

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
28th July, 2014**

Venue

**Singhik Panchayat Bhawan,
Mangan, North Sikkim**

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

Date: 28.07.2014

Venue: Panchayat Bhawan, Singhik (Mangan), North Sikkim

Programme Schedule

11:00 – 11:15	Registration of the participants	
11:15 – 11:30	Welcome address	Shri Pem Tsh. Lepcha Panchayat Secretary (Singhik GPU)
11:30 – 12:15	Lecture on Biological Diversity Act, 2002	Dr. Bharat Kumar Pradhan Technical Scientific Asst. (UNEP-GEF-MoEF ABS Project)
12:15 – 12:30	Tea Break	
12:30 – 01:30	Lecture on Role of BMC	Miss Peggyla Tsh. Venchungpa ACF (SBB) & Jt. Project Coordinator (UNEP-GEF-MoEF ABS Project)
01:30 – 02:30	Open discussion	
02:30 – 02:40	Vote of Thanks	Miss Peggyla Tsh. Venchungpa
02:40	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 Singhik Panchayat Bhawan, Mangan, north Sikkim on 28th July, 2014. The programme was attended by over 80 participants including the Panchayat members from 3 GPUs of north district: Singhik GPU, Passingdang-Saffu GPU and Toong-Naga GPU. The local villagers from Singhik, Ex-Panchayats from Dzongu and the representative from the Land Revenue Department (Mangan), Government of Sikkim, were amongst the other participants. The Sikkim SBB was represented by Miss Peggyla Tshering Venchungpa (ACF/SBB & Jt. Project Co-ordinator/UNEP-GEF-MoEF-ABS Project) and Dr. Bharat Kumar Pradhan (Scientific Technical Assistant/ UNEP-GEF-MoEF-ABS Project). The important part of the programme included the lecture on the **“Biological Diversity Act, 2002”** by Dr. Bharat Kumar Pradhan and **“The Roles of BMCs”** by Miss Peggyla.

Welcoming the participants and the board members, Shri Pem Tshering Lepcha (Panchayat Secretary, Singhik GPU) expressed gratefulness towards the Honourable Minister (FEWMD/DSTCC) Shri Tshering Wangdi Lepcha for showing interest and choosing their GPU for BMC formation. Shri Lepcha 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. He also said that there is a great need to generate awareness amongst the local people especially the youth regarding the value of biodiversity and assured the Board members their full cooperation in organizing the Gram Sabhas for forming the BMC in their respective areas.



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 Peggyla 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 ended with the open discussion where the participants participated with full enthusiasm. They too agreed on the need of formation of BMCs and enlightened the board members and others about the different areas of biodiversity, cultural and religious significance in their areas. Some of the elderly person shared the stories/folklores about how the name of the particular place came into existence, the plants and animals which they used to see during their childhood, their lifelong experience on changing climate and the biodiversity of the local area.

