CHAPTER 5

Agitation Against Industrial Shrimp Aquaculture in Tamil Nadu
AGITATION AGAINST INDUSTRIAL SHRIMP AQUACULTURE
IN TAMIL NADU

Shrimp industries all over the world have destroyed the surrounding environment indiscriminately. The uncontrolled growth of aquaculture has resulted in the unthinkable level of destruction of mangrove forests, including very sensitive and fragile lands. Introduction of exotic shrimp species for export production has resulted in destruction of marine resources by harvesting wild post larvae, pollution due to effluent discharged from the shrimp farms, salinisation of coastal aquifers and adjacent agricultural lands, reduction of land fertility level because of solid waste from shrimp farms and use of antibiotics, fungicides, paraciticides, algicides and varieties of pesticides have made aquaculture as one of main threats towards present environment and society. Aquaculture has not only degraded the environment but also displaced the local people who are directly dependent on the natural resources that shrimp aquaculture destroys. Being a commercial and profit oriented nature this organisation requires substantial acquisition and privatisation of common resources (like ground water). It also leads to deprivation, poverty and displacement of coastal people who are dependent on traditional livelihood.}

The main reason for the boom in the shrimp aquaculture is a growing import of shrimps by the Western countries. The wild stocks are already over fished as a result of the growing market demand for fish products and destructive fishing of shrimp juveniles
in sea, backwater, lagoons, estuaries etc. for shrimp culture. Almost the entire production of shrimp from aquaculture comes from the developing countries, and, therefore, the impact of shrimp aquaculture are of particular concern to the local people, artisanal communities and local NGOs who protest against shrimp aquaculture in several countries including India.²

At the centre of growth of industrial aquaculture the concern was devaluing and displacing the coastal communities - both fisherfolk and farmers. Large corporate houses were involved in large scale shrimp farming which has completely pushed small farmers aside. The traditional life style of rural communities was getting disturbed. In the process the contribution of the small scale fisherfolk in agriculture and fishing got minimised. This was also due to a variety of factors, other than the involvement of corporate houses in shrimp culture, like excessive pressure on fish stocks, denial of free access to sea, increased competition for limited resources.¹

Shrimp farming for exports encouraged the conversion of agricultural lands and even forests and mangrove lands to shrimp farms. Increasing competition and new technologies reduced the need for labour in aqua farms. The livelihoods of small farmers and agricultural labourers did not get any other alternative employment as a result of shrimp farming. This led to social tensions and displeasure among the local people.⁴
Grassroot movements have started in many countries to counter the shrimp industry. There have been social conflicts, human rights abuse and violence wherever rampant industrial shrimp aquaculture has been in practice. In India many NGOs have campaigned against shrimp aquaculture continuously and in support of the local affected people.

In India the unrest against commercial shrimp aquaculture first started in Tamil Nadu in 1992. Initially in 1990, the local people showed a lot of enthusiasm and welcomed this industry on their land, unaware of the adverse effects of this industry. In some cases the aquaculturists promised employment and prosperity to the local people. The adverse impact of modern shrimp culture was clearly visible within three years of its introduction. As this industry does not need much of a man-power, the local people did not get employment as promised by the aquaculturists. In 1992 the impact of shrimp farming were very much obvious on the livelihood of people and the environment. The adversities caused by shrimp aquaculture were felt by the coastal people slowly over a period of time. But these impacts came to limelight when S.Jagannathan and other members of an NGO, Land for Tiller (LAFTI) in 1992 went round Nagapattinam district propagating the ideals of Grama Swaraj and the environment degradation caused by shrimp aquaculture.

