



Biocultural Community Protocols for Livestock Keepers

Workshop in Jaisalmer
25th February, 2010

Livestock Keepers have been recognized as the creators of breeds and the stewards of domestic animal diversity in the Interlaken Declaration and the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources. But beyond this, they also make an essential contribution to the conservation of wild biodiversity, including flora and fauna, as well as of eco-systems and of landscapes. They have developed a rich array of mechanisms and strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of their production systems and their natural environment and thus been termed “guardians of biodiversity” (FAO, 2009).

Biocultural protocols (BCPs) are a new community-centered approach that has been developed to make this crucial role of local livestock keepers in the management of biological diversity visible and provide a written record of it. Their establishment involves a facilitated process in which the community itself articulates its role in biodiversity conservation, and at the same time, also receives information about the laws and legal frameworks that support in-situ conservation.

In India, two livestock keeping communities have established BCPs - these include the Raika of Rajasthan and the Lingayat of Tamil Nadu.

Nevertheless, they have already proven controversial among Civil Society actors working with livestock keepers. While proponents regard BCPs as a major tool for empowerment of marginalized communities, others criticize the fact that they make reference to the concept of Access and Benefit-sharing and thereby implicitly condone “Intellectual Property Rights”.

On the international level, BCPs are poised to be a major discussion point at the upcoming 10th Convention of the Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 10) and envisioned to get formal legal standing in the context of the “International Regime on Access and Benefit-Sharing”. They have the backing of many of Africa’s indigenous and local communities.

In India too, the National Biodiversity Authority seems to support Biocultural Protocols and Indian traditional healers have formally accepted them as method for protecting their Traditional Knowledge.

This workshop that will be hosted by Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan (LPPS) in or near Jaisalmer, is organized by LIFE-Network and supported by the Rain-Fed Livestock Network, will provide opportunity to share the experiences to date with the development of Bio-cultural protocols, identify the potential and pitfalls, and better understand their implications for local livestock keepers.

For more information contact:

P. Vivekanandan, Coordinator LIFE Network India,

SEVA, 45, T.P.M.Nagar, Virattipathu, Madurai - 625 010, Tamil Nadu.

Phone: 0452 - 238 09 43 ; 238 00 82 (O) 0452- 238 36 19 (R)

E-mail: vivekseva@dataone.in

Kamal Kishore, Coordinator, Rain-fed Livestock Network. Mobile: 09418060572

E-mail: kamal_3456@yahoo.co.in

Hanwant Singh Rathore, Director, Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan (LPPS), P.O. Box 1, Sadri 306702, District Pali, Rajasthan. Mobile: 09414818564. E-mail: lpps@sify.com

For local information:

LPPS Jaisalmer office, Camel Project, Achalvansi Colony, Tel. 02992250652