



PEOPLE'S BIODIVERSITY REGISTER - A TOOL FOR NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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Collection, compilation and updating of information relating to natural resources and traditional knowledge of the locality in People's Biodiversity Registers can create a sound database for mainstreaming biodiversity issue outside the intensively managed ecosystems such as protected areas. This can facilitate better resource management planning by local bodies, prioritize the areas/species within the district for greater focus and regulate access to unsustainable bio-resources utilization. In Kerala, Bio-diversity Management Committee has been formulated in all LSG's and PBR has been prepared in 558 panchayats. The BMC's were entrusted with the documentation of bio-diversity and managing natural resources in a decentralized way at the panchayat level with due inputs from local communities. The stage has reached when the PBR has to be viewed not as an end on itself but as a guide to develop strategies and management plans based on the local issues and the green development of panchayats. BMC's have also been entrusted to function as "Environmental watch group" and work for incorporating primary environmental protection programmes in the schemes of the panchayat, present them in the Gramsabha and take actions to include them in the development schemes of the panchayat in order to ensure utilization of natural resources sustainably. The documentation of people's knowledge about changes happening in their locality and the drivers of these provide valuable insights into natural resource management. PBR can be developed as a valuable empowerment tool for adaptive management. It is desirable to interpret the data and to identify plans for explicitly linking PBRs and the tremendous time tested knowledge and local issues recorded by the people to an agenda for conservation and developmental action of panchayats. The present paper highlights some of the follow up research and extension work relating to the documented knowledge undertaken by KSBB. Conservation of fresh water fishes during Monsoon fishery, Community conservation of rice diversity, Conservation of tuber diversity, Development of climate change indicators at district level with special reference to birds, identification of biodiversity heritage sites are some of the funded projects evolved from data such generated. The issues, although specific to the study areas, can serve as models for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. We discuss the use of PBR as a tool for integrated natural resource management and the methodologies for interpreting the data on local resource utilization, based on these case studies.