

# **Experience of India & State of Kerala on Working with Knowledge Holders for Conservation of Traditional Knowledge through People's Biodiversity Register**

**Dr. K.P. Laladhas**

Member Secretary

Kerala State Biodiversity Board

Government of Kerala

# Specific threats to TK

The Inter-governmental committee of WIPO (2003) has identified specific threats to TK including:

**a) Unauthorised commercial exploitation**

**b) Insulting, degrading or culturally offensive use of material that is the subject matter of TK**

**c) False or misleading indications that there is a relationship with the communities wherein the material has originated.**

**d) Failure to appropriately acknowledge the source of the material.**

**e) Biopiracy**

# Three-tier system

CBD 1992

Biological Diversity Act  
(2002)

Biological Diversity Rules  
(2004)

Kerala State Biological  
Diversity Rules (2008)

National Biodiversity Authority



State Biodiversity Board



(Local) Biodiversity Management  
Committee (BMC)



People's Biodiversity Registers

# Biological Diversity Act (2002)

## section 18 (4) & 20 (1, 2 & 3)

- The **National Biodiversity Authority** may take measures to oppose the grant of IPR in any country outside India on any biological resources obtained from India or knowledge associated with such biological resource which is derived and accessed from India.

## section 14

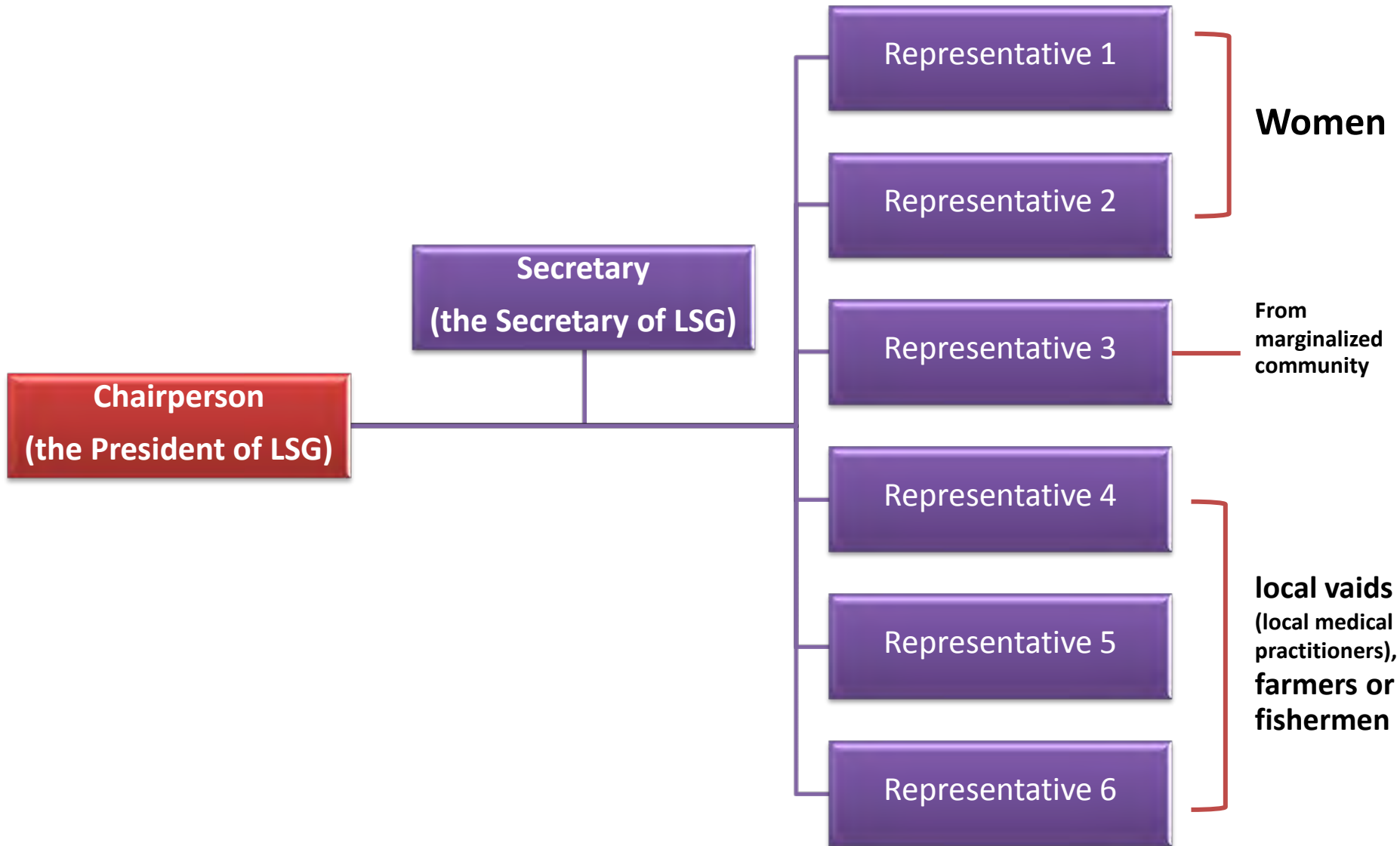
- It specifically gives the procedure for access to biological resources and associated Traditional Knowledge.

