RIGHTS + RESOURCES

Securing Women's Tenure and Leadership for Forest Management: A Summary of the Asian Experience

June 2012   Marlène Buchy[1]

From the early 1980s onward, scholars and civil society activists have worked hard to alert us to the plight of women and their role in the sustainability of natural resource management (NRM). Since the evolution of Women in Development (WID) into Gender and Development (GAD) and subsequently Gender, Environment and Development (GED), considerable empirical evidence has been gathered which documents gender-related issues in the context of NRM.[2]

In parallel to academic research and development, gender specialist positions, gender mainstreaming programs, gender training courses and tool kits, and gender divisions in bilateral aid organisations and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have appeared with the remit to put gender issues on the international development agenda.[3] The evolution from WID to the more sophisticated GAD has helped to increase our understanding of the multitude of locally specific, complex and dynamic gender relationships worldwide.

But despite more understanding, more resources and some policy changes, the 'discursive landslide' as Cornwall et al[4] put it, has delivered limited change on the ground. Women continue to be largely marginalised and ignored or exploited in community based resource management processes, as do other marginalized groups and Indigenous Peoples (IPs).

The Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) has always argued that securing tenure and access rights to natural resources is a critical step towards achieving environmental and social justice. These issues have again become timely in relation to new forest sector initiatives for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, particularly Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) strategies and programs, posing a danger that past failures to address GAD will only be repeated in the new plans and interventions. In response to emerging challenges and opportunities in the NRM sector, RRI commissioned a series of papers, spotlight cases, and interviews with prominent women activists

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involved in NRM in Nepal, Cameroon, Indonesia, the Philippines and China to take stock of and better understand the diverse challenges faced by Asian women in relation to limited rights and insecure tenure.

1. CASES FROM THE FIELD

The four studies included in this volume come from Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines, as well as a multi-country case study from South and Southeast Asia.

The paper from Indonesia focuses on the dynamics between tenure and access to forests and between state and customary law.[5] The paper includes three case studies highlighting how gender justice is being ignored and compromised and why this is the case, and proposes some ideas for a gender justice framework in forest tenure and forest governance. The first case study follows Ibu Asih, a married woman who juggles local power relations of community elders and forest officers to secure fragile access to small plots of land only to provide insufficient food for her family. The second case documents the plight of a Dayak community in Central Kalimantan trapped in the aftermath of a 'Mega Rice project' development project, and highlights how exogenous top-down planning is detrimental to local environments and communities and how women, especially, have little chances to benefit. Finally, the third case focuses on how gender and class based inequality in community forestry compromises economic, social and environmental outcomes through the experience of another woman, Ibu Tuti. Though Ibu Tuti does play a role in managing land attributed through the project, her participation remains superficial. The case study shows how involving women in a meaningful way requires gendered targeted interventions, of which projects and project staff are often oblivious.

The Philippines paper takes us to the nexus of armed conflict, gender roles, ecosystem degradation, inconsistent policies and uncontrolled capitalism.[6] Though the Philippines are a hot-spot biodiversity area and the government has signed various international conventions for environment and biodiversity protection, mining, land grabbing for intensive cash crop plantation development, and large scale hydro-electric projects are supported and facilitated by the government in sensitive areas. The paper shows how these brutal changes affect rural communities. The progressive proletarisation of farmers as new economic rationalities push people off their land to become laborers undermines women's traditional roles in NRM and conflict management, and compromises their access to land and resources and the food security of their families. However, women fight back and 'create spaces for participation'[7] to protect valuable resources, enhance food security and promote peace and conflict resolution.

