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CSI seeks review of river linking project

Staff Reporter

The Central Kerala diocese of the Church of South India (CSI) has urged the Centre to review the river interlinking project, considering its impact on the ecosystem.

In a statement here on Monday, Mathew Koshy Punnackad, convener of the CSI Ecological Committee, said an executive committee meeting of the diocese at Thiruvalla had maintained that the proposed project would do more harm than good.

Impact on wetlands

The proposal to link the Pampa and Achancoil rivers with the Vaippar river in Tamil Nadu would have disastrous impact on the Vembanad wetlands, which had been identified as a Ramsar site.

“Similarly, when the Ganga is linked to the Cauvery, 2,640 km away in southern India, the flow of water to the downstream reaches of the Ganga will be affected.

“The very existence of the Sunderbans delta is due to the Ganga waters and the river-linking project will be hazardous to the Sunderbans delta too,” Dr. Koshy said.

The CSI executive committee said the project would also have a negative impact on Bangladesh.

The committee maintained that man's attempt to change the natural course of rivers and streams would adversely impact the environment, ecology, and the riverine system.

Plea for study

“What is needed is a study to find the factors leading to drought in different parts of the country and address the problem without altering the nature's balance and natural course of rivers,” Dr. Koshy said.

The committee called for a review of the project to link 30 rivers in the country by 2016.

Bishop Thomas K.Oommen chaired the meeting. Dr. Koshy presented the resolution on the proposed river-linking project, which was unanimously passed.

Fr. Daniel George, Fr. P.U. Paulose, Prof. Jacob George, Stephen Daniel, and Koshy Mathew addressed the meeting.

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