's Project Report on CAFL.

EXPENDITURE SPLIT OF THE CAFL PROJECT
(Rs. 20 Crores)

	<i>Rs. in lakhs</i>
<i>Farm</i>	1158
<i>Hatchery</i>	246
<i>Head office</i>	15
<i>Technical Fee</i>	24
<i>Ground rent for Farm land</i>	76
<i>Pre-operative Expenses</i>	24
<i>Interest Capitalised during construction phase (1st Year)</i>	42
<i>Total Capital Expenditure of the project</i>	1585
<i>Working Capital requirement</i>	415
Total:	2000

Source: Tata's Project Report on CAFL.

The project also envisages a hatchery with a capacity of 400 million, a feed mill with a single shift capacity of 4,000 tonnes per year and a seaside processing plant near Puri.

Environmental Destruction and Human Misery

The 20 crore Tata, Govt. of Orissa joint venture has all the potentials to inflict serious damages to the Chilika's ecosystem. Consider the effect, of the enormous quantities of polluted and toxic water pumped out of the ponds, will have on the Chilika lake. The argument that the effluents are not pumped out directly into the Chilika lake doesn't stand reason because the Bhubania channel is very much part of the lake system. Tata's project is said to be the scientific way of cultivating prawns. But what does that science entail? The market oriented science enables Tatas to cultivate prawns in isolation, but kills in the process the whole, the Chilika lake.

SURVIVAL OF CHILIKA

The lake has four natural sectors—north, central, south and the outer channel. Daya, Luna, Ratnachira, Bhargavi and Kania rivers of district Puri discharge flood waters into the north sector of Chilika. Malaguni, Dhanua and Salia from district Puri and the ten water channels from district Ganjam empty into the central sector of Chilika. During monsoon, the flood waters push out the saline waters into the Bay of Bengal through the Magarmukh opening. The lake turns into a sweet water ecosystem from July to December. From January onwards, the south wind begins to flow and the saline waters from the Bay of Bengal rush to the lake through Magarmukh during high tides. This saline ecosystem prevails from January to June. During the transition period of the sweet-saline cycle, both flora and fauna that does not suit to the alien ecosystem get killed.

This cycle is now getting disturbed due to natural and artificial changes. The Magarmukh opening got shifted southward in 1972 due to the devastating cyclone. Old Harchandi mouth in the southern extremity is no more now. Linkage of Palur Bay with Rushikulya estuary through Palur canal has been cut off. The Magarmukh is only 30 cms. deep in summer. Since the Magarmukh mouth gets elevated and is shallow, the net results of tidal ingress is not significant. This reduces the salinity of the lake water. The egress of water caused by the northerly wind during October-February is low. This gives less change for the replacement with saline water, and at the same time silt load is not pushed into the sea. The area between Bay of Bengal and outer channel suffers from sand casting, reducing the tidal ingress and thus the flushing out of sweet water. Thus the brackish environment is endangered and the silt is not flushed out as well. Part of the average addition of 13 million tonnes of silt a year brought by the flood waters remains in the lake.

Deforestation of the basins of the Chilika bound rivers have only added to the problem. It is said that the rice cultivation taken up by the newly settled refugees on the banks of these rivers and rivulets has also increased

the silt load. Preventive measures like proper soil management in the nearby banks and the distant basins, dredging of Magarmukh, etc. are being suggested.

As siltation and salinity are inter-related, so is the problem of eutrophy. The north sector is the eutrophication region. Less salinity breeds more weeds. More than 200 sq. kms. are affected by the weed of *Potamogeton* species alone. Spread of an exotic water hyacinth (*Eichornea* species) is alarming. The overgrowth of weeds can reduce the dissolved oxygen level of water endangering the water fauna, increasing mosquito breeding, creating problems of public health in terms of high incidence of malaria and filaria which are already rampant in the area, and obstructing the movement of boats, affecting negatively both fishing and transport. The dead vegetation shallows the lake forming peats. The north western part of the north sector is getting marshy at accelerated rate. As Prof. C. K. Varshney mentions, only a salinity regime can control the weeds in a natural ecofriendly manner. Weeds are not just a nuisance. They are a must for fish and birds. Inter-tidal vegetation are a must for prawn juveniles in the natural culture of prawns. Weeds prevent mud layer erosion. What is needed is that the excessive weed growth should be controlled.

Then there is the general pollution. There are industries around the western part of the lake. Waste water from these industries, oil from bilgewater of the Naval Cadet training ships and power driven boats are discharged into the lake. The catchment areas of the rivers feeding Chilika have also industries. Agriculture uses fertilizers intensively. The residues of industrial chemical wastes and fertilizers find their way into Chilika. B.N. Sahu suggests the avoidance of the tourist approach from satpada to prevent pollution. He also suggests the stoppage and prevention of aquaculture in the area between Arkhakuda and Satpura as it is a threat to the dolphine movement and also in the low lying areas between Nuapara island and Bajrakote region in the south sector because these areas are playgrounds of prawn juveniles and as such aquaculture here would be a threat to the natural crustacean fishery.

Source: Sahu, B.N., "The Chilika Lake is in Danger", Chilika: The Pride of Our Wetland Heritage (Bhubaneswar: Orissa Environmental Society, 1988).

Varshney, C.K., "Workshop Highlights and Closing Address" at the Technical Workshop on Chilika at Bhubaneswar, 5-6 Feb. 1992, Saving Chilika Lake, Saving the People of Chilika (Bhubaneswar: CIDA and CENDERET, 1992).

The embankment with a width of 40 ft. and a height of 30 ft. will obstruct the natural movement of fish. The artificial prawns are meant to remain within the ponds created for that purpose. It has been observed that fish and prawn in Chilika move from the brackish water to the sea (Bay of Bengal) to lay eggs and the young ones go back into the lake through the Magarmukh channel. The traditional fisherpeople think, the movement of fish will be obstructed by the Tata embankment.

It is feared that the embankment will stop the drainage of water coming into Chilika from the rivers Daya, Bhargavi, Luna and Kania. A survey report of the then Chief Irrigation Engineer, Banabar Das says that 35,000 acres of cultivable land in more than 80 Panchayats of Kanas, Brahmagiri, Sakshigopal and Krunaprasad Block areas will be inundated for longer periods due to the backwater effect of flood waters that get obstructed by the ring dam. Thousands of acres of land in these blocks have got submerged this year. The large scale inundation will naturally lead to massive displacement of people from the affected region.

