



NPSSF Statement Regarding Parliamentary Standing Committee Report on Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Bill 2023

The National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers (NPSSF) vehemently rejects the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food Processing on Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Bill 2023. The report has not only accepted the CAA (Amendment) Bill which has already been very harmful for coastal environment and the livelihood of small scale fish workers but has also made it more damaging.

The report paves the way for large-scale expansion of all forms of aquaculture, including intensive shrimp aquaculture, in coastal regulation zones (CRZ) up to the territorial waters. The report suggests “to remove the ambiguity and to unequivocally declare that coastal aquaculture is exempted from the prohibited activities of CRZ Notifications”. It further suggests “to permit Hatcheries, Brood Stock Multiplication Centres (BMCs) and Nucleus Breeding Centres (NBC) within the No Development Zone” and to “ensure that the mariculture activities like seaweed cultivation, cage fishing, etc. ... are protected from the prohibitions of CRZ Notification.” It means that the CRZ restrictions have been rendered void for all aquaculture and related activities up to 500 meters in the landward side and 12 nautical miles or 22 kilometres in the seaward side.

Considering that the above exemptions for coastal aquaculture are not enough to provide relief to enormous and widespread violations made by such activities in the past, the report recommends that the exemptions “shall have and shall be deemed always to have effect for all purposes as if they had been in force at all material times”. This means that all judicial/executive measures taken against violations perpetrated by coastal aquaculture in the past will be rendered void.

The circle is complete. Justice Kuldip Singh, in his landmark judgement of 11th December, 1996 ordered to **close all shrimp aquaculture** farms other than traditional or improved traditional ones in the Coastal Regulation Zone to protect coastal environment and natural resources. This amendment **allows all kinds of aquaculture** including intensive shrimp culture, seaweed cultivation and cage culture.

It is one of the most grotesque onslaughts by the united force of political power and capital on the coastal environment as well as on the livelihoods of millions of small-scale fish workers and farmers. The Parliament of our country, along with the Standing Committee, are constitutionally responsible to protect and promote country’s environment and livelihood of the common people of India that include small scale fishers and farmers. The reports of the Standing Committee on the Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Bill 2023 blatantly violates their constitutional responsibilities and facilitates the transfer of coastal lands and waters from the public good to private profit.

Our coast is not for sale. Save coast. Save water. Save fisher people.

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