

Green alarm over bid to allow business in forest wealth

Activists fear this would “open the door for rich and influential people and would create adverse situation for genuinely needy persons”. Activists Bittu Sehgal, Debi Goenka and others have written to the MoTA pointing out that the original rules didn’t provide for sale. “While surplus produce cultivated on the land allotted to the forest-dwellers should be allowed, sale of forest produce shouldn’t be permitted,” the activists have said.

RULE BY RULE

Sustenance/livelihood

The Act: “Bona fide livelihood needs” means fulfilment of sustenance needs of self and family through production or sale of produce resulting from self-cultivation of forest land as provided...

Draft amendment: “Bona fide livelihood needs” means fulfilment of livelihood needs of self and family through exercise of all the rights specified in [sub-section] and includes sale of surplus produce arising out of exercise of such rights.

Transportation

The Act: “Disposal of minor forest produce” shall include transportation in forest area through head-load, bicycles and handcarts for use of such products or sale by the gatherer or community for livelihood.

Draft amendment: Mode of transport be changed to “appropriate means of transport”. Also substitution of “gatherers and community” with “gatherers or their co-operatives or associations or federations for livelihood.

Resource rights

2008: Mentions “community forest rights”, not “community forest resource rights”.

Draft amendment: Ensure certified copy of record of community forest resource rights and title as specified [new annexure], is provided to gram sabha or community.

Source: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/green-alarm-over-bid-to-allow-business-in-forest-wealth/992277/2>