Nepal is the flagship country when it comes to the institutionalisation of community-based resource management through the Community Forestry (CF) model promoted by the country's Ministry of Forestry. The chapter on Nepal retraces the history of forestry and CF, with a focus on how the roles and needs of local rural communities have been considered during different periods.[8] After 30 years of CF, gender and social equity remain elusive despite donor support, gender mainstreaming policies at the national level and official discourses. Women continue to remain less visible and less heard despite some progress and the active lobbying of civil society organisations. The paper focuses on how various tenure arrangements have addressed (or not addressed) gender discrimination, and proposes that the concept of the 'bundle of rights' (including rights to access and benefits, and rights to management) needs to be tested against a gender analysis. Women in Nepal face specific constraints, which are not easily overcome solely by the realisation of their rights.

In the last decade climate change has become more prominent in the global discourse. The UN-REDD Programme has been attracting interest from many Asian governments; however locking away forest resources for carbon has implications for rural populations depending on these resources. The redistribution mechanisms of resources generated through REDD are still unclear, and will depend on tenure arrangements and who can claim rights over those natural resources. In their contribution, Gurung and Setyowati share the results of a multi-country study drawing lessons from supposedly gender sensitive initiatives.[9] They find that though these initiatives acknowledge the importance of stakeholder participation, women's constraints are not understood and their livelihoods needs are not fully taken into account in the discussions and negotiations. This exclusion may have a dramatic negative impact on women's ability to sustain the food security of their family. The authors propose a number of ways in which women's contribution to NRM should be recognised and capitalised on.

2. INSIGHTS AND LESSONS

Despite contextual differences, a number of similarities and trends emerge from these chapters which explain why women continue to struggle to find recognition and enjoy equal citizens' rights. Many poor Asian women face challenges articulated around three nexuses: generic gender issues; the interrelations between poverty and tenure issues; and ill-conceived, gender blind and gender biased development interventions.

2.1 Gender constraints and exclusionary outcomes

All four chapters identify, to varying degrees, the same gender issues at the heart of inequality: rural women on average work longer hours than men[10] and continue to combine economic, social and reproductive roles;[11] they are less literate and less mobile, thus limiting their ability to grasp new livelihoods opportunities;[12] when employed, women earn lower salaries and are confined to jobs of lower status;[13] women have unequal access to land and resources which limits their economic options, for example, the ability to access formal credit facilities is limited; often women can only access land though marriage[14] and many depend on a man (husband, brother or father)[15] for decision making, thus limiting their bargaining position within the family[16] despite their responsibility for the family's food security. Women are generally more involved in the collection of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), but are less likely to be involved in the formal forestry enterprises sector.[17] Women are also more or less absent from NRM related governance structures even within community-based programmes such as CF. Sisawati and Mahamingtyas analyse the role of gender politics in post-colonial Indonesia and show how the ideology of *Ibuism* promoted by the New Order has 'domesticated, segregated and depoliticised women'. Giri reminds us of Nepali sayings which confine women to specific spaces and economic activities.[18] These values are ingrained and have become part of the identities of men and women alike. As such they exemplify what Gaventa has coined 'invisible power'.[19] This internalised form of power is more elusive and difficult to articulate, thus more difficult to fight combat.

The concept of intersectionality helps us to understand the multidimensionality of a person's identity and how different socio-economic variables converge and produce specific outcomes.[20] For example, not all women share the same constraints, as a woman's economic status or religion may be more important in determining what she can and cannot do than her gender per se. Many poor men, such as *dalits* in Nepal, face more constraints and discrimination than some women. Jamisolamin highlights how

indigenous women in the Philippines experience a 'double minorisation' as they need to fight two kinds of prejudice.[21] This makes it more complicated for outsiders and policy makers to understand the local realities of women, and increases the likelihood that top-down interventions miss and misinterpret the subtle interactions between these variables and the outcomes of interventions and policies.

2.2 Insecure tenure, rights and poverty

Despite the recognition of equal tenure rights for men and women in the law of many countries worldwide, as is the case in China,[22] women continue to be excluded from property rights and they are seldom the owners of the land they cultivate. Gender discrimination combined with the lack of rights and security and limited opportunities often lock women into a cycle of vulnerability and poverty.

