

NGOs oppose Wildlife (Protection) Act Amendment



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Dr M Firoz Ahmed 14 September 2013 10074 views

Aaranyak, a premier biodiversity conservation organization, along with Wildlife Protection Society of India and Wildlife Society of Odisha has submitted a joint memorandum to the Government of India through the Joint Director of Rajya Sabha Directorate demanding withdrawal of the Section 44 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act Amendment Bill 2013 which has been tabled in Rajya Sabha by the Government of India.

The memorandum stated that though the said amendment bill had proposed several progressive measures for protection of wildlife in the country, the Section 44 will be detrimental to the livelihood security of lakhs of fishing community people as well as common people in the country. According to this Section, barring the fishes produced through systematic farming, all the fish species found in the natural environment will be considered as wildlife species. In case this definition is accepted, barring those businessmen armed with license from the Chief Wildlife Warden, no other person will be able to catch fish in natural wetlands and sell the same. Moreover, it will be considered an offence under the Wildlife (Protection) Act if fish is procured from unlicensed traders and even cooking of such fish. Such violation will lead to imposition of fine upto Rs 25,000 and jail term upto three years.

Aaranyak of the opinion that such a definition of wildlife will be a lethal blow to the livelihood of lakhs of common people pushing their life to the darkness of uncertainty. Such a suicidal decision will strain the relations between the people and the government and facilitate some opportunist forces to exploit natural resources to their advantage which may lead to unrest in the country. Aaranyak, therefore, calls upon all the conscious organisations, institutions as well as general people raise a voice in unison against the Section 44 of the said amendment bill and persuade the government to drop the same.

Dr M Firoz Ahmed

BY DR M FIROZ AHMED

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