Due to the efforts of environmentalists the shrimp farming had met with significant resistance by local communities for further expansion. Protests had centered
around issues of pollution, takeover of lands, access to water resources, destruction of mangroves and the deterioration of surrounding soil quality. Many environmentalists along with the protesting mass and NGOs joined hand against the shrimp industry. Women from the fishing communities also joined the agitation. Large groups were organised in Women's Societies that decided not to collect shrimp fry's or work on the shrimp farms. Various voluntary organisations in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh with like minded objectives joined and formed the Joint Action Forum Against Shrimp Farming in October, 1994, in order to pressurise the respective governments to stop the mushroom growth of modern shrimp farms immediately and to help the poor farmers and agricultural labourers retain their land and employment.

During this period social activists, environmentalists, people's organisations, social movement groups, human rights activists, women's groups and activists opposing the industrialisation of shrimp aquaculture, rallied around Tamil Nadu and formed a forum called Campaign Against Shrimp Industry (CASi) in 1994. The members of this organisation at various level organised many protests, filed a number of petitions, demanding a total ban on industrial shrimp aquaculture in Tamil Nadu.

Fishermen, agricultural labourers and small farmers, trade unions, environment and consumer groups from various parts of the state opposed shrimp industries. On several occasion people's movements against shrimp aquaculture were able to stop big industries even at the stage of construction from implementing shrimp aquaculture through their
various form of protests, actions like dharna, rallies, processions, hunger strikes, mass meetings, gherao, road rokos etc. The agitation against aquaculture had gained momentum and some political parties also started voicing their views in public against shrimp aquaculture, like CPI(M), MDMK and CPML. Initially, in 1994, even BJP which was then an opposition party at the national level strongly condemned the practice of industrial shrimp farming.¹¹

The NGOs and peoples organisations continuously campaigned and submitted evidence showing adversities of shrimp farms to the State Government, Central Government and also to the High Court of Tamil Nadu and the Supreme Court. The NGOs like LAFTI, CASI, People's Alliance Against Shrimp Industry (PAASI), Movement Against Shrimp Industry (MASI), National Fish Workers Forum etc. vehemently opposed the shrimp industry in Tamil Nadu with some objectives and certain methodologies such as organising protests that demanded a total ban on shrimp industry, educated people for creating awareness about the issue, lobbying to bring necessary changes in government policy, extending supportive legal action to the victims of shrimp farming, articulating the demands of victims and pressurising the government into protecting the rights of the habitat and also networking of different movements, people's organisations working against shrimp aquaculture at international level. These NGOs subsequently expected the central as well as the Tamil Nadu State Government to take required action against the shrimp industry.¹²
People inspired by these NGOs started protesting openly and in 1994, a lot of tension surfaced in the shrimp farming areas. Led by women, people had marched to occupy the sites where new aquafarms were being set up. They refused to allow any kind of work to take place even in the old farms, though bulldozers and other heavy equipment for leveling the land or digging huge ponds had been rendered into operation because of the agitators.13

In 1994, around five rallies were arranged for voicing against shrimp culture in Tamil Nadu which were attended by thousands of people. These rallies were mostly conducted in Nagapattinam district. Thousands of protesters took up fasting as a silent protest with solidarity from LAFTI. As many as eight mass hunger strikes were recorded in 1994. People participated in fast at Eranjimedu, Dharmakulam, Sirkazhi, Malaiyur, Mayiladuthurai, Thenampattinam on different dates in 1994, which drew a lot of public attention not only in Tamil Nadu, but also throughout the country. By that time, the agitations were streamlined and well organised. NGO’s collectively arranged public meetings and tried to induce awareness against shrimp culture among people. There were around 13 public meetings conducted in 1994 with a reasonably positive response. People took active participation in these meetings. As many as eighteen petitions were filed by individuals and NGOs in various courts. The most important among those was the public interest litigation filed by S.jagannathan in the Supreme Court on 12 September 1994 which in 1996 ended with the Supreme Court passing a historic judgement. The villagers of Nayakkarkuppam, Pudupettai, Thandavakulam, Myladuthurai, Perunthottam,
Tenampattinam, Vamagiri, Kuthur, Poompuhar also pleaded for the court intervention. A number of people participated in satyagrahas conducted at the sites of many big shrimp farms. The protest in the form of satyagraha was observed against the big companies like Magna Foods and Proteins Ltd., Hi-tech prawn farm in Thandavakulam, Sri Ram Marine Harvest at Dharmakulam and Prawnex Prawn farm at Malaiyur. All these farms occupied more than 100 hectares of land and had introduced semi-intensive/intensive model of shrimp farming. The agitations exposed the destructive nature of shrimp farms and focused the plight of coastal fishermen and farmers. These agitations in 1994 enabled to gather people from fishing communities, agriculture sector and also local people to fight collectively against shrimp aquaculture, from time to time.¹⁴