Giri refers to the 'bundle of rights' which are more complex than simple ownership. Cecile Jackson has argued that tenure systems are essentially social relationships, and that tenure should be considered within a historical and socio-economic context. What a woman could gain, she argues, through individual ownership, economic opportunity, or in bargaining power within the family, she could lose if the realisation of her rights creates tensions and conflicts within the family or if she becomes socially ostracised.[23] This confirms the precarious position of women and is described well in the story of Ibu Asih[24] who struggles to make ends meet on five plots of land. She has inherited one plot from her parents where her ownership is secure. For the other plots, she only has the right to cultivate against in kind and in cash payments to a local male customary leader and a corrupt forest officer. Her food production is insufficient and she has married off her daughters early as she could no longer afford to feed them; thus reproducing for her daughters the same cycle of dependency and vulnerability. Ibu Ashi is dependent on these men. She remains vulnerable because of her insecure access to land.

> *Therefore, if secure and clear tenure arrangements are necessary and need to be implemented, they are also not sufficient to guarantee gender justice, as discrimination against women is as much part of institutional arrangements as it is of culture and social norms.*

Insecurity is also the result of unstable and unclear tenure arrangements prevalent in many countries, following the overlaps between customary and modern legal systems inherited from colonial times, and inconsistency between regional and national level laws. The China spotlight highlights where the national law may clearly support gender equality, but as it is applied in a policy context of decentralisation, a degree of freedom is given to a local interpretation which often results in the negation of gender equality. The case of Nepal also shows that statutory rights do not guarantee the recognition of women's authority over management and the use of benefits. Therefore, if secure and clear tenure arrangements are necessary and need to be implemented, they are also not sufficient to guarantee gender justice, as discrimination against women is as much part of institutional arrangements as it is of culture and social norms.

2.3 Gender blind and gender biased programmes and interventions

Gender mainstreaming has been a feature in the Philippines, Nepal and Indonesia and yet, as the various case studies testify, programs and projects continue to bypass women. This can be explained partly by the lack of gender awareness amongst various project staff which is largely male (especially so within state

forestry departments).[25] The leasehold forestry programme in Nepal is staffed at the grassroots by women community mobilisers and perhaps this explains that in this case gender issues have been taken up more systematically within forest user groups. But NGO staff too can be gender blind and even within an activist organisation like FECOFUN, keeping gender issues on the agenda can be a challenge. Jamisolamin highlights that at the community level, male leaders do not recognise women's rights despite their active involvement for peace building. On the whole, as Sisawati and Mahaningtyas point out there is limited understanding of gender justice. Basic issues, such as setting community meetings at times that are unsuitable for busy women, thus excluding women and then blaming them for their lack of interest, are still very common.

Projects, however not only bypass women, but they also continue to follow top-down approaches, with limited genuine participation, therefore bypassing many additional marginalized stakeholders. One of the findings of the REDD + study is that very limited consultation has taken place in the various projects and when there is, it is the men who are considered as interlocutors. Women are often ignored as 'they know nothing' and their needs are often invisible to outsiders as they do not own land and their names do not appear in the public domain or on titles.[26]