The continuous use of water pumps and sounds they make may scare away the migratory birds that flock the Chilika lake.

The aquatic farms and the embankment will also obstruct the local fisherpeople's free access to Chilika. It should be recalled that it was in this shallow region that the fisherpeople used to anchor their canoes and fishing boats.

This area was the grazing ground for cattle and buffalos when water used to recede from the land mass.

The local people are apprehensive of Tata's intentions, whether they will ultimately monopolise the prawn trade and whether they will be the ones who determine the price of prawns.

They are not ready to catch the bait of employment opportunity offered by the Tatas. They say even the very few direct employment accruing from the project will not be given to the local people since most of them are technical in nature. Therefore skilled labourers will be brought in from outside, leaving probably, a few fourth class jobs to the local people. At the same time, the project will inflict severe economic loss to tens of thousands of families in the area.

TRUTH BEHIND THE EMPLOYMENT BAIT

Information from the project report of the Chilika Aquatic Farms Limited (CAFL) reveals that contrary to the claims of the Tatas, employment will not accrue, to the local population, in any significant manner. Technology intensive and labour saving CAFL provides a few job opportunities for skilled labour. Transportation, storage and shipment may provide some low paid employment for the local people as contract workers. No guarantee comes along with the CAFL project to ensure that the opportunities for self employment through the project's extension service will be made available to the poor fisherpeople in Chilika and will not be appropriated by the small scale entrepreneurs who now flock Chilika.

While the total project envisages only an 80 member staff for direct employment and 480 people on contract labour, the Shrimp Farm in Chilika, the major component of the project, would employ 7 officers and 32 skilled staff. The following is the break up of the direct and contract employment in Shrimp Farm in Chilika.

SHRIMP FARM IN CHILIKA

Direct Employment

Officers:

Manager	—	1
Technical Officers	—	4
Agriculture Engineer	—	1
Purchase/Accounts Officer	—	1

Total: 7



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<i>Skilled Workers:</i>		
<i>Technical Supervisors</i>	—	6
<i>Security Supervisor</i>	—	1
<i>Laboratory Assistants</i>	—	3
<i>Store Assistant</i>	—	1
<i>Pump Operators/Mechanics</i>	—	10
<i>Electricians</i>	—	3
<i>Office Clerks</i>	—	2
<i>Drivers</i>	—	4
<i>Messengers</i>	—	2
		<hr/>
<i>Total:</i>	—	32
<i>Total direct employment (7 + 32)</i>	=	39
<i>On Contract</i>		
<i>Pond workers</i>	—	200
<i>Security</i>	—	120
		<hr/>
<i>Total contract employment</i>	=	320

The Chilika people are highly critical of how the Tatas are forcefully entering the area. Officials of Tata have won over some local agents by giving bribes. These people who work as musclemen for Tata have started terrorising and enticing common people to fall into the trap.

They are apprehensive also of a violent disruption of their social and cultural moorings. Liquor and flesh trade will go on increasing.

The people are already facing the inflationary pressure on the economy as a consequence to Tata's entry. The prices of lands and that of essential commodities have increased leaps and bounds. A situation may arise when the local producers are inconsequential to the economy of the region.

The Tata acquired land had already been leased out to Mangala, Saupad and Garada fishing societies. But the administration didn't serve notices to the people before the land was leased out to Tata.

When the local fishing co-operative societies paid Rs. 800/- per hectare an year to the State Government, the Tatas are now to pay only Rs. 834/-. People say, they are also willing to pay the same amount, if proper facilities are provided.

Tata has been hired for a finish, for a slow, systematic and technologically efficient destruction of the Chilika ecosystem, which is already under threat from a number of other factors. Large scale commercial deforestation of the hills in the South and Southwest, the source of feeder rivers, has resulted in unusually high rate of siltation. It has been estimated that 13 million tonnes of sediments are being deposited in the lake, every year. Consequently, the surface area of the lake has shrunk drastically to 916 sq. kms. from 1,265 sq. kms. in 1963. The river discharge into the lake got reduced due to the silt deposits at the river mouth. Meanwhile, the sand deposits at the sea mouth of the Magarmukh canal significantly obstructs the free passage of saline water into the lake. The salinity of the brackish water reduces drastically, with serious consequences to the life forms in the lake. Simultaneously, there exists fierce competition to exploit the depleting fish resources in the Chilika lake. The farmers whose cultivable lands get flooded, due to the deforestation on the one hand and the decreased outflow into the lake on the other hand, are forced to leave their land and resort to fishing in the lake. There are another set of exploiters in the rich farmers and traders who are lured by the prospects of the export value of the prawns. They, not being part of the Chilika bio system, do not feel constrained in hastening the lake's destruction. Unsustainable and destructive techniques like the use of closely knit nets, that catch even fish fingerlings and post larval prawns are widely being employed by the non fishing communities. This has adversely affected the regeneration of fish resources. The fish production has come down from 8,590 tonnes in 1985-86 to 4,273 tonnes in 1991-'92.

It may be recalled at this moment that perceiving the significance of Chilika's abundance in bio diversity and natural resources, the 1971 international convention on wetlands held at Ramsar in Iran called for the protection and sustainable management of the lake. India acceded to the Ramsar Convention, in 1981. Nevertheless, neither the Central

WETLANDS AND RAMSAR CONVENTION

India is a party to the "Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat", adopted in 1971 at Ramsar in Iran. This is an international treaty which provides the framework for international co-operation for the conservation of wetland habitats. The Convention entered into force in late 1975. By 1985, the Convention could enlist 40 contracting state parties throughout the world. India acceded to the Convention since October 1981.

Parties to the Convention have met many times to share their national experiences, in Italy in 1980, in France in 1982, in Netherlands in 1984 and in Canada in 1987. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) acts as the Convention Bureau and the Contracting Parties are obliged to inform IUCN of any changes or likely changes in the ecological character of any listed site. International Waterfowl Research Bureau (IWRB) works as the Scientific Advisor of the Convention and UNESCO the Convention Depository. The listed site is the membership in the "List of Wetlands of International Importance" maintained by the Convention. From India, Bharatpur and Chilika are among the listed sites. By mid 1985, the membership in the List increased to as many as 300 sites covering more than 20,000,000 hectares.

