

Report on

**One Day GPU Level Awareness Programme on Biological Diversity Act,
2002 and the Role of Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC)**

Under the

UNEP-GEF-MoEF-ABS Project

**Strengthening the Implementation of the Biological Diversity Act and
Rules with focus on its Access and Benefit Sharing provisions**

Organized By

**Sikkim State Biodiversity Board
Department of Forests, Environment and Wildlife Management
Government of Sikkim
05.09.2014**

Venue

**Gyaten Karmataar,
West Sikkim**

**One Day GPU Level Awareness Programme on
Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and the Role of BMC**

Date: 05.09.2014

Venue: House of D.R. Rai, JFMC, President

| Programme Schedule | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| 10:30-11:00 | Registration of the participants | |
| 11:00-11:15 | Welcome address | Shri D.R. Rai JFMC President |
| 11:15-11:30 | Lecture on Bioiversity and its importance | Mrs. Usha Lachungpa Addl. Dir, SBB |
| 11:30-11:45 | Lecture on Biological Diversity Act 2002 and its importance | Dr. Bharat Kumar Pradhan Technical/ Scientific Assistant (UNEP-GEF-MoEF ABS Project) |
| 11:45-12:00 | Tea Break | |
| 12:00-12:15 | Lecture on Role of BMC | Ms. Shewani Pradhan ACF, SBB |
| 12:15-01:00 | Open discussion and constitution of BMC | |
| 01:00-01:15 | Address | Ms. Sanam Gurung, Zilla Panchayat |
| 01:15-01:30 | Closing remarks | Ms.Markit Lepcha, Panchayat President, |
| 01:30-01:45 | Vote of Thanks | Shri Den Tshering Lepcha Panchayat member, Upper Bolung |
| 01:45 | Lunch | |

A **“One Day GPU Level Awareness Programme on Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and the Role of Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC)”** was organized by the Sikkim State Biodiversity Board at Gyaten Karmataar on 05.09.2014. The programme was attended by over 100 participants including Panchayat President, Smt. Markit Lepcha; Panchayat Secretary Shri Laxuman Chettri, JFMC President Shri D.R. Rai and Zilla Panchayat Smt. Sanam Gurung. The Sikkim SBB was represented by Mrs. Usha Lachungpa, Additional director, Sikkim Biodiversity Board, Ms. Shewani Pradhan, ACF, SBB and Dr. Bharat Kumar Pradhan, Technical/ Scientific Assistant, (UNEP-GEF-MoEF-ABSv Project) SBB. The important part of the programme included the lecture on the **“Biodiversity and its importance”** by Mrs. Usha Lachungpa; **“Biological Diversity Act, 2002”** by Dr. Bharat Kumar Pradhan and **“The Roles of BMCs”** by Miss Shewani Pradhan.

Welcoming the participants and the board members, Shri D.R. Rai expressed his gratefulness to the Forest Department also thanked the board members for arranging such awareness programme in their area which is a very new concept to them and expressed hope that the programme will surely benefit the local people in the longer run.



Mrs. Usha Lachungpa introduced the term “Biodiversity” to the locals. She highlighted that biodiversity comprises not only of the flora and fauna but also habitats, land races, folk varieties and cultivars, domesticated stocks and breeds of animals and microorganisms . She also talked about the invasive species that come from outside and invade our land thus destroying the habitat of our

indigenous floras and sometimes even leading to spread of diseases. The brain drain method adapted by the foreign researcher was also highlighted wherein they take away all the traditional knowledge from the locals and the locals are deprived of any kind of benefits arising out of that knowledge. She highlighted the need for formation of BMC and about the access and benefit sharing where they will have the right to guard their bioresources and enjoy the benefit sharing in case of any kind of access of bio-resources made by company or researchers. With the advancement of technology, and disappearing traditions she emphasized on the need to document all traditional knowledge and the necessity to pass on the knowledge to younger generation to preserve our rich culture and heritage.

