

People's Biodiversity Register – Simply Explained

Characters:

1. **Hari:** 15-16 years. Boy.
2. **Deepa:** 17-18 years. Girl.
3. **Madhu:** Hari and Deepa's grandmother. 60-65 years. Female. White hair, wrinkled skin, wearing saree.

Name of characters to be changed based on the language and state.

Scene 1:

Two young adults from the city are taking a stroll beside a playground surrounded with plants/trees in the village. They have come to visit their grandparents who live in the village. Suddenly they see a ball (football size) going into a bush. The boy sees the ball and runs to get it. The girl follows. They come across a plant with beautiful flowers of *Gloriosa superba*. The girl picks up the flower and tries to recollect the name of the plant but doesn't remember. Then she asks her brother if he remembers the name. He tells her that their grandparents had taught them names of many plants in their childhood. The girl says they take the flower to their grandmother to find the name of the flower and its significance.

Character Description: Here the girl should act intelligent, curious and like a know-it-all kind of person. The boy should be curious.

You may look at this for inspiration. (<http://indo-germanbiodiversity.com/children-segment/what-is-bio-diversity.php>)

Visual Description: Two young adults from the city taking a stroll beside a playground surrounded with plants/trees in the village. They have come to visit their grandparents who live in the village.

Hari: *Didi, It feels so good to be away from the hustle and bustle of the city! There is so much more space to move around and the greenery is so pleasant and soothing to my eyes!*

Deepa: *I wish I could live in a place like this forever.*

Visual Description: Suddenly they see a ball (football size) going into a bush. The

boy sees the ball and runs to get it. The girl follows.

Hari: *Wow, this flower is so beautiful.*

Deepa: *Yes, this is beautiful, but I am not able to remember the name of this plant. Do you know what it's called, Hari?*

Hari: *Yes, Grandma taught us about many plants. I am trying to recall the name but I cannot.*

Deepa: *Actually, I know this plant has some medicinal use. Let me take this to Grandma.*

Scene 2:

Visual: Hari and Deepa come back to their grandparents' house from the ground. On entering the house, there's an open verandah in the center of the house. Grandmother is seen sitting in the verandah on a stool grinding something, with a bunch of plants kept next to her. Deepa has the *Gloriosa superba* flowers in her hand and both Deepa and Hari walk swiftly towards their grandmother.

Deepa: *Look grandma, I found this flower out there. What are these called?*

Grandma: *Where did you find these flowers, Deepa?*

Deepa: *Grandma! We found these in the nearby playground!*

Grandma: *This is called flame lily or glory lily flowers. It's not just beautiful, its actually very useful for treating arthritis, inflammation in joints and skin diseases in our traditional medicine*

Hari: *Wow! Grandma, this indeed is a very useful plant.*

Grandma: *Yes, Hari.*

Scene 3:

Visual: The grandma gets up from her place with the churned plants, takes them to the nearby kitchen. The children move along with her. Grandma puts the mixture on the stove and stirs it. While she's stirring the mixture, the conversation continues.

Hari: *Grandma, you know so much about different plants. You should write a book about it!*

Grandma: *Haha! I don't need to do that. Our BMC already records all this information.*

Deepa: *BMC? What is that, Grandma?*



Grandma: *Those are Biodiversity Management Committees. You see, India is a land of great biological and cultural diversity. It is home to many tribal groups, farming and fishing communities like ours and nomadic groups. All these communities have been carrying a wealth of knowledge about plants and animals which is passed on from one generation to the next. To conserve India's rich biological heritage and the knowledge associated with it, every Panchayat sets up a Biodiversity Management Committee or BMC. This is required under our Biodiversity Act.*

Deepa: *What do they do, Grandma?*

Grandma: *They make plans to ensure that biological resources in our region are used in such a manner that they can support us, our children and all future generations. The documentation of local biological resources in the People's Biodiversity Register or PBR is one such task of the BMC.*

Hari: *What is this Register, Grandma?*

Grandma: *It is a document that contains detailed information on which plants and animals exist in the region, and whether they can be used as medicine, food or anything else that the local people know about. You know plants and animals provide so many services to us. You might overlook those because you stay in a city and cannot observe them directly but if you think about it, everything from food, to medicines, cosmetics and even perfumes have been obtained by the biological resources around us for thousands of years. That is why it is crucial for knowledge about these resources to be recorded and preserved, so we don't lose our connection with our own environment.*

Hari: *How do they prepare these registers?*

Grandma: *Good question! It is not a one-person job! Many people contribute to preparing these PBRs along with BMC members. These could be local people or Technical Support Groups that consist of knowledgeable people from forest, agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries, researchers, colleges, schools and NGOs. All these people bring their knowledge and unique perspectives, which helps the BMCs in identifying plants and animals.*

Deepa: *Does that mean PBR focuses mainly on the biological resources?*

Grandma: *No dear! PBR focuses on many other things.*

Visual as the VO comes:

- Local people, their dependency on biological resources
- Biodiversity and people's knowledge including agricultural, animal husbandry practices
- Landscape or waterscape of the area

- People's perspectives on management issues

Deepa: *Interesting! What happens then?*

Visual: Grandma adds some more ingredients (spices) to the mixture and stirs it.