At a larger scale, local people are also excluded from many macro-economic policy decisions that will affect the interests and livelihoods of local people. The expansion of mining in the Philippines even within protected areas is a good example of the state renegading its own commitments to environmental and social sustainability. Economic pressures push poor small farmers off their land, forcing them to become proletarians on intensive agro-business farms. Though both men and women suffer from these exclusionary processes, women suffer more because of the gender constraints identified above and their lack of secure access to resources. The competition for resources between local communities and private investors also creates new conflicts between men and women,[27] which further compromises women's chances to see their needs considered.
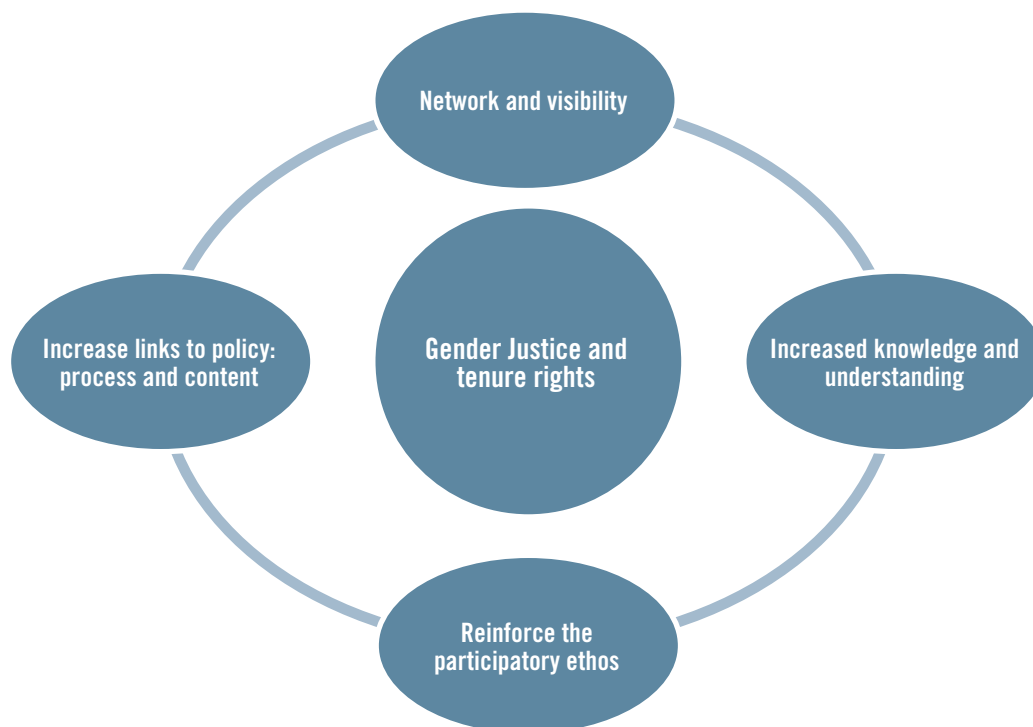
3. A FRAMEWORK TO MOVE FORWARD

The sources of gender inequity come from various ways. Contributors in this volume suggest a focus on four interconnected areas of action to improve gender justice and secure tenure rights:

3.1 Increase women's visibility through mobilisation and networking

For Apsara Chapagain of FECOFUN, there is no doubt that networking at the national level is a must to strengthen social movements. Networks play an important role in balancing power through advocacy and in giving local people a voice, and serve as an important space for information sharing and dissemination, and a source of capacity building for members. Such a federation can also be a role model by developing and implementing within the organisation itself a gender policy. FECOFUN has become a strong voice in Nepal and has become a major actor in policy design. Yet it is also important and necessary to create women only institutional spaces, such as HIMAWANTI, as these organizations have better ability to focus on women related issues.

Networking internationally is also vital to increase visibility on a global stage and link to national level NGOs which may be working in isolation from one another and could benefit from synergies. REFACOF in Africa, for example, is still a young network but already 14 countries are represented through the

Figure 1: Framework for achieving gender justice and tenure rights

Network and visibility

Increase links to policy: process and content

Gender Justice and tenure rights

Increased knowledge and understanding

Reinforce the participatory ethos

linking of various grassroots women's organisations. Securing tenure rights and eliciting issues at the local/national level can be used to develop strategies to lobby governments at the international level, such as the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC). Work at the global level gives visibility and legitimacy to work done at the national and local levels and vice versa. The hope is to shape a space for women to influence policy debates throughout their respective regions, and around the world.