The general criteria adopted by the Convention to consider a site for inclusion in the List are, if it

- (a) supports an appreciable number of rare, vulnerable or endangered species or sub-species of plants or animals;*
- (b) is of special value for maintaining the genetic and ecological diversity of a region because of the quality and peculiarities of its flora and fauna;*
- (c) is of special value as the habitat of plants or animals at a critical stage of their biological cycles; or*
- (d) is of special value for its endemic plant or animal species or communities.*

The Convention takes a broader approach in determining the 'wetlands'. Wetlands are defined as "areas of marsh, peatland or water whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water, the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres".

In addition, the Convention provides that wetlands "may incorporate riparian and coastal zones adjacent to the wetlands and islands or bodies of marine water deeper than six metres at low tide lying within the wetlands". Thus, the coverage includes a variety of habitats.

The need of conserving wetlands comes from the fact that wetlands are among the world's most productive environments. Over two thirds of the world's fish harvest is linked to the health of wetland areas. Apart from fishery, other factors that benefit mankind but linked to the conservation of wetlands are the maintenance of water tables for agriculture, water storage and flood control, shoreline stabilisation, timber production, water disposal and water purification and recreational opportunities.

(Source: a booklet by the name "The Ramsar Convention: Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat", produced by Ramsar Convention Bureau with financial assistance of UNESCO and contribution from the Contracting Parties).

Government nor the State Government have any comprehensive programme to save the lake from destructive exploitation. A State level Steering Committee constituted in 1990 to monitor the management of the lake, in reality, never got off. In January 1992 Chilika Development Authority was set up with the State Chief Minister as its Chairperson. But it hasn't met once since its formation. On the other hand, the State Government is encouraging commercial exploitation of the resources in this brackish water lake.

Fishing Rights Of The Traditional Fisherpeople Usurped

The history of the commercialisation of the Chilika lake is also the history of the marginalisation of its traditional fishing communities, as a result of the intervention of the

rich and powerful non-fishing communities from outside, who usurped the indigenous peoples' right over the Chilika's resources. When Tata enters the scene, the State Government flouts every rule in the book to offer them Chilika in a platter.

There are about 1,91,000 traditional fisherpeople inhabiting 122 revenue villages around the Chilika lake. Among them the majority, around 35% are the Keutas and the rest are constituted by the Kandaras, the Tiars, the Karatias and the Nolias. The Telugu speaking Nolias also do marine fishing.

The traditional fisherpeople trace their right over the Chilika lake after paying lease money, when the Afghans and Britishers ruled Orissa. It was at the time of the Britishers, the fisherpeople were organised into co-operative societies. The objective of the exercise was to lease out systematically the fishing rights in favour of the fishermen societies, to supply fishing materials and to provide grants to the fisherpeople to purchase necessary equipments. In 1953, with the abolition of Zamindari system, the Chilika lake became Government's property and they continued the practice of formal auction and leasing out of fisheries to fishermen societies on priority basis. Subsequently, the State Revenue Department gave orders in 1959 to constitute the Central Fishermen Marketing Co-operative Society Ltd. at Balugaon as an apex body of 65 primary co-operative societies. The entire fisheries of Chilika lake was to be leased out to the Central co-operative Marketing Society who in turn would sublet the fishing rights to the village co-operative societies. Though the lease had to be renewed every three years, the primary co-operative societies were assured of the same territory each time.

A Dubious Deal

A fundamental break in this tradition occurred in 1986 when the Orissa Maritime and Chilika Area Development Corporation Ltd. entered into a deal with Tatas to lease out to Tata Aquatic Farms Ltd, 1400 acres of Chilika land for prawn aquaculture project. The State Government initiated steps to materialise this deal. In 1987, they conducted a survey on the fish resources in Chilika. But they didn't bother to seek the participation of the fishing communities. In 1990, the election of the Board of Directors of the Balugaon Central Fishermen Marketing Co-operative Society was postponed

sine die. Later on, this Central Society was dissolved and amalgamated with the Orissa State Fishermen Co-operative Federation Ltd, undermining the exclusive right the traditional fisher-people will have over the fish resources of Chilika lake. Consequently, when the leases expired in 1991, the State Government decided to put the fishing resources of Chilika to public auction favouring the entry of big entrepreneurs. In the same year, in December, the Tatas were illegally allowed the advance possession of 400 hectares of Chilika land.

The State Government has clearly gone out of the way to grant Tatas the right of possession over Chilika lake. How else could one otherwise explain the fact that the delivery note of advanced possession dated 20th December 1991 issued by the Revenue Inspector of Panaspada didn't indicate the exact area to be delivered! The Tehsildar of Puri confirms this in a letter written by him to the Additional Tehsildar, Puri.

HAS CAFL COMPLIED WITH THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS WHILE TAKING POSSESSION OF THE CHILIKA LAND?

The letter written by Tehsildar of Puri dated February 1, 1992 addressed to the Additional Tehsildar shows that the land deal was not undertaken complying with the legal requirements. Though sounds absolutely strange, the statement of delivery doesn't specify the exact plots that were being transferred to the Tatas.

The order as well as the two memos sent to the Revenue Inspector, Panasapada and M/s. Tata Aquatic Farms Ltd. are reproduced here.

(Source: Chilika Banchao Andolan).

L. No. 928 of Rev. Dt. 1.2.92

To

The Addl. Tdr. Puri

Sub:—Advance Possession of Land to M/s. Tata Ltd., BBSR

Ref:—Your Letter No. 1, dtd. 7.1.92.

Sir,

In inviting reference to your letter dated above I am to say that the statement of delivery of advance possession does not indicate the area delivered to M/s. TATA AQUATIC FARM LTD., Orissa, B.B.S.R., on 20.12.1991, since it is a permanent record the possession of the area so delivered against each plot should be clearly mentioned and the recipient should acknowledge the area taken over possession. The statement is returned herewith to reconcile the defects and furnish the same early.