Around nine picketings were reported in Tamil Nadu in 1994 where people successfully stopped the farm operations, including digging work of many new shrimp ponds. The one which attracted a lot of local as well as national attention was in Peranthottam village in Nagapattinam district, where companies engaged bulldozers to dig new shrimp ponds. Women protesters laid themselves down on the path of the bulldozers and stopped the pond construction work. In many other places in Sirkazhi taluk, of Nagapattinam district sea food companies had bought land, but could not set up shrimp farms owing to increasing protests by local people.¹⁵ Nagapattinam and Tanjore were most densely loaded with shrimp farms and obviously the agitations were also centering around these districts.
When the opposition to shrimp farming intensified, in response the shrimp industries hired strongmen and tried to suppress the growing sentiment of popular resistance. On one hand farmers and fisherfolks were trying to stop the shrimp culture work in various big aquafarms, and on the other hand companies with support from rich people, police and administration continued to do the farming. The Central as well as the State Government were in a dilemma. The Governments were committed to development of shrimp aquaculture, but also had to consider its ecological as well as social repercussions. The high handedness of the shrimp farm owners on the local people were very much clear from the Thennampattinam incident. As a result of continuous protest on 10 August 1994 the Swarunamatsya shrimp farm in Thennampattinam, engaged strongmen and set 34 huts ablaze and 36 social workers, protesters against Swarunamatsya shrimp farm were arrested on false charges foisted by the farm owner. Villagers believed that those who protested against the shrimp farm in the area were targeted. Movement within the village was restricted. Anyone walking after dusk even on the public roads was accused of theft of shrimps from shrimp farms, beaten up and arrested by the police, engaged by the shrimp farm owners. In some extreme cases rape of women were also reported in some areas of Nagapattinam district. Even common people in the local authorities were found helpless and powerless against the shrimp owners. In 1994 many innocent people were arrested by the Sri Ram shrimp farm owners in Pudukuppam as people of Pudukuppam vehemently opposed shrimp farming. Many other incidents like threatening people of dire consequences by hired men were reported. In Myladuthurai village hired men were engaged by the Bask and Bismi farm to disperse the protesters,
protesting near the shrimp farm. Police also chased the protestors. A similar type of incident occurred in Perunthottam village where many protesters were beaten up and arrested by the police. There were even incidents like chasing and teasing women vendors by the shrimp farm employees while passing near the shrimp farms.18

Incidents like these intensified the dissatisfaction among the villagers. Unhappiness associated with livelihood constraints added fuel to the villagers anger against shrimp aquaculture. These incidents were brought to limelight in the public meetings and gatherings which intensified the resentment and anger of the protesters.