3.2 Capacity building within projects and organisations

These networks need donor support to help develop the capacity of grassroots organisations, but also to share and disseminate information and lessons. As the case studies have shown, gender justice remains a misunderstood issue even within government and donor funded projects. More efforts are needed to increase the understanding of women and gender rights issues,[28] but more specific information is needed on the effect of insecure tenure rights on gender and social equity. Collecting gender disaggregated data is one step towards increasing awareness and knowledge.[29] Employing more women or gender aware and properly trained staff within government agencies projects is also necessary. By working through focal points within government agencies and NGOs, REFACOF for example has the potential to gradually institutionalise gender concerns and build capacity within organisations. This is an ambitious goal as REDD+ and other climate change initiatives continue to shift the locus of decisions affecting the forest sector to additional ministries and technical agencies separate from those historically responsible for the sector.

3.3 Reinforce participatory ethos

Participation is often understood by government agencies and donor funded project as 'being there' or 'taking part' without questioning the quality of this participation. For example, does it matter if 50 percent of participants are women if they are not saying anything or if what they say is considered to have limited value? Gurung and Setyowati report that in Lam Dong Province (Viet Nam) though over 51 percent of women attend meetings and are vocal, their voices remains ignored. Women networks are there to ensure that women fully participate, but women continue to face many hurdles to their full participation.[30] In order to increase knowledge, understanding, and participation of women, REFACOF has commissioned national level studies on gender and tenure rights. Once validated at participatory national level workshops, these findings will form the basis for advocacy messages and campaigns ensuring women's concerns are taken up by national agendas.

3.4 Increase link with policy

Women's relatively limited capabilities (as identified above), the social and cultural norms, and gender biased policies and legislation contribute to their exclusion from full participation and recognition in the public sphere or the formal economic sector. This is why contributors in this volume also advocate for closer links with policy making. One essential role for networks, as discussed above is to feed into the national debate information emerging from the daily reality of women facing insecurity and chronic vulnerability due in great part to the absence of secure and clear tenure rights. The China study highlights how important it is to check the impact of policy and legal changes as they exist on the ground. REFACOF and FECOFUN have been lobbying relevant ministries for an inclusion of gender concerns during policy development or legal reforms, but as seen in the China case, reforms also need to be supported and implemented. Efforts to link with policy have to address content, as well as process.

4. CONCLUSION

The contributions in this volume demonstrate that exclusion and inequality on gender grounds are still rife and often due to cultural and social norms, economic pressures, and inadequate legal and institutional frameworks. Many Asian women continue to be locked into a cycle of chronic poverty, and are denied some of their basic rights because of unclear, unsecured and unequal tenure rights. Despite playing a huge role in sustainable management and natural resources, indigenous women facing exclusion on gender and ethnicity grounds need particular attention. Yet women are fighting back with incredible resilience and energy, putting forward creative ways to combat prejudice on different grounds and at different levels. Whether it is through international or national networks, grassroots organisations or within their families and communities, women show – through their commitment and hard work – that they are able and willing to construct a better future, if allowed a voice and the means to succeed.

> *Many Asian women continue to be locked into a cycle of chronic poverty, and are denied some of their basic rights because of unclear, unsecured and unequal tenure rights. Despite playing a huge role in sustainable management and natural resources, indigenous women facing exclusion on gender and ethnicity grounds need particular attention.*

Farming communities play a big role in maintaining biodiversity on agriculture land and in forest areas. Securing land rights is essential and necessary to protect rural communities from land grabbing and provide incentives and resources for people to continue to sustain diversified livelihood systems. In these papers we have seen the pivotal role that women play in NRM and in sustaining their families and communities against all odds, but we've also seen how women are more vulnerable because of the nature of gender inequality.

Studies in Africa focusing on women's land rights, conservation and climate change do highlight similar issues as those identified in this paper as well as lessons that can be applied to the Asian context.[31] The main message from the African continent is also that unsecure, unclear tenure rights are a major constraint to achieving poverty alleviation and sustainable social and environmental management.