Further it has been instructed by the A.D.M., (Rev) Puri, his letter No. 655/Rev. dt. 24.1.92, that delivery of advance possession to the said Company is under re-consideration by the Govt. on the recommendation of R.D.C. (...) Cuttack, till receipt of further instruction from Govt. the M/s. TATA AQUATIC FARM, ORISSA, BBSR., may be restrained to proceed with any construction or development works over the land.

Sd/

Tdr, Puri.

Memo No. 929/Rev. Dtd. 1.2.92.,

Copy Forwarded to the R.I. Panasapada for information and the necessary action. He is requested not to allow the TATA AQUATIC FARMS, ORISSA, BBSR., to go ahead with any construction work even though advance possession has been delivered.

R.I.,

Memo No. 930/Rev. dt. 1.2.92.

Copy forwarded to M/s. TATA AQUATIC FARMS ORISSA LTD., BBSR., for information and necessary action. He is requested not to utilise the land in any work for any purpose till further order.

Tdr, Puri.

Interestingly, R.D.C. Cuttack, issued a stay order on February 1, 1992 restraining Tatas from going ahead with any construction or development work over the land. The conspiratorial act of the administration in favour of the money power of Tatas has already taken its toll. Fisherpeople of 3 villages numbering around 1500, who for over 100 years used to get the lease on this Tata acquired land, are dispossessed.

WHOSE LAND IS IT?

The Chilika Aquatic Farms Ltd. has applied as per Rules 5(2) under the provisions of the Orissa Government Land Settlement Act to the extent of 597.72 Acres of land in 8 plots, recorded as Chilika Lake, under classification of land in Record to Right (ROR) of 1977 Settlement in Mouza Panasapada, under Lease Case No. 79/91 before the Tehsildar, Puri. Similarly in Lease Case No. 80/91, the same applicant has applied for lease under the same provision in the same manner, for another 327.06 Acres of land, in respect of Mouza Siara, which also comes under the classification of Chilika Lake. Both these lands are recorded as of 'Rakhita Anabadi' status. The first application was made admittedly in the name of Tata Aquatic Farms Ltd., which has been subsequently changed, in the name of Chilika Aquatic Farms Ltd. on 17th February 1992. These applications are still pending before the Tehsildar, who heard the objections from the general public and village community of the concerned villages.

Under the provisions of the Orissa Government Land Settlement Act, the lands in question cannot be transferred to the applicant for the purpose, for which they have applied. Since the scheme of the Act as provided under the President's Act (22 of 1972) amendment as per, Sub-Section 2 of Section 3, 70 percent of Government lands shall be settled with the persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and Tribes in proportion to their respective population in their village, in which the lands are situated and the remaining lands, shall be settled with other persons not belonging to aforesaid categories. Of course, the provision provides, when persons belonging to the aforesaid categories are not available in the village, in which the lands are situated, or while being

available are not willing to accept the settlement, the same may be settled with other persons. Even the settlement with other persons under the scheme has been formulated under Sub Section 3 of the said Section. The settlement in favour of other persons is also skinned on priority basis, such as :—

- (1) *Co-operative Farming Societies formed by landless, agricultural labourers.*
- (2) *Any landless, agricultural labourer of the village, in which the land is situated or any from neighbouring village.*
- (3) *Ex-servicemen or members of Armed Forces of the Union if they belong to the village, in which the land is situated.*
- (4) *Raiyats who personally cultivate not more than standard Acre of continuous land.*

After exhausting all these persons in order of preference, the settlement in favour of other person may arise as per Sub Section 3.

According to latest Acts and judgements, the lands under question are explained as common property (communal lands) and thus are not at all leasable. These vast acres of land, recorded as Chilika Lake under classification column and given 'status' of Rakhita Anabadi in the last RORs published in the year 1977, are undoubtedly communal lands as per the definition given under Section 2(a) Clause 1, in the Act 1 of 1948, i.e. Orissa Communal Forest and Lands Alienation Act, which says that the lands recorded as Gochara, Rakhita or Sarbasadharana or waste land are either expressly or impliedly set apart for the common use of the villagers, whether recorded as such in the RORs or not. Undoubtedly these lands are recorded as Rakhita, so communal. Apart from this, under the definition section 2 of the Orissa Estates Abolition Act, 1951, it is provided that the words not defined are to be held to be defined as per the tenancy laws.

Hence the definition of Act 1 of 1948 is to be accepted as the definition under Orissa Estates Abolition Act. Besides, Section 5 of the Act provides the vesting

of entire estate including all communal lands and porambokes, other non raiyati lands, waste lands, rivers and streams etc. Definitely, the lake comes under this category of vesting. When the validity of this Act was challenged before the Supreme Court, the Court held valid the meticulous list described in section 5(a) and the right to vest lies absolutely with the State Government under the operation of the Act. But the point to note is whether the communal rights in such lands vest with the State Government and the community can be deprived from exercising their communal rights from such land after vesting. This issue came for decision in 1992 (S.C. 1421) and 1976 (S.C. 2599) before the Supreme Court. In the earlier decision three judges held that the communal right does not vest, and in subsequent decision two Judges held that it vests. The earlier decision, . . . being a judgement of larger number of judges, was held to be binding and many decisions of the Orissa High Court accepted the position of law of non vesting of communal right. Now, in this light, it can be urged that the communal right in respect of these plots in Chilika Lake cannot be interfered with by the Government under the proposed settlement.

Even under the Orissa Government Land Settlement Act, there is scheme for development of communal land like Gochara by the Government itself or through any Gram Panchayat on transfer. The Government under the same Act under Section 3 (a) may reserve other lands for house sites, communal or industrial purposes. Hence the communal lands cannot be leased out as a matter of public policy.

(Source: Slightly modified version of the article, "Legal Issues of the Land taken by Tata Prawn Project", distributed by Chilika Banchao Andolan).

It is an irony that the system that is built upon the edifice of private property, even in principle denies this right to the communities like those of traditional fisherpeople and tribals. The traditional communities do not establish private ownership over land and water. In that sense, the sea, the lake or the forests are not synonymous with a common land in a village. In these cases, the organic inter relationships that elements establish, bestow on them the right to be part of a total bio-system.