# The Kerala State Biodiversity Rules 2008

## Rule 12

- It lays down 31 important functions to be performed by the **State Biodiversity Board** without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of the Biological Diversity Act.
- The role of **State Biodiversity Board** in protection and conservation of TK is specified in the section 12(xv) which states, “to build up database to create information and documentation system for biological resources and associated traditional knowledge including systems of maintaining confidentiality of such information as appropriate”.
- For this purpose every local body is mandated to constitute a **Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC)** to facilitate preparation of **People’s Biodiversity Register (PBR)** for documenting information on availability and knowledge of local biological resources. In Kerala, there are 1,043 BMC

# Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) of Local Self Government (LSG) institution



# Regional strategy for conservation of TK

- The Biological diversity Act attempts to reach out to the knowledge holders, especially in rural and remote areas at the grass root level.
- A regional policy has to be developed for the protection of indigenous knowledge related to biodiversity, which includes enumeration and documentation, valuation of available TK, after ensuring prior informed consent.
- Merits of TK can be accessed and benefit gained out of it may be shared to the community or holder of the knowledge with geo-indication of TK for safe guarding its specificity.

# Strategy for effective protection of TK, GR

- **Prior informed consent from the knowledge holders** after clarifying merits and demerits of opening up TK
- **Identify the merits and potency of TK associated with biodiversity**, from different user groups like farmers, fisher folk, healers, craftsman, agricultural labourers, traders etc. with potential for commercialization and capable enough to be enlisted as a potent player for trade in ABS regime and IPR
- **Screening of Traditional knowledge** especially those relating to the use of plants in single formulation for the possibility of bio-prospecting.
- **Documenting region specific/ folk specific, bio-resources capable of TK and creating awareness of its potency and efficacy** to the Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) for conserving the valuable resources.
- **Well established TK having reproducibility and strength can be identified for geographical indications** "as a good" originating in the territory for awareness and endorsement of the people for effective conservation.
- **Generating a database for conservation of TK associated with bio-resources for future generation.**



# People's Biodiversity Register (PBR)

- PBR is an authentic document
  - prepared by State Biodiversity Board in vernacular language chronicling the local biodiversity of the cultural landscapes at Panchayat, Municipality and Corporation level prepared in a participatory manner with prior informed consent of the local community;
  - prepared with the active involvement of concerned community and support of scientists and teachers.
- PBR records people's knowledge and ongoing changes in biodiversity of the area and serves as a baseline database for future management strategies.
- PBR is used ideally as a handbook for assessing locally significant elements of biodiversity and TK.

# PBR Methodology

One of the first steps for preparing a PBR is to organize a group meeting at unit level (ward in LSG, Indian Panchayat Raj Act 1994) to explain the objectives and purpose of the exercise.