As men are increasingly forced to migrate, leaving women in villages to never return, it becomes even more important to recognise women's needs and rights to secure access and control over natural resources, in order to fulfil their role as household heads. The case studies demonstrate strongly that changing the law is necessary and urgent but not sufficient: there has to be a genuine political will to implement and enforce clarified tenure systems. Women's roles must be recognised through their involvement as equal stakeholders in collaborative NRM processes, and inclusive forest governance, conservation or REDD+ initiatives. Poor rural women will continue to play a critical role in the global fight against climate change and environmental degradation. To face this challenge, women need secure tenure rights.

Many of the recommendations that the authors have made for gender equity in natural resource management are very relevant to the ongoing design of climate change mitigation and adaptation and specifically of REDD+ readiness plans and initiatives. Those particularly applicable throughout Asia include:

- the importance of gender mainstreaming tools;

- attention to gender in participation, capacity building, governance and benefit sharing

- providing secure tenure for women;

- compensating women for their engagement in forest protection and carbon monitoring activities;

- innovation in pilot projects to use forest carbon markets for income generation for rural women; and

- promotion of renewable energy and agroforestry to meet women's needs for fuel wood and fodder resources while building their climate change resilience.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ENDNOTES

1   Fellow in International Development, University of Bath International Development Group; independent researcher on natural resource management, participation and gender issues. Marlène also supports organizations in the area of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, and holds a PhD in Development Studies from Paris VII University.

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10   Giri: 3.

11   Jamisolamin: 5.

12   Basik, Naomi. 2012. The Role of Women in Asia's Community Forest Enterprises.

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18   Siscawati and Mahamingtyas: 13.

19   Gaventa, John. 2006. Finding the spaces for change: a power analysis. *IDS Bulletin* 37(6): 23-33.

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24   Siscawati and Mahaningtyas: 4.

25   Siscawati and Mahaningtyas; Gurung and Setyowati.

26   Wang.

27   Jamisolanim: 2; Siscawati and Mahaningtyas: 6.

28   Jamisolanim: 14.

29   Basik.

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THE RIGHTS AND RESOURCES INITIATIVE

RRI is a global coalition of international, regional, and community organizations advancing forest tenure, policy and market reforms. RRI leverages the strategic collaboration and investment of its Partners and Collaborators around the world by working together on research, advocacy and convening strategic actors to catalyze change on the ground.

RRI is coordinated by the Rights and Resources Group, a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. For more information, please visit *www.rightsandresources.org*.

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Gender in Forest Tenure: Pre-requisite for Sustainable Forest Management in Nepal
Brief #1 of 4

June 2012   Kalpana Giri[1]

1. GENDER AND FOREST TENURE IN NEPAL: THE SOUTH ASIAN CONTEXT

The type and extent of forest tenure reforms in South Asia vary across countries. Yet, all reforms share common objectives of addressing greater equity, realizing communities' rights, improving livelihoods and promoting conservation. Some other noted commonalities include the state retaining majority ownership of forests while still increasing community tenure and rights, and the emergence of multiple stakeholders to defend, promote and expand community interests. For example, Community Forestry and Joint Forest Management programmes in Nepal and India, respectively, transfer or recognize local community tenure, management and use rights to different degrees.

Forest tenure holds special significance in South Asia. First, agriculture and forestry are interdependent sectors that contribute to livelihoods (particularly for rural populations) and provide integral safety nets for disaster management in countries facing the uncertain threat of climate change and forming adaptation strategies. Second, forestry management is by its multiple impacts highly pluralistic, which means multiple actors need to be engaged across scales, involving both local (intra- and inter-community) and non-local (regional, national and international) actors. The various power dynamics (i.e. donor and national state, state and community, and men and women) affect the design, degree, and extent of implementation and consolidation of forest tenure. The interplay of these factors extensively determines the extent to which forest tenure operates in practice, and in turn, the winners and losers.[2]

