



MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE (MAB) PROGRAMME

Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) was set up by UNESCO in 1971 to provide a better scientific basis for the management of natural resources. The greatest achievement of the programme has been the constitution of a World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). These internationally recognized sites are considered as the main instrument for reconciling biodiversity conservation with socio-economic development of the local communities. Biosphere Reserves (BR) are designed to protect the flora and fauna and to ensure sustainable livelihoods for the communities living therein, through a unique partnership between people and nature.

Biosphere reserves are 'Science for Sustainability support sites' – special places for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems, including conflict prevention and management of biodiversity. Sustainability science in BRs could generate learning resources for the Indian educational system, from primary to tertiary as well as for formal and non-formal audiences. There are 18 designated Biosphere Reserves (BRs) in India. Out of 18 Biosphere Reserves, 11 Biosphere Reserves have been included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves of UNESCO. Currently there are 701 BRs in 124 countries comprising terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems.

The Indian National Man and Biosphere Committee constituted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India identifies new sites, advises on policies and programmes, lays down guidelines, reviews progress and guidelines in the light of evaluation studies and feed back.