Dr. Pradhan, in his lecture, gave brief introduction on the purpose of organizing such awareness programme and talked about the history on the development of the conservation concepts, various existing national and international acts/rules framed for the conservation of biodiversity, etc. The participants were also enlightened about the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the three important goals of CBD, and the initiative taken by the Indian Government for biodiversity conservation, as one of the signatory to the CBD, such as formulation of the Indian Biological Diversity Act, 2002. Further, they were informed that the BD Act, 2002 do not restrict them like other Indian Acts such as Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, etc. which focuses mainly on the biodiversity conservation but told the participants that in addition to conservation of biodiversity, the BD Act (2002) also talks about their sustainable use and the Access and Benefit Sharing provisions which will help them in earning sustainable livelihood by using their traditional knowledge on the use, conservation, etc. of natural and genetic resources as well as retaining the Intellectual Property Right (IPR) of an individual or community. He further mentioned about the different agencies like National Biodiversity Board and State Biodiversity Board at the national and regional level to implement the BD Act, 2002 and the need for the formation of the Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) at the local level. He highlighted that the role of the NBA and SBBs are to see that the concerned villages and the villagers through local BMCs get full benefit of their traditional knowledge, natural resources, etc. by acting as a mediator between them and the organizations who are trying to use or already using their resources for commercial benefits by making them sign an ABS agreement.

Miss Shewani talked in detail about the necessity to form BMCs in every GPU level. The participants were informed about the processes involved in the formation of the committee, its composition, member's selection criteria, tenure of BMC, etc. It was specifically mentioned by her that the BMC members can be anyone from the existing EDC or JFMC or community provided they have sound traditional knowledge about the use practices of the natural / genetic / biological resources and also having familiarity in identification of the resources whether it be plants or animals or any other. She emphasized that the members should be drawn from amongst the traditional healers (*Amchis, Vaidhyas*, etc.), NTFP collectors, fishermen, academicians, etc. because their responsibilities

includes promotion of biodiversity conservation, their sustainable use, preparation of documents like People’s Biodiversity Register (PBR) which will be their sole property to claim their IPR, etc., preservation of habitats, conservation of land races, folk varieties and cultivars, domesticated stocks of breeds and animals, management of Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHSs) like sacred grooves, sacred water bodies, sacred trees/animals, etc. and they should be the local residents possessing the Sikkim Subject Certificate or Certificate of Identification. It was also informed by her to the participants that the NBA will provide a start-up grant through SBB for BMC constitution, office set-up, etc. nevertheless, they should continuously provide feedback to the SBBs in the matter of traditional knowledge and biodiversity related issues.

The programme was followed by the open house discussion and constitution of BMC. Members were nominated from various wards under Gyaten Karmataar. The members unanimously selected by participants are as follows:

Panchayat Secreatry, **Shri Laxumann Chettri** was appointed as the chairperson of the committee. Range officer (WL) will be the ex officio member secretary. Other members include:

| SI No | Name of members | Designation |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Yuwa Raj Rai | Member |
| 2 | Amrit Bahadur chettri | Member |
| 3 | Dhan Maya Limboo | Member (Female) |
| 4 | Ugen Lepcha | Member (ST) |
| 5 | Permit Lepcha | Member (Female) |



An advisory group comprising the elderly villagers were also constituted to facilitate the BMC members in their future endeavour. After the constitution of Gyaten Karmataar BMC, Ms. Sanam Gurung, Zilla Panchayat congratulated the committee members. She also expressed the need for formation of such committees and assured that members will work hard to achieve the goal under which BMCs have been formed. Ms.Markit Lepcha, Panchayat President, also expressed her gratitude towards the department and the board member for enlightening them on issues of ABS of which they were unaware. She also expressed the need to conserve our vanishing tradition and culture.

The programme ended with Vote of Thanks by the Shri Den Tshering Lepcha Panchayat member, Upper Bolung.