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DEVICONG



Land or water bodies are not something to be possessed and exploited, but something to live in and to live with. Therefore, the question of the traditional communities destroying the forest or the resources in the water bodies doesn't arise. Traditional fisherpeople have been fishing in the Chilika lake since time immemorial. It is only after the arrival of commercial fish promoters that the rape of Chilika begins.

The Larger Design

Tatas and the Chilika Aquatic Farms Ltd. are only the beginning of the technological and market invasions of Chilika and other water bodies in Orissa. The Minister of State for Fisheries and animal Husbandry, Mr. Surya Narayan Patra in the Assembly told that more than 81,000 hectares along the Orissa coast had been identified as suitable for prawn cultivation. It may be recalled that the State Government's initiatives on the export oriented prawn aquaculture are within the

NATIONAL FISHWORKERS' FORUM ON AQUACULTURE

Culture fisheries are a new trend where fish or crustaceans are grown and harvested under capture conditions. The commercial approach to aquaculture is an emerging problem confronting the traditional capture fisher people—be it in fresh or brackish waters. Aquaculture is practised in inland fresh water, brackish and coastal waters. Fresh water culture fisheries practised mostly in the States of West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Bihar, cater mainly to domestic consumers. The National Fishworker's Forum identifies many constraints that came in the way of it picking up momentum in the rest of the country: the absence of physical planning in identification of water areas, the lack of proper water lease and utilisation policy, inadequate and lack of timely supply of fish seeds, feed and manures, paucity of technical and extension support, dearth of timely credit and marketing facilities and inadequate training for fish farmers in fish culture and management practices. The Fish Farmers Development Agencies (FFDA) were set up in the country to take care of these constraints. National Fishworkers's Forum points out that FFDA couldn't prevent the registered fish farmers from discontinuing the culture activities once the subsidy and loan facilities

were withdrawn. Prawn having acquired high export value and with the decline of prawn landings in the marine sector, brackish water prawn farming has now attained greater importance. To maintain the growth rate of foreign exchange earnings from the fisheries sector, the government has planned for large scale promotion of brackish water prawn culture. Big business houses, as the TATAs in the case of Chilika, and private entrepreneurs grab this opportunity to make quick and huge profits. Since many capture fisherpeople depend on these water bodies, liberal leasing of these potential areas to big entrepreneurs causes the marginalisation of the existing fisherpeople and unemployment among the growing number of fishworkers. The aquaculture promoted by the government is ecologically destructive, unsustainable and encourage the big business to grab land and water from people who survive on these natural resources.

A seminar by the National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) on 12-13 October 1990 sums up that "with the growing interest in aquaculture, there is a tendency to privatise the water bodies, especially the most productive areas and thereby traditional fisherpeople are alienated from their occupation." ('An Approach to the National Fisheries Policy for Fuller Employment and Sustainable Development in the Eighth Plan.') The NFF report adds that the mere reservation of 50 percent of brackish water areas for the weaker sections, as being done in some States, doesn't ensure sustainable development and fuller employment. NFF is of the opinion that:

A great opportunity exists to absorb underemployed from the fisheries sector as well as the landless and underemployed in the agricultural sector in aquacultural activities. Here, the possibility of big business taking over large tracts of suitable land and water areas and employing highly capital intensive forms of aquaculture is a serious threat to fuller employment. This would even lead to reduced employment, displacement of local populations and environmental degradation. A major effort is required to ensure that the narrow legal, financial and administrative hurdles that block the

participation of the rural poor in aquaculture are removed and that appropriate technologies are made available to them. In the post harvest field, employment generation is best guaranteed by emphasis on low cost processing methods, decentralisation of marketing and processing infrastructure, greater reliance on renewable sources of energy and better facilities/conditions for the fisherwomen and other small operators. (Ibid)

With the present ways of aquaculture, the traditional fisherpeople are systematically losing access and rights over water bodies as their community property. Moreover, they are also losing the fishing practices and traditional systems of management being collectively evolved and practised by them across generations.

Sources:

- * National Fishworkers' Forum, 'National and State Level Union's Reports, 1991' (Thiruvananthapuram: Cherureshmi Centre, 1992)*
- * National Fishermen's Forum, 'An Approach to the National Fisheries Policy for Fuller Employment and Sustainable Development in the Eighth Plan' (New Delhi: NFF, 1990).*

policy perspective of the Union Government. India's answer for severe foreign exchange crisis, they say, lies in producing fish for exports. The President of the Association of Chartered Fishing Trawler Operators of India (ACFTOI) said that 4,800 chartered fishing trawlers are required to exploit our fish potential worth, according to him, Rs. 15,000 crores in foreign exchange. He laments, now only 27 vessels are in operation. The Central Government has cleared an investment of Rs. 844.45 crores in completely export oriented deep-sea fishing project owned by large Indian and multinational companies. This intensive export promotion is not only in the deep sea fishing, but also in the coastal, brackish water and inland fishing. The Government has identified nearly 1.4 million hectares of brackish water as suitable for shrimp cultivation. This resuscitation of prawns become necessary, Government explains, in 1991, when the shrimp catches from sea

EXPORT OF PRAWN AND FISH PRODUCTS

Export of prawns constitutes the major share of the exports of the marine products by India. The Table below shows that prawns alone account for as many as 70% of the foreign exchange from marine exports:

Year	Total Marine Products	Share of prawns
	Quantity/Value (tonnes)/(Rs. lakhs)	Quantity/Value (tonnes)/(Rs. lakhs)
1983-84	92691 / 37302	54444 / 31480
1984-85	86187 / 38428	55398 / 32969
1985-86	83651 / 39799	50349 / 32981
1986-87	85843 / 46067	49203 / 37792
1987-88	91179 / 53114	55736 / 42578

Compiled from Bharat Dogra, 'Chilika Lake Controversy: Dollars Vs. Livelihood' (New Delhi: NFS-India, 92)

Export of fish and fish preparations dominates the area of food exports by India. See table below:

Year	Quantity in thousand tonnes	Value in Rs. crores
1985-86	87.5	409
1986-87	110.6	539
1987-88	98.4	533
1988-89	115.6	630
1989-90	124.9	687
1990-91	158.9	960

Source: Bharat Dogra, 'Chilika Lake Controversy: Dollars Vs. Livelihood, (New Delhi: NFS-India, 1992).

by both fishing boats and trawlers have stagnated. In 1990, prawns accounted for more than 70% of India's total Rs. 90 crore marine exports. In this year, World Bank has sanctioned Rs. 284 crore fish culture project for the States of West Bengal, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

People's Resistance

In the wake of these developments, a quite powerful people's movement has emerged in the Chilika over the last

two years, to protect it from the commercial exploitation by the big business and to restore to the people their right to manage Chilika. The struggle operates at different levels through different actors but bound together by a common purpose.