- Different social groups in the village need to be identified for purpose of data collection from those groups
- Volunteers at ward level will collect the information from all sectors of biodiversity and ecosystem
- In an urban situation, spots where biodiversity are important need to be identified for the purpose of the study and documentation.

# PBR Methodology (cont.)

- The PBR is a participatory process requiring intensive and extensive consultation with the people.
- The objectives and purpose is to be explained in a group meeting in the presence of all sections of people in the Panchayat, members of the BMC, students, knowledgeable individuals and all those interested in the effort.
- **Documentation** includes photographs (including digital images), drawings, audio and video recordings and other records like printed material.

# PBR Methodology (cont.)

- The various steps include:
  - Sensitization of the public about the study, survey and possible management
  - Training of members in identification and collection of data on biological resources and traditional knowledge
  - Collection of data. Data collections includes review of literature on the natural resources of the districts, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRAs) at village level, house hold interviews, individual interviews with village leaders/ knowledgeable individuals / household heads/ key actors of the panchayat raj institutions and NGOs and direct field observations
  - Analysis and validation of data in consultation with technical support group and BMC
  - Preparation of People's Biodiversity Register (PBR)
  - Computerization of information and resources

# Documentation of Traditional Knowledge (TK) related to biodiversity in PBR

- Documentation of knowledge of individuals with regard to biodiversity and its uses is an important part of PBR. Every effort are made to **identify the persons with proven knowledge of local biodiversity**.
- Special attention should be given to **the elderly persons** who can also provide information on the biodiversity which was available in the past but are no longer seen at present.
- **In some cases focus group discussion** may be held for the purpose of documentation.

# Ward Level Data Collection by Volunteer

Primary Information  
(Tradition, Culture,  
Developmental Activities, etc.  
About Grama Panchayat/  
Municipality/Corporation)

**Biodiversity and associated Information on Agro Biodiversity/ Homestead Biodiversity/ Wild Biodiversity / Wetland Biodiversity may be collected from;**

- house oriented
- Senior Citizens of the Grama Panchayat
- Panchayat Samithy Members
- Other Traditional knowledge holders
- NGO's
- Senior Farmers
- Senior Teachers
- Traditional medical practitioner
- Senior Fishermen
- Senior Forest men
- Senior Cattle farmers
- experienced Poultry Farmers

# Consolidation Workshop

## 1. Consolidation of Collected Data

One-day consolidation workshop

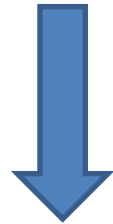


Consolidation process (2 months)



## 2. Analysis and Validation of Data

Recorded information will be analysed and validated by the BMC, elected members of the local body and TSG



## 3. Preparation of PBR

BMC keeps one copy of PBR

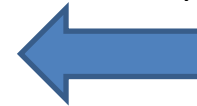


The approved PBR will be evaluated by the Senior Programme Coordinator of KSBB



Two copies of the prepared PBR will be submitted to the Board

Approved by the BMC and local body



Final copy of the PBR will be prepared

KSBB keeps one copy of PBR



# Statutory endorsement of PBR

- The PBR of local body contains comprehensive information on availability and knowledge of local biological
- This information is recorded in the prescribed formats elaborated by the NBA.
- The documented information will be kept in the safe custody of BMC.
- PBR also acts as a legal document for the purposes of determining Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) provisions under the Act.
- In addition to them TSG also provide technical and scientific support for PBR preparation, which comprises 5 members in each district.
- The PBR shall be maintained and validated by BMC.



# Statutory endorsement of PBR (cont.)

- For the protection of PBR from biopiracy, the Biodiversity Rules (2008) stipulates that **the committee shall maintain a register** giving information about the details of access to biological resources and traditional knowledge.
- **People's Biodiversity Registers lead to recognition of conservation oriented local practices** such as protection of sacred groves and help mobilize local communities to prudently manage local biodiversity resources in ways that would promote social justice.
- **It is a key document asserting the rights of local people over biological resources and associated traditional knowledge.**