

Date : 1 November, 2010
Time : 14:00 to 16.30 Hrs
Workshop : 1
Title : Biodiversity and Ethics
Session : 1
Coordinators: Atul Pandya and Ramesh Savalia
Rapporteurs : Methila D’cruz and Janki Shah



Session 1: Panel discussion

Chair : BMS Rathore

Panellists: Dr Razeena Omar, Seema Bhatt, Meenubhai Parabia

Welcome note by Coordinator Shri Atul Pandya. small presentation discussing objectives of the workshop and list some of the ethical concerns associated – presentation attached

From his talk:

Yesterday at Nagoya world community has just finished the conversation on biodiversity. One of the press note heading was ‘if accountants are negotiating on biodiversity’ as economical concerns have headed negotiation. Fortunately ethical concerns are there and we all agree to and have gathered to discuss their framework for conservation of biodiversity

As a moderator, while conceptualising the workshop we have figured out some ethical concerns these are not the recommendation we have to stick to but just some concerns we thought...which can be modified , added deleted and so on..

He introduced the panel

Speaker : Mr Rathore

Started his session with a Shloka from Atharvaved – meaning whatever I take from mother earth let that must be regenerated” This is the underline value our Vedas have founded .

Now in 21st century when our GDPs have now gone beyond 3% and 5 % up to 8%..We have made many adjustments in how we approach it.

I will try and being with – who define biodiversity what definitions we are looking at . what meaning different stake holders have form biodiversity.

Global farmer community have different meaning for biodiversity, it is about seed traditional varieties and more about livelihood. For scientist community it is species, and genetic resource; staple food for biotech research. Scientific community value for its own reason; food for genetic research; If no biodiversity then no food.

Something from ABS. there is trade in biodiversity who shares the benefit. Who owns the resources and who has access to biodiversity and bio resources? Who should get how much of the benefit is under discussion. whether we like it or not

There is also a subset called managers who are given responsibility for managing biodiversity for different stake holders Eg. Forest manager. Their understanding of biodiversity is very limited to their own perspective.

If you put all this meanings in totality, you will see that there are people who respect biodiversity for livelihood like farmers. On the other hands there are issues like trade off. So there are different meanings for different stake holders. Reaching a meaning in totality is a challenge.

In the morning 3 Ps profit planet people. Profit is major guiding force in 21st century. If US life style is adopted many, many more earths are needed. Here is a need to bring the “Prana” into it or the soul and the ethics into the way to bring the concerns for biodiversity into our lives

Prana into it, means adding spirituality, which is the heart. Translating it to education head is knowledge, hand is skill. Practitioners, different stake holder needs different skill sets such as farmer needs skills to do tradition farming to conserve biodiversity. But only skill is not sufficient heart is also needed.

Speaker : Dr. Razeena Omar

I have been working with govt, NGOs with many years. But very significant in my life are 5 years at African national park. During those 5 years we actually utilised EC’s values and integration in means of work. By means of case studies I will explain how we integrated EC values and principles in our project. (At this point due to technological issues her presentation didn’t started so session chair requested Ms Seema Bhatt to start with her presentation and Ms Omar’s presentation was done later)

Speaker : Ms Seema Bhatt

She mainly focussed through her presentation, which is attached along with. Though there were some additional information which are noted below

For me biodiversity is all about ethics.. so actually it was difficult to separate people living in this country we all know weather in rural or urban areas how much we are dependent on bio diversity.

It was the developed countries who decided that biodiversity should be conserved and then they asked not to cut trees or conserve biodiversity.

But essentially this approach was rejected. There were communities who went upto saying who are you to say us to conserve we would rather burn our trees. So sharp divide. After so much of discussion they got used to accept that they are repositories of genetic resource about which so much concern is there. And so by negotiating they can get some concessions such as sovereignty over legal resources, legal framework to protect, rights of local communities, and requirements of prior informed consent and mutual sharing with local communities.

Lets also question how much of CBD has achieved. There was a target set for 2010 has not happened 3rd objective equitable sharing has it happened but not very encouraging.

Biodiversity still has remained a very ambiguous term. But community based natural resource management is now included in forest management practices which is a landmark decision.

Many studies show that communities are developing their own assess and benefit systems missing link between local and global policies . India biodiversity act is not talking much about CBD it is more about genetic resource going out of the country

Land mark case: Kerala: The KANI tribals were eating a berry, study that these tribals never get tired, the study on this berry showed that this berry actually had qualities that deal with fatigue. This was later made into a drug in collaboration with the ayurvedic committee. This case had a lot of interesting issues where the tribals were unable to harvest this berry as it had a high commercial value. (TBGRI-KANI COMMUNITY,)

Comments by Nandita Krishna: I have a problem that when you limit the discussion on biodiversity to just community sharing. It is more than just that. Additionally this is not a case of management between the community where the deal with the biodiversity, it is a relation with their normal natural lifestyles. It is not managerial, these phrases needed to be rethought and reconsidered.

Answer: I completely agree!

Speaker : Minubhai Parabia:

Scenario on flora of Gujarat – 341 rare plants in Gujarat number of total rare plants in Gujarat

Ethical Issues : since human is intellectual is taking more share out of planets species but collective wisdom is needed to conserve biodiversity. Indian ethic in Indian system the doctor.. will go to the plant before and will request the plant beforehand to,

Sustainable exploitation – requires social change which is painfully slow process. When we go on using underground parts of the plant without proper skill the whole plant die.

Afforestation process should focus on species of economical value only. For Example when we prune side ranches all living population dies. Orchids completely vanish.. forest should not be tried to improve upon , if you live them on their own it will sustain.

Tribes should be allowed to collect. Tribes should have first right over the material. Now the tribal people loose access to medicines when they become part of the mainstream.

More medicinal plants should be bought under cultivation. Farmers are not getting equal price. Economical consideration. There are no Studies on how long can plants can be used.. quality control. Arbitarily used substitutes, original plants are not available.. still markets are flooded.

There was a traditional variety of wheat raised Uttarakhand. A popular variety was developed and profit from the sale was given back to the community where originated. There is lot of traditional knowledge but if there is proper funding sources it can be tapped.

There were deliberations and discussions following presentations