

Biodiversity Register and Indigenous Knowledge: A Case Study of Baigachak Area, in Dindori District of Madhya Pradesh

Ratul Saha¹ and Prodyut Bhattacharya²

¹Biodiversity Conservation, Sundarbans Programme, WWF-India

²University School of Environment Management, GGS IP University, New Delhi, India

KEYWORDS Conservation. Forests. Biological diversity Act. Primitive Tribes. Central India. Resource Management. Documentation

ABSTRACT Conservation of biological diversity is extremely imperative as it is essential for efficient functioning of the ecosystem which actually accounts the innumerable life forms. Local initiatives have been taken to conserve biodiversity in landscape continuum in the form of sacred groves, home gardens and other indigenous practices. The wealth of NTFP and medicinal plant life useful to people is a strong justification for their conservation. Unfortunately, this indigenous knowledge on the properties, utilization and conservation aspects of plant resources available with tribal groups is on the verge of depletion due to developmental activities which are adversely affecting the cultural and traditional life of these groups. Tribal cultures are themselves disappearing and with them go their plant lore. Studies have shown that indigenous knowledge and biodiversity are complementary phenomena and are needed to conserve biodiversity. The study aimed to develop and document the process of a Biodiversity Register for two forest villages (Dhaba and Sherajhar) in Baigachak area, in Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh. The register identifies both wild and agro biodiversity elements and their indigenous knowledge. Development of management plan was a part of exercise to review local knowledge and conservation practices. Participatory Rural Appraisal tools along with conventional questionnaire methods were used to understand the biodiversity situation in their landscape covering 10 villages of Baigachak area, a comprised of Baiga, the primitive tribes of Madhya Pradesh. The study indicates that a rich biodiversity (109 floral species, 57 species of birds, 16 species of butterflies, 3 species of amphibian, 17 species of reptilian and 1 species of mammals) exists around the study area, local people's concern whereas there is a declining rate of availability for the last 15 years due to various reasons.