A strategic moment in the people's struggle was when 8000 people from the fisherpeople community around Chilika reached Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Orissa on 20th September 1991, to present a memorandum to the Chief Minister. That was the day when the 3 year lease period for the contentious Chilika land was to expire. The government had declared its intention not only to discontinue with the practice of leasing out to the fisherpeople's primary co-operative societies but to leave it open favouring the entrance of big business. The Bhubaneswar demonstration took place under the banner of Matsyajibi Mahasangha and 'Meet The Students' who brought together fisherpeople from 121 fishing villages in Chilika. People gave a memorandum to the Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Surya Narayan Patra, demanding the stoppage of Tata's entry into Chilika. Minister assured the people that not an inch of Chilika would be leased out to the Tatas. Consequent to this demonstration, the State government constituted a committee under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister including MLAs of Khurda, Brahmagiri, Chilika, Chhatrapur and representatives of Chilika Matsyajibi Mahasangha.

The programme in the State capital was preceeded by militant mass actions in Chilika. On February 16, 1992, a gathering of about 8000 people consisting of fishermen, non-fishermen, women, students and intellectuals took possession of the Tata occupied Chilika area. They hoisted their own flag and declared a "peoples' curfew" in the area. Village chiefs from 62 villages vowed to continue their fight against Tata's illegal occupation of Chilika.

On 7th March 1992, was a rally of 1000 women towards the Tata site with the intention to break the embankment. People really broke the embankment on 15th March. There were about 6000 people from all over Chilika villages. Neither the presence of police force in large numbers nor the physical assaults by Tata's goondas could deter the people from their determination to demolish the dam.

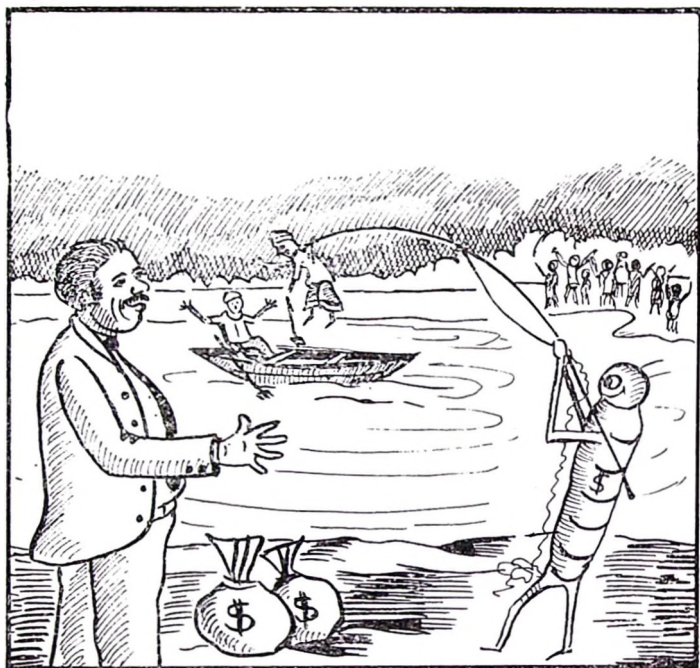
On March 25th people set up a check gate to obstruct the movement of Tata's vehicles from their godown. It was removed later. The agitationists declared another peoples' march to the Tata site on 28th March. The administration got panicky and responded with severe police repression. On the day of the rally 11 platoons of police were despatched to the area. They resorted to lathicharge. 69 fisherpeople including 33 women and 6 children were arrested on the day of the rally and on the previous few days and kept in jail for 14 days. In spite of these fierce police repressions, people succeeded in continuing with the act of demolition of the dam. On 4th April, the administration executed the arrest of the leader of the movement, Mr. Chittaranjan Sarangi. Students from the Utkal University infuriated by this highhandedness, went on a rally and gheraoed the Puri District Collector demanding the release of all the arrested people including Chittaranjan.

A letter signed by 21 MPs calling for his immediate intervention in restraining Tatas from executing the aquaculture project was submitted to the Prime Minister on 13th March 1992. A memorandum was also submitted to the Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr. Kamal Nath.

Social Dynamics Of The People's Movement

Let us go little more into the social dynamics of the people's movement in Chilika. There are mainly three strata of social forces operating in Chilika contributing to the emergence of the People's Movement; they are the traditional fisherpeople, farmers and the students. Among these, the fisherpeople and the farmers are those who are directly affected by the Tata's invasion of Chilika. Students' group is an extraneous force, but deeply involved in the Chilika struggle.

It has been estimated that there would be around 22,000 acres of wetland in Chilika congenial for prawn aquaculture. Though 65 fishermen's co-operatives have been functioning in these lands, since no proper survey has been conducted by the administration and the lease lands not properly apportioned to the co-operative societies, fights and long drawn out litigations are rampant among the societies. With the arrival of farmers from the surrounding agricultural villages for prawn farming in the lake, fights between fishing and non-fishing communities started occurring quite often. The State government's



decision to make the Central Fishermen Marketing Co-operative Society disfunctional aggravated the situation, as the traditional fisherpeople lost an important avenue to safeguard their interests. The fishing community had another organization, Matsyajibi Mahasangha, but it was not active in the absence of proper leadership. The traditional fishing community was deeply concerned about the violent destruction of Chilika, but there wasn't a proper forum through which to air their grievances. Yet people protested, and it was conceived of as an important issue. Earlier, in an election meeting in Panasapada village, the then opposition leader Biju Patnaik announced in the presence of Janata Dal M.P. Mr. Nilamoni Routray and MLA candidate Mr. Ajay Jena, that he would withdraw the project if he would assume power.

