

Law sought to protect fish workers' interests

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Thiruvananthapuram: Participants in a seminar organised by the Kerala Swathantra Matsya Thozhilali Federation (KSMTF) have stressed the need for a legislation to protect the interests of coastal communities in the country.

Expressing concern over the threats to the lives and livelihood of fishworkers, the two-day seminar, which concluded at Kovalam on Saturday, decided to voice their apprehensions at the proposed consultation between the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the fishing community to be held in Kochi soon.

The meeting recognized the success of the fishworkers' struggle against Coastal Zone Management Notification. It called for strengthening the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification issued in 1991.

Activists said the 1991 notification did not recognize the customary rights of the fishing community, including the right to build new houses. Pointing to a report on 8825 CRZ violations in Goa, former Joint Fisheries Director S. Ravindran Nair said the government had to come up with regulatory measures to prevent such large scale offences. "Considering the large number of people inhabiting the coastal areas, Parliament has to discuss the regulation. It should not be issued as a notification."

Call to assert rights of fishing community

By Express News Service

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The seminar organized by the CRZ-CMZ consultation which concluded here on Saturday has expressed the need for asserting the rights of the fishermen to participate in the emergence of a new Coastal Management Notification recognizing all rights of the fishing community.

The seminar held at the Animation Centre, Kovalam, dealt with a number of issues concerning the lives and livelihood of the fishing community, to be expressed in the consultation between the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the fishing community to be held in Kochi soon.

The meeting recognized the success of the fishermen's struggle to force the Government to withdraw the plan of Coastal Management Notification and implement a notification which strengthens the original Coastal Regulation Notification, 1991.

S.Ravindran Nair, retired joint director, Fisheries, said that since there was a large population on the Indian coasts, the debate on CRZ-CMZ notification had to be discussed by Parliament and not as a mere notification. Women's activist Nilanjana Biswas said that from the experience of Gujarat, the move by the Government to create marine protected areas will only facilitate industries and not the small and medium-level fisher people.

T. Peter, president of the Kerala Swatantra Matsya Thozhilali Federation (KSMTF) strongly challenged the capacity of the Government to prosecute CRZ violators, which has become the biggest threat to the fishing community.