The same sort of situation prevailed throughout 1995. The major among was the incident that happened in Perunthottam village where around 300 hiredmen were employed by the Bask and Bismi prawn company to attack the stayagrahies who were on a hunger strike opposing shrimp farming in that village. This resulted in serious injuries to men and women.19

The other incident was the arrest of village leaders and Grama Swaraj Movement (GSM) members as a result of mass hunger strike and satyagraha near shrimp farms in Perunthottam and Thenampattinam.20

During this period many acres of agricultural land had been purchased by big shrimp farm owners. In Sembodai, Vedaranyam, Kallimedu Vedaranyam, T.R.Pattinam,
Madathukuppam, Vanagiri, Perunthottam, Penampattinam, Sammankadu and Khargasthu village, big portions of cultivable land had been purchased by shrimp farm owners.\textsuperscript{21}

Due to continuous protest in 1994, the Government of Tamil Nadu appointed an Expert Committee to examine the problem and to propose measures for rationalising the development of shrimp aquaculture by assessing the environmental impact of the shrimp farms. The Expert Committee though came up with its report, before it was released for public debate the Tamil Nadu Government enacted the Tamil Nadu Aquaculture (Regulation) bill for the regulation of coastal aquaculture farms and got it passed to be effective from 3 May 1995.\textsuperscript{22}

The Tamil Nadu Aquaculture (Regulation) Act, 1995 was passed in the Assembly amid stiff opposition from parties like congress (I), CPI, CPM and MDMK on 21 March 1995. The Act was passed in the Assembly by a voice vote on 20 March 1995.\textsuperscript{21} This Act was made effective from 3 May 1995 throughout Tamil Nadu. This Act evoked a lot of opposition as it was taken up in haste as an answer to the numerous petitions and struggles against industrial aquaculture. The Government was criticised as it had failed to seek the views of local farms and fishermen in the affected coastal districts. The legislation had very little to combat the delcterious efforts of the shrimp industry which had already laid waste in vast tracts of fertile agricultural land in the coastal region. It was cited by the opposition leaders in the Assembly that the Government did not look keenly into protecting the interest of poor coastal people and the role of the District Committee
envisaged in the Act did not even provide for the inclusion of any members of the local community. The opposition leaders also made it very clear that the Aquaculture (Regulation) Act, 1995, was just a face-saving gesture and an immediate and hasty answer to all the petitions and movements against aquaculture as the bill was tabled before Assembly.

By this time the Supreme Court of India passed its judgement on 27 March 1995, in response to the petition filed by Jagannathan for proper enforcement of Coastal Regulation Zone Notification of 19 February of 1991 and a total ban on shrimp industry. The order focused on the complaint that the coastal states were allowing big business houses to develop prawn farms on large scale in the ecologically fragile coastal areas cited in the Environment Protection Act of 1986 and the rules framed there under and various other provisions of law. As an answer to the petition the Supreme Court directed National Environment Engineer Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur, to appoint an investigation team to visit the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry and to give its full report before 30 April 1995, so as to know the reality and also issued a stay order against the construction of new shrimp farms. The court had given the direction not to convert any part of agricultural land or salt pans into commercial shrimp farms thereafter. No more ground water be allowed for aquaculture purposes or any of the industries whether already existing or in the process of being set up. The Supreme Court also directed the State Governments to provide free access through aquaculture units to the sea coast to the fisherman/tourists after hearing the concerned parties, as fishermen were
denied access to the sea coast through the aquafarm (aquafarms fell on the way of fishermen to sea coast). The Superintendent of Police and Collectors were also given directions to see that the order of the Court was meticulously complied with by all the farms.25

CASI also appointed another Expert Committee headed by retired Justice H.Suresh to assess the impact of aquaculture in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. NEERI was directed to send its expert team to the coastal states other than Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry and give its report in the subsequent two months. Justice Suresh Expert Committee Report and the NEERI report were submitted to the Supreme Court in 1995.