Students In Action

The situation changes qualitatively with the arrival of a batch of Utkal University students in Chilika. They were members of a group called "Meet The Students" working within the campus 'with a mission to bring about a value based change in society'. They used to get involved in symbolic action programmes that 'expose the hollowness of the present system'. One such programme was the 'Alternate booth' they opened, during the polling day of the June 1991 elections, for those who are against the system. Interestingly some 20,000 people preferred to cast their votes in the 'Alternate booth' set up by the 'Meet The Students'.

'Meet the Students' geared themselves to the task as soon as they came to know of Tata's plan of action on Chilika. Led by social activist and Sarvodaya leader, Mr. Chittaranjan and student activist Ms. Srimati Dash, the 'Meet the Students' embarked on a series of activities, on the one hand to apprise themselves of the situation and on the other hand to motivate and unite the traditional fisherpeople and others who are affected by the corporate aquatic farm towards a sustained struggle to oust Tatas from the Chilika and to re-establish the rights of the local people over the natural resources of Chilika. In the first visit from 5th to 12th August 1991, the student activists covered 62 villages that would be directly affected by the project. Their strategy was to rejuvenate and strengthen Matsyajibi Mahasangha, the organisation of the traditional fisherpeople. Accordingly, meetings under the auspices of Matsyajibi Mahasangha were convened at Keshpur on 17th August, Pathara on 29th August and Nairi on 11th and 12th September 1991. Such intense activities resulted in the Bhubaneswar rally on 20th September which was jointly called by 'Matsyajibi Mahasangha' and 'Meet the Students'.

Meanwhile, steps were taken to broaden the support base of those who had been in struggle to save Chilika. A meeting of the intellectuals, arranged at Bhubaneswar on 13th August 1991, was attended by people like Dr. Bhabagrahi Misra, Sri Pradyumna Bal, Shri Banka Behari Das, Shri A. K. Dash, Prof. Indranil Chakravorthy, Prof. Chittaranjan Das and Shri Gangadhar Panigrahi. The meeting decided to form a platform 'Chilika Suraksha Parishad' to co-ordinate the activities.

The cause also received support from democratic rights organisations like Swadhikar and Ganatantra Adhikar Surakshya Samiti (GASS).

As students intensified their activities, the fisherpeople regained their confidence and they mobilised themselves into a people's movement of their own. On 15th January 1992, in Gopinathpur, in a meeting of representatives of fisherpeople villages, the people's organisation in Chilika was named 'CHILIKA BANCHAO ANDOLAN'. The 55 member Executive Committee was formed from among local fisherpeople. Mr. Govinda Behera of Gopinathpur was elected the convenor.

Meanwhile, the direct involvement with the people necessitated the formation of another state level activist forum of the students, "KRANTADARSI YUBA SANGAM" with Ms. Srimati Dash as its convenor. 'Meet the Students' remains more as a university based students' forum. At present 24 full time activists of 'Krantadarsi Yuba Sangam' are working in Chilika.

Though the affected farmers have not forced themselves into an effective movement of their own, the active involvement of Shri Banka Behari Das, Ex M.P. and leader of Orissa Krushak Mahasangh has broadened the campaign base in Orissa and elsewhere in the country.

Activists of Krantadarsi Yuba Sangam and Chilika Banchao Andolan met Mr. J. J. Irani, Managing Director, TISCO, and appealed to him to move out of Chilika. He assured them that he will look into the matter and even withdraw the project if it goes against the interest of the local people. Later on (October 29, 1992), Chairman of TISCO, Mr. Russey Mody clarified that the Shrimp project poses no threat to the Chilika lake and all objections are baseless. Infact, Mody has a genuine grievance.

No Clearance From Ministry Of Environment

The project is yet to get clearance from the concerned Central Government Ministry. In June 1992, Mr. Kamal Nath, Minister of Environment and Forests had asked the State Government to suspend the ongoing project till the ecological issues affecting the lagoon are thoroughly examined.

IMPACT OF CAFL : WAPCOS Vs. PEOPLE

Sl. Issues as given
No. by WAPCOS

What WAPCOS Says

What People Says

1. Rehabilitation and
Resettlement

400 hectares of land including the pond area is not inhabited. Hence no displacement and no need of resettlement or rehabilitation.

Large scale displacement of fisher-people and farmers takes place consequent to (i) their common land being taken away from them by CAFL, (ii) inundation of significant cultivable land along the path of the feeder rivers.

2. Encroachment in
Grazing Lands

Land acquired neither belongs to nearby villages nor is it 'gochar' (grazing) land. Revenue records classified this land as "Rakhita Anabadi". Land use maps record it as mud/tidal flats. So, the land given to CAFL is not notified as grazing land.

But, after discussion with the local population it is found that some

Land acquired is the grazing land of the local livestock for a full season. Milk is an integral component of the local economy. The idea of the alternative site is unacceptable as the creation of a site will necessarily disturb further, the ecosystem of the lake. The land classified as 'Rakhita Anabadi' is undoubtedly communal land as

animals from the nearby villages graze on this land for about 4 months. As sufficient land is available, the extra load on the nearby land, in the wake of CAFL take over, would be estimated and appropriate measures and alternative sites will be suggested based on the carrying capacity of these areas.

3. Change in land use Pattern

The land is "not being put to any major use". Though the seasonal growth of salinity resistant grass called *paspalum* makes this a grazing land for live stock, area remains a wasteland. The project will utilise the waste land and convert it into an "economically productive zone". No major land use change is expected.

per the definition given under section 2(a), Clause 1 in the Act 1 of 1948, i.e. the Orissa Communal Forests and Lands Alienation Act. And as such it cannot be leased out to outside parties. (See box item "whose land is it?").

The so called "waste land" is a communally owned highly productive land. There is a complete change in the use pattern of the land. The comparatively shallow lake bed in that area is used by fisherpeople, during the rainy season, to anchor their fishing canoes. When water recedes people use this land for cattle grazing. The argument of "waste land" is brought to undermine the economic productivity of the traditional fisherpeople and farmers

4. *Impacts due to
Construction Work*

Soil erosion would be taken care of by careful planning, revegetation and avoiding construction during monsoon. Careful planning, cleaning, redressing, landscaping and revegetation would be resorted to avoid surface and ground water pollution due to construction spoils like cement, concrete, bricks, soil wastes etc.

and to transfer it to the TATAs, leaving behind the people as destitutes.

