

TOWARDS SECURING THE RICH BIODIVERSITY OF MEGHALAYA

MEGHALAYA BIODIVERSITY BOARD

Meghalaya the 'Abode of Clouds' is rich in Biodiversity in all its forms. This region was described by Hooker as 'Cradle of Angiosperms'. It is home to many rare species of flora and fauna and exhibits a high degree of endemism.

Habitat degradation, deforestation, mining, fires and development activities pose threats to conservation of biodiversity in Meghalaya.

Only through protection of natural habitats and judicious use of resources can we ensure an ecologically benign future.

The Biological Diversity Act (2002), Rules (2004) and the Meghalaya Biological Diversity Rules, 2010 all aim at achieving conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its resources and a fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from such use.

Meghalaya Biodiversity Board, constituted in 2010, strives to achieve the above objectives by joining hands with the local communities, through various conservation measures and awareness programmes. So far 94 Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC) have been constituted in the state and 25 People's Biodiversity Registers (PBR) are under preparation.



Salient features of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 :

- Regulating access to biological resources of the country; ensuring their conservation and sustainable use.
 - Respecting and protecting the local communities' traditional knowledge related to biodiversity & securing benefits to the real custodians of biological resources/holders of traditional knowledge whenever commercial use of these biological resources occur.
 - Protecting India's rich biodiversity and associated knowledge against illegal access by foreign individuals and organizations and ensuring sharing of benefits arising out of such use.
 - Conservation and management of areas of importance from the standpoint of biological diversity by declaring them as biodiversity heritage sites (BHS).
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- Setting up of National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), State Biodiversity Board (SBB) and Biodiversity Management-Committee's (BMC) to implement the BD Act.
 - NBA and SBB are required to consult BMCs in decisions relating to access to Bio resource/ related knowledge occurring within their jurisdiction.
 - People's Biodiversity Register (PBR) to document Biodiversity.
 - BMCs are empowered to levy fees for accessing bio resources within their jurisdiction.
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- All foreign nationals/organizations require prior approval of NBA for accessing biological resources and/or associated traditional knowledge.
 - Indian scientists/individuals require approval of NBA for transferring results of research using bioresources to foreign nationals/organizations.
 - Indian industries need to get permission from SBBs to access bio-resource for commercial use. SBB has the right to restrict the access if it is found to violate requirements of conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing.
 - Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) framework is based on a Prior Informed Consent (PIC) and on Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT), between the possessor of Bioresource/ traditional knowledge and its user.
 - NBA will oppose grant of patents arising out of use of bio resource/ associated traditional knowledge from India if the same was not accessed under the legal framework of BD Act, 2002.



Dendrobium devonianum



Nepenthes khasiana



Paphiopedilum insigne