The displeasure over the Tamil Nadu Aquaculture (Regulation) Act was clearly noticed throughout the state especially among the groups and villagers, who were fighting against shrimp industry and were expecting a total ban. The enraged coastal people made no secret of their unhappiness over the inadequacy of the Act and continued with their protest against shrimp aquaculture. Despite the Supreme Court stay order new farms continued to come up in coastal areas especially in Nagapattinam district. As a result of which a new struggle flared up, opposing the construction of new farms. These struggles came to a head-on collision with the state machinery when Rev. Y. David of the East Coast Movement and S. Jagannathan of Grama Swaraj Movement (LAFTI) observed continuous fast from 22 May 1995 demanding the enforcement of the Supreme Court stay
order. Around 2000 people in Perunthottam village participated in a relay fasting. The
demand put forth by them were to ban all the shrimp farms industry in the state, immediate
implementation of the interim stay order of the Supreme Court to cancel the license issued
to some farms violating the stay order and to withdraw all false cases filed against the
struggling masses.26

Many other NGOs supported the fast undertaken by the people along with many
noted environmentalists. The main reason behind this was as stated that the shrimp
industry, caused more damage than gain, as the earning from sale of shrimp aquaculture in
Tamil Nadu was 280 crores in 1994-95, whereas the annual economic cost in terms of lost
livelihood opportunities in the traditional type of farming, fishing and the environmental
destruction was over 423 crores.27 Seeing the intensity of the mass hunger strike and
protest the District Collector of Nagapattinam intervened and assured the protestors that
the administration will look into the matter. With the Collector's assurances the protestors
withdrew the fast on 7 June 1995.28

Inspite of all these struggles and opposition many new shrimp farms were
constructed and for the coastal farmers, fish workers and NGOs, no other alternative was
left but to intensify their struggle. Mobilisation and protests at various levels took place,
including rallies, giving write ups in newspaper campaigns, lobbying of MLAs and
involving various organisations, such as the National Human Rights Commission and the
National Women's Commission. A national level pressure group, the People's Alliance
Against Shrimp Industry (PAASI) was formed in 1995, aimed to oppose indiscriminate spread of the unsustainable shrimp aquaculture farms.25

The year 1996 remains as a milestone in the history of struggle against aquaculture. As answer to the petitions filed in the High Court of Chennai, an interim order during early September 1996, directed the State Government to stop all the works relating to aquaculture activities carried out by the VGP Aquafronts Ltd., in about 50 hectares of land in and around Periannapuram village of Ramanathapuram district. It was pointed out that the VGP Aquafronts Ltd., drew sea water through a channel. This resulted in sea water seepage into the neighbouring agriculture fields rendering them unfit for cultivation. The High Court also ordered for the immediate closure of 1000 shrimp farms and hatcheries in Tamil Nadu spread over eleven coastal districts until a final decision by the Supreme Court would be taken. Moreover, the High Court directed all the Tamil Nadu coastal District Collectors and the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Directorate to ensure strict compliance of the order and send a report to this effect by 21 November 1996. The court also directed the District Collectors that, wherever channels have been dug and embankments put up for establishment of aquafronts which were causing hinderance to the fishermen besides health hazards, they have to ensure that the original position of the land should be restored by the persons responsible for such structure. Aquaculture Foundation of India (AFI), a non-governmental organisation, works for the growth and development of brackish water aquaculture, filed a revision petition citing that around 1000 farms where a standing crop of about Rs.500 crores worth of shrimps would be lost and the
farms will face bankruptcy. Awaiting the Supreme Court’s judgement would lead to a total ban on aquaculture activity. Hence the High Court on 15 November 1996 in its order suspended its earlier order passed on 8 November 1996 for three weeks of closing of all shrimp farms and hatcheries spread over 11 coastal districts of Tamil Nadu. The Bench while suspending the closure order, made it clear that the ‘closure order’ is valid so far as establishment of new aquaculture farms and hatcheries were concerned. The Court also ordered that the respective District Collectors, Director of Fisheries, his subordinate officers and Pollution Control Board (PCB) were not to permit any fresh aquaculture farm or hatcheries to be established and operated pending final decision by the court. The Bench prohibited that no fresh seedings to be done by any aquafarm until further orders from the High Court and the engineers of the PCB. 30