Even if, in paper, the pollution by construction spoils is taken care of, the real impacts of construction work remain unattended. The 13.7 km. long boundary wall of the CAFL, in effect, is a dam constructed in the Chilika lake which blocks the natural flow of feeder rivers like Bhargavi, Luna, Cania and Daya through the Chilika Lake into the Dahikhia channel and into the Bay of Bengal. This results in the flooding of 35000 hectares of agricultural land in 80 Panchayats in Kanas, Brahmagiri, Sakhigopal and Krusnaprasad blocks. The Chief Engineer of Irrigation Department had, in fact, in his report, warned the Government of Orissa on the im-

5. Cultural Hazards

Difference in culture of immigrant workers and local residents can cause cultural hazards. Adequate facilities in workers' camps and the employment of local labour would solve this.

pending danger of water logging and drainage. The submergence during 1992 monsoon had caused immense loss to the farmers. The obstruction of the river water flow into the sea through Chilika will reduce the salinity resulting in its slow death. The 'Dam' will obstruct the movement of the fish as well as that of the fisherpeople with their canoes, boats and nets.

The promise of jobs is a myth. (See box item on employment bait). With the arrival of outsiders as employees of CAFL, "Cultural Hazard" has become a reality. The local agents and the wrestlers from Puri Akhara are employed by TATAs to terrorise the common people. Rape cases are already reported. Poaching has increased. Liquor and flesh trade are afraid to be increasing. The smooth life of

6. Water Pollution

In the Shrimp Farm, two stages of waste water discharge is expected. One is the routine 'draining' where, on average, a maximum of 10% of volume of the ponds per day would be discharged. The other is the 'seining,' the cleaning of the ponds after two crops i.e. once in a year. The quality of both these discharges would be better than the water quality of the Bhubania river in summer when it is mostly dry with stagnant water pools on it.

7. Sludge Production Risks

The possible sludge (slimy, muddy sediment) production due to 150

the village is violently getting disrupted.

See the audacity of the corporate justification. Added quantities of polluted water, will necessarily change the quality of the Bhubania and Chilika waters in the long run. A myopic CAFL is not bothered about the pollution of Chilika as the firm proposes to exploit the ground water resources. The water being emptied into the lake would be heavily contaminated due to the heavy use of pesticides, fertilizers and chemicals during the process of culture which ultimately will convert Chilka into a death trap to the fish, the migratory birds and other living organisms. The processing plants will also have its share in polluting the lake.

No measure to remove sludge is suggested. The sludge will enhance

tonnes of lime and 60 tonnes of organic manure, added twice for each crop, in addition to the nondegradable chiton (outer skeleton) due to the moulting of shrimps, cannot be quantified. But, the large surface area of tanks would keep this nuisance at low.

8. Eutrophication Risks

Orthophosphates level would lead to eutrophy. If Bhubania has enough water there is no risk. Otherwise, dilution is better.

9. Air Pollution

Diesel contains 6.1% of it ash and 1.75 of it sulphur. 6,912 litres of diesel per day are going to be spent. Air pollution is 'negligible' since no other industry is there in the vicinity.

10. Noise Pollution

144 pumps of 10 H.P. each, 4 generators of 75 KVA each and 720 aerators would be at work. Noise level would not increase at the birds sanctuary. Noise level can be reduced at the local area by adopting suitable control measures.

the risks involved in the already existing siltation problem.

Eutrophication risk is higher due to high protein content of the feed used. This would add to the existing weed growth and thus to the slow death of the lagoon itself.

If diesel is going to be used, air pollution would obviously be on the increase. Ash sedimentation in the lake will add to the sludge formation and siltation.

The birds are going to be scared by the regular high pitch noise of the pumps.

Consequently, The Water and Power Consultancy Services (India) Ltd (WAPCOS) in September 1992 came out with a report that the positive impacts of the farm outweighed its apprehended negative ones and that the project would not harm the lake's ecosystem. There is nothing surprising about the quality of the report if one recognizes the fact that WAPCOS was commissioned by the Chilika Aquatic Farms Ltd (CAFL) to prepare the report. It should be recalled that neither the competency of the WAPCOS to undertake the assessment was accepted by the Union Government nor the terms of reference for the socio economic and environmental impact assessment defined.

In the context of the strong and participative people's movement in Chilika and the wide support it has acquired all over the country and sensing the danger involved in accepting the report based on half truth, it is learnt, the Union Environment Ministry is not prepared to revoke its suspension order. But the Environment Ministry's will to hold on to its decision to oppose an export oriented project by a leading industrialist is a matter of conjecture. And the past experiences like that of the clearance given under pressure to Sardar Sarovar Projects show that ultimately it is the vigilance and consciousness of the people that matter.

Struggle Continues

The people of Chilika are aware of this and the strategies are planned accordingly. In September 1992, the Chilika Banchao Andolan organised a convention of 632 representatives of villages in four blocks to be affected by the Tata Project. In the convention, was articulated, an alternative master plan for the traditional fisherpeople to continue the natural prawn culture, from whose co-operatives any exporter including Tatas could purchase prawns at competitive prices. In the last week of September the activists of Krantadarsi Yuba Sangam and Chilika Banchao Andolan have undertaken a week long padayatra cum boat yatra into the Chilika villages. Participating in a state level convention in Bhubaneswar, on 2nd November 1992, eminent environmentalists, jurists, social activists and politicians urged the Centre, State and the Tatas to 'call off the CAFL project in the larger interests of protecting the ecology of the lake and the livelihood of several hundred

villages situated in the vicinity of the lake'. Will the legitimate right of the Chilika fisherpeople to be part of their environment and to manage its natural resources be accepted? And the struggle continues.

7 November 1992

Addresses :

Chilika Banchao

Andolan

—Mr. Govinda Behera, Chilika Banchao Andolan, Gopinathpur village, P.O. Panasapada, Puri—752011, Orissa.

Krantadarsi

Yuba Sangam

—Ms. Srimati Dash, Convenor, Krantadarsi, Balisahi, Mangala Lane, Puri-752001, Orissa.

Orissa Krushak

Mahasangha

—Mr. Banka Behari Das, President, Orissa Krushak Mahasangha, 14, Ashok Nagar, Bhubaneswar-9, Orissa.