

# ROLE OF WOMEN IN CONSERVATION OF NATURE

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## ABSTRACT:

Gender is a highly relevant issue within the Agro Forestry project, which stresses the empowerment of women. Men and women have different strategies for managing natural resources, leading to different problems and different solutions. A study was conducted prior to inception—to understand overall gender issues in Sulawesi and to develop criteria and indicators for project implementation. This study covered gender roles and needs, and differences in access and control to natural resources .The main objective was to gauge equality and equity, and to identify factors that encourage the integration of women into natural-resource-management.

## Introduction:

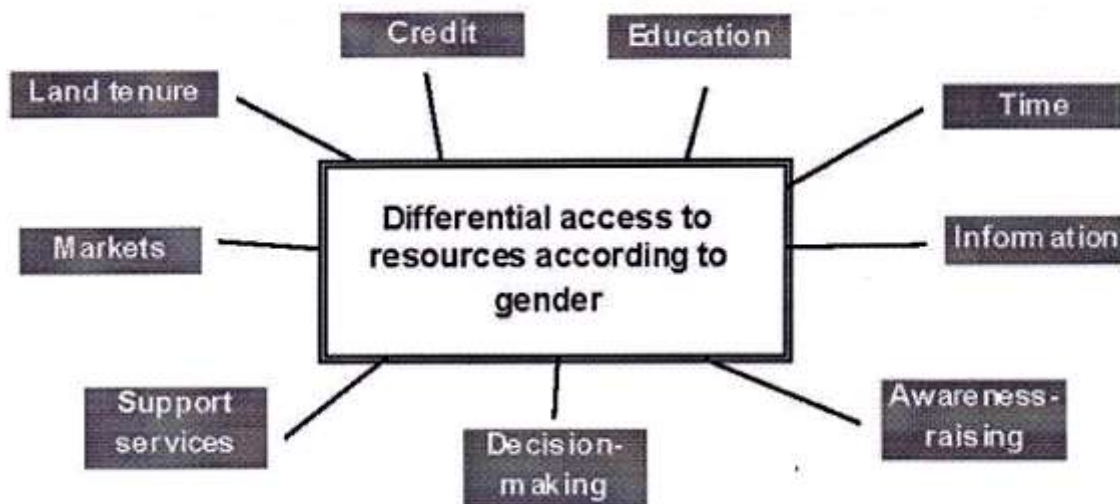
Gender refers to the social roles that men and women play and the power relations between them, which usually have a profound effect on the use and management of natural resources. Gender is not based on sex or the biological differences between men and women; however, gender is shaped by culture, social relations and natural environments. Thus, depending on values, norms customs and laws men and women in different parts of the world have evolved different-gender&roles.

Gender roles of women and men include different labor 'responsibilities, decision-making processes, and knowledge. According to their needs, men and women often use and manage resources in different ways. The gender attributions of local knowledge, including knowledge for managing biological systems have four key characteristics (Husinga et al., 2001):

- 1) Women and men have knowledge about different things.
- 2) Men and women have different knowledge about the same things.
- 3) Women and men may organize their knowledge in different ways.
- 4) Men and women may receive and transmit their knowledge by different mean.

Gender and gender roles affect the economic, political, and social opportunities and constraints faced by both men and women.

The importance of biodiversity to individuals varies according to gender. Based upon the social roles of and power relations between men and women, gender is shaped by culture, social relations, and natural environments. For this reason, we need to incorporate gender dimensions into our understanding of biodiversity and its conservation, sustainable use and the sharing of benefits. CBD developed a Gender Plan of Action in 2008 that defines the Secretariat's role in stimulating and facilitating efforts on national, regional, and global levels to promote gender equality and mainstream a gender perspective. The Millennium Development Goals emphasize clear linkages between gender equality, poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Such insights should be included into our outlook and approach to reversing biodiversity loss, reducing poverty and improving human wellbeing.



The many study uncovered gender differences in livelihood sources, household roles, farming activities, land use and ownership, market dynamics and poverty dynamics. Women were mostly responsible for domestic tasks and maintaining land located close to the settlement area. Men were mostly responsible for earning income from working in the public domain, were fully responsible for maintaining the land that is located far from the settlement area, and for physically heavy work. Women are more knowledgeable about land use values in regards to environmental issues related with biodiversity, while men are more aware of conservation or protecting the environment. Biodiversity in this context related to medicinal plants. Women were also known to possess more knowledge about the use of medicinal plants.

Women are still under-acknowledged as land holders as most land certificates are under male names. Providing more conducive conditions for women to become land owners and legalized in land certificates would increase equity in terms of land rights and ownership. The data in the two provinces clearly shows that women and men have different roles in natural resource management. Women are more knowledgeable about land use values in regards to environmental issues related with biodiversity, while men are more aware of conservation or protecting the environment. Biodiversity in this context related to medicinal plants. Women were also known to possess more knowledge about the use of medicinal plants. Therefore, increasing women's involvement in land-use management will help to maintain biodiversity and also enhance the role of women.

Female participation in decision making was very low and contribution to community income was also much lower than men. However, in reality, at the community level, women's contributions to decision-making, and household and community income were potentially high in conducive situations. Women were more involved in the marketing of commodities such as coffee, cacao, candlenut, vegetables, maize and cloves than men. Men's roles in marketing timber, firewood, and rubber latex were higher than women's. Women's roles in farming were relatively high in the areas of harvesting, post-harvesting, and marketing, with men's roles high in clearing and preparing the land.

## Conclusion

The authors recommend developing situations that allow women, particularly in female-headed households, to become legal landowners. Also, providing opportunities for women to be involved in public, extension services, technical assistance, credit and other activities. A program to target the livelihood source preferred by both women and men, such as mixed-gardens, irrigated paddy fields and maize production

in South Sulawesi is also recommended; and in relation to gender and the market—women’s knowledge of cacao, coffee and clove products should be increased, so that their bargaining skills improve, with resultant increases in income and their position within the market chain.

The Chipko Movement has attracted world-wide attention. The image of poor, rural women in the hills of northern India standing with their arms around trees to prevent them being cut down is a romantic and compelling one. The reality, in many ways, fits the image: the Chipko Movement can indeed be considered an important success story in the fight to secure women’s rights, in the process of local community development through forestry and in environmental protection. But there are more complicated implications as well. It is important to understand the history of Chipko and the context in which it arose - and is still evolving.

The women who participated in the Chipko Movement have become aware of their potentialities and are now demanding a share in the decision-making process at the community level.

They asked the women to confine themselves to their fields and homes and simultaneously issued a written warning to Bhatt that if he tried to agitate or organize the village women, he would be killed.

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