



हरियाणा राज्य जैव विविधता बोर्ड, पंचकूला  
Haryana State Biodiversity Board, Panchkula

## Biodiversity Heritage Sites



Gita Updesh Sthal (Kurukshetra)

### Introduction

Under Section 37 of Biological Diversity Act, 2002 (BDA) the State Government in consultation with local bodies may notify in the official gazette, areas of biodiversity importance as Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS).

Under sub section (2) of Section 37, the State Government in consultation with the Central Government may frame rules for the management and conservation of BHS.

Under sub section (3) of Section 37, the State Governments shall frame schemes for compensating or rehabilitating any person or section of people economically affected by such notification.

Considering the above provisions of the Act, the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) has issued the following guidelines for selection and management of the BHS.

### Significance and objectives of Biodiversity Heritage sites:

- To strengthen the biodiversity conservation in traditionally managed areas and to stem the rapid loss of biodiversity in intensively managed areas, such areas need special attention.
- To have a BHS in or around a community should be a matter of pride and honour to such community and this virtuous act of community may work as an example to the entire nation apart from ensuring availability of the resources to their own future generation. The areas like existing sacred grooves in general and those existing in Western Ghats in particular can be straight away be declared and notified as BHS.
- It is necessary to instill and nurture conservation ethics in all sections of the society. The creation of BHS will ensure bringing home these values in the society and thereby put an end to over-exploitation of natural resources and avoid environmental degradation.
- The creation of BHS may not put any restriction on the prevailing practices and usages of the local communities, other than those voluntarily decided by them. The purpose is to enhance the quality of life of the local communities through this conservation measure.



Mangarban (Faridabad)

### Definitions:

"Biodiversity Heritage Sites" (BHS) are well defined areas that are unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems - terrestrial, coastal and inland waters and, marine having rich biodiversity comprising of any one or more of the following components: richness of wild as well as domesticated species or intra-specific categories, high endemism, presence of rare and threatened species, keystone species, species of evolutionary significance, wild ancestors of domestic/cultivated species or their varieties, past pre-eminence of biological components represented by fossil beds and having significant cultural, ethical or aesthetic values and are important for the maintenance of cultural diversity, with or without a long history of human association with them.

All other terms used are as defined in Section 2 of the Biological Diversity Act (2002)

### The criteria for identification of BHS

Areas having any of the following characteristics may qualify for inclusion as BHS:-

- Areas that contain a mosaic of natural, semi-natural, and man made habitats, which together contain a significant diversity of life forms.
- Areas that contain significant domesticated biodiversity component and /or representative agro-ecosystems with ongoing agricultural practices that sustain this diversity.
- Areas that are significant from a biodiversity point of view as also are important cultural spaces such as sacred groves / trees and sites, or other large community conserved areas.
- Areas including very small ones that offer refuge or corridors for threatened and endemic fauna and flora, such as community conserved areas or urban greens and wetlands.
- All kinds of legal land uses whether government, community or private land could be considered under the above categories.
- As far as possible those sites may be considered which are not covered under Protected Area Network under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

- g. Areas that provide habitats, aquatic or terrestrial, for seasonal migrant species for feeding and breeding.
- h. Areas that are maintained as preservation plots by the research wing of Forest department.
- i. Medicinal Plant Conservation Areas.

## Identification and Declaration of Biodiversity Heritage Sites

State Biodiversity Boards (SBB) may invite suggestion (or consider those already coming from communities) for declaration of BHSs, through BMC's and other relevant community institutions including gram sabhas, panchayats, urban wards, forest protection committees, tribal councils. SBB may undertake widespread dissemination of information related to the proposed BHS among rural communities, NGOs, farmer / fishermen / adivasi associations, urban groups, research institutions, government agencies and other organizations, regarding the provision of BHSs, through locally appropriate means. These could include local language newspapers, radio, holding meetings with the communities, letters to line departments, grampanchayats, local bodies and others.

## Management of BHS

- a. The Biodiversity Management Committee or other appropriate institution as determined by relevant local body in the absence of BMCs, which in addition to their



duties defined in the Act, may also take care of the management of each BHS. Wherever the BHS extends to more than one local body, the management of the BHS shall be the responsibility of the Biodiversity Heritage Site Management Committee constituted by the BMC or other relevant local institutions linked to the local bodies in case BMC does not exist, and approved by the SBB.

- b. The committee responsible for the management of the BHS may include representatives of all sections of local communities, and in particular those most dependent on the natural resources as also those who have been traditionally conserving the area.
- c. It may be the responsibility of the BMC / BHS Management Committee to prepare and implement a management plan for the BHS which should cover a period of five to ten years.
- d. SBBs will then recognize and facilitate the implementation of the final management plan.
- e. SBBs and concerned government departments will also facilitate the regeneration or revival of degraded or lost ecosystems and taxa, including the reintroduction of threatened / locally extinct wildlife where feasible, and the repatriation of lost / declining domesticated biodiversity from ex-situ collections.
- f. Wherever there are existing conservation related management practices serving the purpose of the BHS may be documented and considered as the BHS Management Plan.
- g. Generally no restriction is likely to be placed on the community on the existing utilization of resources from the proposed BHS.
- h. Restriction in form of regulating the use of the resources may be warranted in some cases and such restriction may be totally voluntary on the part of community.
- i. The management structure and utilization of resources for BHS notified on Government forest areas and other government owned areas will be determined by the concerned departments of the State Government.



Herbal Nature Park - Chuhanpur (Yamunanagar)

## Monitoring of BHS

- a) There may be a State-level Monitoring Committee constituted by the SBB.
- b) The State-level Monitoring Committee shall monitor the implementation of management plan periodically and submit a report to the SBB indicating clearly the extent (in qualitative and where possible quantitative terms) of achievement under each component of the Management Plan and recommendations for improvement. This committee shall monitor the implementation of management plan periodically.
- c) The tenure of the Monitoring Committee may be three years.



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