

Gram sabhas can coordinate with biodiversity panel

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The Hindu, 28th September, 2007

It will promote assertion of intellectual property rights and ensure even sharing of benefits

Gram sabhas can coordinate with the biodiversity management committee, created under the Biological diversity Act, 2002, to document the biodiversity resources being conserved, sustainably used and managed by it under the scheduled tribe and other Traditional forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

The draft rules to the Tribal right Act also empower the gram sabhas to record individual, group or community knowledge associated with such biodiversity and cultural diversity and voluntarily disclosed information disclosed by knowledge providers.

This documentation shall be the property of the gram sabha and it will decide on which of its parts or contents are to be made freely available to the public, and the terms and conditions under which other parts or contents may be disclosed to the parties.

The gram sabha can coordinate with the state Biodiversity Boards as well as the Protected Plant Varieties and farmers Rights Authority in the management of such documented knowledge to promote assertion of intellectual property rights and ensure equitable sharing of benefits from its use. The gram sabha will regulate access to biodiversity resources by outsiders and to levy collection charges and work out benefit sharing arrangements.

When a right of access to biodiversity and community right to intellectual property and traditional knowledge related to biodiversity and cultural diversity has been recognized, it will include rights to regulate access, control, develop and protect traditional science and technology associated with biodiversity resources including genetic resources, seeds, medicines, health practices, medicinal plants, agriculture, knowledge of flora and fauna, minerals and other indigenous knowledge systems, and practices, according to the draft rules.

As far as the duties of the holders of forest rights are concerned, the draft rules empower the gram sabhas to perform the duties on behalf of the holders, and the duties include preparing a plan for the protection and management of community forest resources, sanctuaries and national parks: biodiversity and watershed management plans.

The gram sabha will guide functioning of the Joint Forest Management Committee, the Eco-development Committee, the Biodiversity Management Committee or any such institution.