A Note on Constitution of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)

**BIODIVERSITY ACT AND RULES:**

Tripura Biodiversity Board (TBB) has been constituted in the State vide No.F.8(31)/A-For/VI/88/Parl-II/7,309-40 Dated 16th June, 2008 in pursuance to the provisions of the Biodiversity Act, 2002 of Government of India.

**THE TRIPURA BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY RULES (2008) STIPULATES:**

- Every local body shall constitute a Biodiversity Management Committee within its area of jurisdiction, Accordingly, Biodiversity Management Committee are to be constituted at all Panchayats, Municipalities and Corporations.
- The Biodiversity Management Committees constituted under Sub Rule (1) shall consist of a Chairperson and not more than six members nominated by the local body, of whom, not less than one third shall be women and not less than 18% should belong to Scheduled castes/Scheduled Tribe percentage of the district, where such a committee is set up. All the above should be residents within the said local body limits and be in the voters list.
- The local body shall nominate six special invitees from forest, agriculture, animal husbandry, livestock, health, fisheries and education departments.
- The Chairperson of the Biodiversity Management Committee may be Chairperson of the local body or elected by BMC members and the Secretary of the local body shall be the Member Secretary of the Biodiversity Management Committee, who will maintain all the records. The Chairperson of the Biodiversity Management Committee shall have the casting vote in case of a tie.
- The Chairperson of the Biodiversity Management Committee shall have a tenure of three years.
- The local Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) or Member of Parliament (MP) would be special invitees to the meetings of the Biodiversity Management Committees at different levels.

**WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY?**

- Biodiversity is the variety of life: the different plants, animals and microorganisms, their genes and the ecosystems of which they are a part. Biodiversity is often defined as the variety of all forms of life, from genes to species, through to the broad scale of ecosystems.

**WHAT IS THE ROLE OF STATE BIODIVERSITY BOARDS?**

- a) Advise the State Government, subject to any guidelines issued by the Central Government, on matters relating to the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of biological resources.
- b) Regulate by granting of approvals or otherwise requests for commercial utilizations or bio survey and bio utilizations of any biological resource by Indians.
- c) Perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act or as may be prescribed by the State Government.

**WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES?**

- BMCs are the loci to the conservation initiatives of the Board and will anchor the local level actions. The local bodies viz. Zilla Panchayats/ Janpad Panchayats/ Gram Panchayats & Gram Sabhas, Nagar Panchayats, Municipal Panchayats, Municipalities and Municipal Corporations shall setup the BMC.

**WHY IS THERE A NEED TO CONSTITUTE BMC?**

- Establishment of Biodiversity Management Committees for the purpose of: Promoting conservation, sustainable use and documentation of biological diversity. Preservation of habitats, Conservation of land races, folk varieties and cultivars, Domesticated stocks and breeds of animals and micro-organisms and Chronicing of knowledge relating to biological diversity.

**HOW TO CONSTITUTE BMC?**

- The BMCs will comprise of the president (president of the respective local body or any other persons elected by BMC members) and Secretary (Secretary of the local body).
- There will be six other members who will be nominated by the panchayat committee. They could be an agricultural representative, Collectors/ traders of non-timber forest produces, fisherman, organizations using biodiversity, social workers, teachers and researchers. Two of the members should be women and one should belong to the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe community.
- The members should be those residing in the panchayat area and should be included in the voters list of the panchayat.
- Panchayat members cannot be members of the BMC.
- Officials of the Forest and Wildlife Department, Agriculture Department, Animal Husbandry Department, Health Department, Fisheries Department, Education Department and research institutions will be special invitees on these committees. The local MLA and MP will be invitees to the meetings of the BMCs.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE FUNCTIONS OF BMC?**

- Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) have the required legislative support and is in a position to strike roots more effectively. Most significantly, BMCs would help to take science right down to the grassroots, since, the rules lay down that:
  - The main function of the BMC is to prepare People’s Biodiversity Registers in consultation with local people. The Registers shall contain comprehensive information on availability and knowledge of the bio-resources, their medicinal or any other use or any other traditional knowledge associate with them.
  - The other functions of the BMCs include giving advice on any matter referred to it by the State Biodiversity Board or National Biodiversity Authority for granting approval to accessing biological resources of the area, to maintain data about local traditional and indigenous knowledge holders using biological resources.
  - The PBs will be maintained and validated by the BMCs
  - The Committee shall also maintain Register giving information about the details of the access to biological resource and traditional knowledge granted, details of the collection fee imposed and details of the benefits derived from the use of biological resource and mode of their sharing.

**WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL PEOPLE?**

- A fact, which for obvious reasons is not deniable, is that people possess immense knowledge regarding local biodiversity resources, their status, dynamics and also techniques of use. This knowledge can be considered in two contexts – (i) Knowledge of uses of bio-resources that might find commercial application, thus needing protection in the light of Intellectual Property Rights regime and (ii) Knowledge significant for discreet management of natural resources, worthy of being widely shared to benefit all concerned. This knowledge needs to be tapped and documented.

**THINGS TO BE DONE BY PANCHAYAT SECRETARY**

- Constitution of BMCs by signing the resolution.
- Opening of bank account in the name of BMC concerned.
- Record of Gram Sabha Meeting with signature.
- Sending of above these documents to Tripura Biodiversity Board.