



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Eco Sensitive Zones

Published On: 06-01-2023

Why is in news? Implementation of provisions of Clause 3 of the Eco Sensitive Zone notification pertaining to Sammed Shikharji Parvat Kshetra is stayed forthwith, including amongst others all Tourism and Eco-Tourism activities

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) over the last few days has received several representations from different organizations representing Jain Samaj about the issues related to certain activities taking place at **Parasnath Wildlife Sanctuary** that have **adversely affected the sentiments of followers of Jain Dharma**.

The representatives were apprised that while the **Parasnath WL Sanctuary** was established by the erstwhile State of Bihar in **1984** under the provisions of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, the Eco Sensitive Zone (ESZ) was notified by the Government of India in consultation with the State Government of Jharkhand in 2019 under the provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

It was mentioned that while there are ample provisions in the **Management Plan of the Parsnath WL Sanctuary** that **prohibit the activities** that have been said to be adversely affecting the sentiments of Jain Community, Govt of India can also issue guidelines to the monitoring committee to address any particular issue, considering the sentiments of the Jain Community at large.

Parasnath Wildlife Sanctuary:

It is surrounding the lush green and gorgeous **Parasnath Hill, the highest in Jharkhand**, and named after the 23rd Jain Thirthankar, Parsvanath, who attained nirvan on the Hill, this wildlife sanctuary with an area of 49.33 Sq. Km.

The wildlife sanctuary is very rich in wild fauna and comprises mixed deciduous forests with very high incidence of climbers.

The localised dampness here favours growth of plenty of lichens, mosses and ferns. The wild fauna comprises Leopard, Sloth Bear, Sambhar, Nilgai, Barking Deer, Wild Boar, Langur, Monkey, Mongoose, Jungle cat, Porcupine, Hyena etc. in addition to varieties of birds and reptiles.

Eco Sensitive Zone:

Eco Sensitive Zones act as some **kind of "shock absorbers"** to the Protected Areas by prohibiting, regulating and promoting activities around Protected Areas.

ESZ notification is **not intended** to promote uncontrolled tourism, and definitely not to promote all kinds of development activities within a Sanctuary boundary.

Declaration of ESZ is in fact to **restrict or regulate activities** surrounding the sanctuary and, therefore, outside its boundary.

The **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** does not mention the word **"Eco-Sensitive Zones"**.

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An ESZ could go **up to 10 kilometres** around a protected area as provided in the **Wildlife Conservation Strategy, 2002**.

The **basic aim is to regulate certain activities around National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries** so as to **minimise the negative impacts** of such activities on the fragile ecosystem encompassing the protected areas.

Activities Allowed in ESZs:

Prohibited Activities: Commercial mining, saw mills, industries causing pollution (air, water, soil, noise etc), establishment of major hydroelectric projects (HEP), commercial use of wood. **Tourism activities** like hot-air balloons over the National Park, discharge of effluents or any solid waste or production of hazardous substances.

Regulated Activities: Felling of trees, establishment of hotels and resorts, commercial use of natural water, erection of electrical cables, drastic change of agriculture system, e.g., adoption of heavy technology, pesticides etc, widening of roads.

Permitted Activities: Ongoing agricultural or horticultural practices, rainwater harvesting, organic farming, use of renewable energy sources, adoption of green technology for all activities.