If the goal of forest tenure is to enhance communities' control over the forest resources

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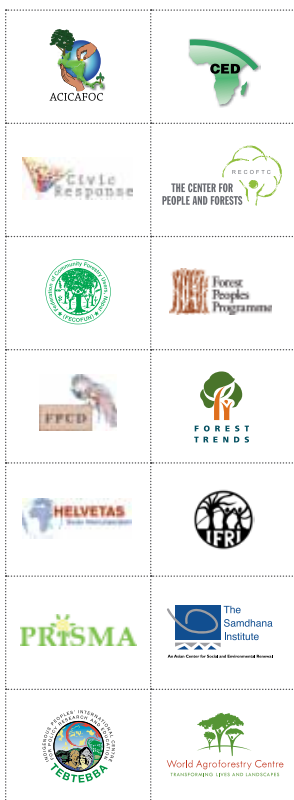
> *If the goal of forest tenure is to enhance communities' control over the forest resources and the benefits therein, as well as delivering sustained forest conservation, then forest management institutions and policies need to cater to the needs and decisions of all key stakeholders, including women.*

and the benefits therein, as well as delivering sustained forest conservation, then forest management institutions and policies need to cater to the needs and decisions of all key stakeholders, including women. In forest communities, women are widely identified as key forest managers due to their knowledge, skills, contribution and dependency on forest resources. Women's rights to resources through forest tenure can be a very important step in achieving social and environmental sustainability, as well as efficient production of forest products and social justice. Thus, how tenure arrangements are designed and implemented in practice, and how these institutions further affect the needs, interests, relations and authority of men and women are important questions that must be assessed and constantly monitored.

Despite the extensive experience and research on gender, forestry and tenure reforms,[3] the linkage between gender and forest tenure is poorly understood, and the mechanisms through which forest tenure contests or consolidates the power relations that discriminate against or between different categories of men and women in South Asian societies, remain unclear. The wider political context that shapes forest tenure reform is also poorly understood from a gender perspective.

This chapter aims to demonstrate the strong connection between gender-sensitive forest tenure reforms and improved livelihood indicators, forest conservation, and overall gender equity in South Asia, drawing on Nepal's Community Forestry framework as a case study. Nepal's diversity of customary and statutory forest tenure arrangements, pioneering experience in decentralized forest governance, and consolidated advances in grassroots civic networks with substantive women's participation give ample opportunity to explore implications for gender equity in a wide range of forest tenure arrangements and practices.

This paper begins with an overview of scholarly insights on gender and forest tenure. It then explains the case of Nepal by presenting the particular forms, structures and processes associated with forest reform, and their implications for gender equity and forest governance. It does so with a focus on three types of forestry in order to reflect a wide variaty of situations: Government-managed forests; Community forests; and Leasehold forests.

The third section contextualizes findings from Nepal within the broader framework of scholarly literature. Finally, the lessons are synthesized to draw out cross-cutting lessons, highlighting the mechanisms through which gender and tenure can be better linked to mediate or eliminate discriminatory relations while simultaneously advancing livelihoods and conservation.

2. SCHOLARLY INSIGHTS ON GENDER AND FOREST TENURE

Early feminist literature treats nature conservation as an inherent feminist virtue[4] in gender studies of forestry and other natural resource management. This school of thought gives way to a more material constructure of gender in forestry,[5] based on forest use, while later schools analyse gender as part of the power relationships in everyday discourse, politics and practice[6] in a post-colonial world.[7] All schools of

thought concur that women's access to and control over forests and their resources is a crucial element of sustainable forest governance, and advocate for greater gender mainstreaming in forestry.