Grandma: *Let me explain. PBR sets the foundation for the work of the local Biodiversity Management Committee.*

To start the preparation of this document, the BMC has a meeting with local people and Technical Support Groups. After all they are the ones with all the knowledge. So, they discuss the objectives and purpose of the PBR. Next the members are trained to collect data. Then begins the actual exercise of collecting all the local information. For this purpose, they interview many people and also record their own observations.

Deepa: *Whom do they interview, Grandma?*

Grandma: *Knowledgeable people like farmers, vaidis, hakims, traditional knowledge holders, the people who collect bio-resources and other local people. Also, members of the local Panchayat and NGOs each share what they know. Then the BMC verifies all the information and finally, documents all this in the PBR.*

Hari: *So, all traditional knowledge is supposed to be documented in the PBR?*

Grandma: *No, no. The knowledge itself does not have to be documented. Only the people who hold traditional knowledge should be registered. And it is entirely up to them how much information they want to share. There are basically three options. The first is, people can provide only their area of expertise and contact details. The second is, if they wish, they can document their specific knowledge - but they don't have to. And the third option, people in the village can also provide names of persons they know who are perceived to hold traditional knowledge. The ultimate objective is to protect this knowledge and practices. The knowledge itself remains the property of its holders.*

Visual as the VO comes:

There are many steps involved in documentation process of People's Biodiversity Register

First Step is: Sensitisation of the public about the need for local PBR documentation

Then Step 2: Training of BMC members and interested public in collection of data on biological resources and traditional knowledge

Step 3: Survey and other data collection

Step 4: Analysis and validation of data

Step 5: Preparation of the PBR and final but most important step is

Step 6: Digitisation of information

Hari: *But grandma, why do they need to document all this information?*

Grandma: *My dear, there are many benefits of documenting PBR.*

Visual as the VO comes:

Benefits of documenting PBR

- Promoting sustainable management of agriculture, livestock, fish, forest resources to support livelihoods of the local people.
- Creating opportunities to generate local income in return for access to biological resources and providing feedback on ABS applications.
- Collecting information for preparing the biodiversity management plan, to help address concerns relating to biodiversity and the impacts of adverse activities.
- Bringing science and local traditional practices together for the benefit and wellbeing of our society, today and in the future.

Hari: *Grandma, this was all about documenting. What happens when these resources are used?*

Grandma: *That's a very good question, Hari. Whenever some companies such as pharmaceuticals or cosmetic companies want to undertake research on any specific plant or other biological resource or if they want to use the biological resources for commercial purposes, details on quantity collected are recorded by the BMC. BMC can also levy a fee for the collection of biological resources.*

Deepa: *Do you mean all information relating to biodiversity is recorded in the PBR?*

Grandma: *Yes. Absolutely correct! PBR will not be a one-time exercise of preparing printed books. It is maintained electronically as well as updated regularly. I told you, it's a dynamic, living document, just like the constitution of our country!*

Scene 4:

Visual: **Children nodding. Grandma picks up the mixture from the stove and keeps it on a table near the kitchen. There's a bedstead on which she sits.**

Hari: *How do you know so much about BMC and People's Biodiversity Registers,*



Grandma?

Grandma: *I've always loved plants. When I was your age, I was fascinated about nature! I used to collect different leaves and herbs and bombard my mother with questions about them. I am lucky to have married somebody who carries similar interests as mine. Your Grandpa is a horticulturist and now the chairman of our BMC, so we still talk a lot about these things. And do you know? I even gave an interview for PBR in our village.*

Children together: *Wow! We never knew that! (excitedly)*

Hari: *Grandma, I also want to learn about all these varieties of plants from you and become so knowledgeable that the BMC interviews me!*

Deepa: *I have an idea! Why don't we grow different medicinal plants in our backyard?*

Grandma (laughing): *Why not! And who knows? When you come back to live in the village, maybe you'll even become a BMC member one day.*

Scene 5:

The next morning, Deepa, Hari and their grandma are seen in their backyard. The backyard has lots of varieties of flowers. The grandmother is standing next to the children guiding them while Deepa and Hari are planting different plants.