Meanwhile, on 11 December 1996 the Supreme Court after scrutinising the NFFRI Report and Justice Suresh Report pronounced its judgement on the long pending public interest litigation petition filed by S. Jagannathan, that shrimp aquaculture farms other than traditional and improved traditional can be set up outside the Coastal Regulation Zone but not within the Zone with prior approval of the Authority (Aquaculture Authority of India) constituted by the Court. Such industries which already existed within 500 meters from the High Tide Line (HTL) and 1000 meters of the Chilika and Pulicat lake should be closed before 31 March 1997. The District Magistrate and the Superintendents of Police of all the coastal states were asked to comply with the directions of the Court and file their compliance reports by 30 April 1997. 31
Along with its final judgement on shrimp aquaculture the Supreme Court had directed the Central Government to constitute an Aquaculture Authority which would help to bring out "sustainable development" and "polluter pays principles" effectively as far as industrial shrimp aquaculture is concerned. In tune to this, Aquaculture Authority was constituted by a notification dated 6 February 1997 by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. At the same time Ministry of Agriculture came out with a bill called the Aquaculture Authority Bill. This bill vested the maximum power with the Aquaculture Authority. The bill empowered the Authority to decide on the site selection and also licencing of any shrimp farm. Even it allowed those farms to function which are within 500 meters from the HTL if approved by the Aquaculture Authority. It empowered the authority to decide on eco-restoration fund and the compensation to be paid by any shrimp farm to the villagers whose lands were damaged because of shrimp farming. This bill, it appears, that have been drafted to nullify the Supreme Court decision.

Fresh set of agitations and protests erupted all over the state whenever the bill was introduced in the Parliament. Many NGOs like LAFTI, CASI, PAASI and many others supported this move and organised press meets, signature campaigns, dharnas, fasts etc. opposing the bill. The prime demand was that the Central Government should immediately take required action to repeal the Aquaculture Authority Bill. This protest took a national shape and spread all over the country. National level conferences were organised to default the bill, which were attended by noted environmentalists like S. Jagannathan, Krishnammal Jagannathan, Vandana Shiva, Banka Bihari Das, Jacob Dhamaraj, Jesurathinam and many other noted social activists.
Many regional conferences were held at Poopumahar, Thiruvankadu, Valivalam and other places in the coastal districts. Nagapattinam became the centre point of the these agitations in the state. Many petitions were filed demanding proper implementation of the Supreme Court and to repeal the Aquaculture Authority Bill since 1997 till date. Moreover, these agitations were not very easy to continue as there were many arrests of the activists who openly condemned the action of the Government and diminishing interest among people to fight against shrimp farming. The diminishing interest might be due to the migration of people of coastal villages to far off cities in search of livelihood which was lost due to shrimp farming. Many villagers in coastal areas of Tamil Nadu shifted to cities in search of jobs, leaving the native place as a result of the loss of livelihood due to conversion of agricultural lands into aquafarms and decline of traditional fish farming. Around 200 families of Perunthottam village have moved to Perungudi area of Chennai in search of their livelihood in early 2001. Around ten years of shrimp farming in many of the large holdings in Nagapattinam has turned the agricultural land saline. This left the villagers without agricultural work and the shrimp farm did not help them get alternative employment.

The proposal of introducing the bill in 2001 was strongly opposed by various movements and campaigns by many NGOs, the most important one being the agitation led by National Fish Workers Forum in 2001. In August a big rally was organised by Women's Struggle Committee and participated by 40 other welfare organisations, in Chennai, demanding the banning of multinationals in shrimp farming in the state, and to reject the Aquaculture Authority Bill.
Immediately after the Supreme Court passed its final judgement the aquaculturists in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh along with supporters of shrimp aquaculture like MPEDA and AFI filed review petitions in the Supreme Court. As a result, in March 1997 the Supreme Court stayed its order till 30 April 1997, and stayed the demolition of aqua farms till 31 July 1997. But the Supreme Court directed the aquaculture not to put any fresh seeds and start any new shrimp crop for those farms who were listed to be demolished by the Supreme Court. Even after many years, the farms which were listed to be demolished continue to operate and the stay order of the Supreme Court is still pending and yet to be decided.  

Even though the Supreme Court directed the states not to allow any shrimp farm to operate within CRZ, the situation which was there before the Supreme Court Judgement still prevailed. Throughout 1997 the appeasers of shrimp aquaculture focused their protest on the enforcement of Supreme Court judgement and a repeal of the Aquaculture Authority Bill. The agitation against shrimp farming started thinning down after 1997, though many NGOs like LAFTI, CASI, PAASI, PREPARE continued their efforts to totally ban shrimp farming in Tamil Nadu and not to pass the Aquaculture Authority Bill. CASI even handed over a memorandum requesting for total ban of aquaculture in Tamil Nadu to Venugopalachari, the Minister of Agriculture of Central Ministry. He was heading a committee of Parliamentary members to listen to the voices of both pro and anti-lobby campaigns against Aquaculture Authority Bill, set up by the Government of India in July 1997. This team led by Venugopalachary visited coastal districts of Tamil Nadu for three days from 1 July to 3 July 1997. The Venugopalachari Committee
organised a Hall meeting after the survey at Nagapattinam. Many representatives participated in the Hall meeting from Tharangampadi, Puduppetai, Pudukuppam and Nayakarkuppam village. Even Grama Swaraj Movement filed a petition to implement the Supreme Court verdict and close down the illegal shrimp industries functioning in 826.62 hectares in Nagapattinam district and sent the petition to the Venugopalachari Committee.99

The vested interest groups within the Government and the shrimp lobby very actively adopted counter action against the agitators by using legislature and bureaucratic measures to annul the impact of the progressive judgement of the Supreme Court. The result was the repeated introduction of Aquaculture Authority Bill. Though this bill till now is not passed, the Central Government and the Aquaculture Authority are trying hard to get the bill passed in the Lok Sabha.

Since many political leaders have invested their money in shrimp farming, it is very difficult to implement the Supreme Court decision in all coastal states. Money and muscle power outrightly dominate over the peoples' grievances. The political leaders involved in the shrimp farming are the real culprits in defying the Supreme Court verdict. Other than this, the big shrimp farm owners occupying huge stretches of land employ their muscle men to keep the protesters at bay. The people's organisations and NGOs who fight for the cause of the poor coastal fishermen do not have much capital to employ lawyers, file cases and fight against the powerful shrimp lobby.
In 2000, as an action on the review order, the Supreme Court directed the Aquaculture Authority to prepare the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Report of shrimp farms in the country. The EIA Report was submitted by the Aquaculture Authority in 2001 in the Supreme Court. This report referred for the shrimp aquaculture in the country and encouraged the Central Government to pass the Aquaculture Authority Bill. The report also showed that the shrimp farms did not have any adverse impact on economy and environment in the coastal districts. This triggered a fresh wave of agitation against the Environment Impact Assessment Report of the Aquaculture Authority in Tamil Nadu. The active NGOs like LAFTI, CASI, PAASI and other peoples group operating in Tamil Nadu outrightly rejected the EIA Report submitted in the Supreme Court by Justice Ramanujam of the Aquaculture Authority. These NGOs labelled this report as anti people in nature. They collectively along with National Alliance of People's Movement (NAPM) and Women's Struggle Committee organised a protest rally on 27 September 2001 in Chennai. Few public meetings and hunger strikes were reported as a protest against the EIA Report. Rejecting the EIA Report, different groups like Grama Swaraj Movement and CASI sent their independent team of members for a fact finding report and submitted their respective reports in the Supreme Court nullifying the EIA Report in September 2001.40
END NOTES


7. *idem*


12. *idem*.


16. *idem*


33. *idem*


40. *ibid* : 118 – 126.