Tenure can be defined either as an inherent possession of property as a thing/object, or as the right and relations to a property. This paper uses the second perspective of tenure as an authority enforcing claims to a "bundle of rights" on certain principles.[8] Forest tenure, in this paper, is defined as authority enforcing claims to a bundle of rights, obtainable from forest and its resources. The authority is enacted through both statutory laws (e.g. policies, land titles, court, contracts) and customary practices (e.g. social relations, norms, beliefs). Authority, at a given time, can be both legitimate and illegitimate. Such notions of legitimacy are dictated by that which has a better and a faster reach and acceptability amidst the wider population. Thus authority is not mandated or an assumed abstraction, but rather constructed through social interactions and subjected to conflict and contestation.[9]

The "bundle of rights" includes rights and specific benefits derived from them (access, withdrawal and benefits), management (overall decision-making including rights of exclusion), and alienation (ownership, right to compensation, right to sale).[10] Thus, forest tenure shapes the definition of who can use which resources, for how long, under what conditions, for whose benefits and on what basis. By extension, forest tenure security refers to the certainty of these rights and authority.[11]

To enhance women's access and control, scholars argue for both improvised structures (e.g. policies, quota and leadership position of women, women's networks, and gender units in forestry departments) and better understanding of how power is lived, contested, argued and consolidated.[12] Likewise, others argue for re-examining forestry programs by assessing benefits/trade-offs, needs and rights, and rights and responsibilities.[13]

However, existing literature has paid little attention to how authority enforced through forest tenure is tested, implemented and contested, and how these power relations between men and women affect the sustainability of forest governance. Or, how and under what circumstances these notions of authority are considered legitimate and shape which tenure rights beneficiaries can claim and enjoy. (A notable exception for South Asia is the book Gender and Green Governance, by Bina Agarwal, which finds that greater women's participation in community forest institutions and governance has significant benefit: when women participate in governance systems, decisions made reflect their needs, and better fulfil conservation objectives.[14])

This paper does not judge forest tenure to be either good or evil, but depending on its application, tenure arrangements may benefit some or all community members or disadvantage them by establishing or undermining their level of authority over forests and the related bundle of rights. Understanding how this dynamic plays out in practice contributes to the current body of knowledge and informs policy choices around tenure and forest governance.

3. EVOLUTION AND STATUS OF GENDER AND FOREST TENURE IN NEPAL

Nepal has about 29 million inhabitants, half of them women. Nepal is broadly divided into three geo-regions: the high mountains, the mid-hills, and the Terai (plain). There are some 100 different ethnic/caste groups and more than 80 percent of Nepal's population lives in rural areas. Forests, together with agriculture and livestock, provide livelihood to the majority of Nepalese. With the Democracy Movement of 2005-2006, a decade-long civil war in Nepal ended, resulting in the Comprehensive Peace

Agreement signed between the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and the Maoists. At present, the interim government is drafting a new constitution. Ensuring greater rights of communities, ethnic minorities, and marginalized categories of people, including women, in the constitution is frequently discussed.[15] Huge mass movements with significant participation of women are also staged to assert greater rights to community and women in forest management.

3.1 Women's social status and role in forestry and governance structures

Women and men's roles are socially and culturally recognized within certain activities and spheres. As examples, the identity of the man as the breadwinner of a household entails responsibilities to fetch economic resources to sustain household livelihoods. By extension, the public sphere (and therefore, public forums and debate) is socially and historically constructed as a male domain. In contrast, women's identity is associated with their domestic responsibility. Such identity based responsibilities match women's significant presence and contribution in agriculture, forest and at home, and men's at paid jobs. Indeed, the common saying in Nepali reconfirms '*aaimai ki khetma, ki banma ki gharma*' meaning women are either in field, forests, or at home.

Women's social position and access to resources are mostly determined in relation to men, i.e. through their position as a daughter, wife, mother or sister. Such practices were consolidated and legitimized through statutory laws such as the *Muluki Yen* (the civil code) which legitimized men's resource control and their mediation and control over women's access to resources. It made legitimate the community's questioning of women's rights regarding resources and property. Even after the multi-party democracy in 1990 and breakthrough policy attempts, women access to and control of resources has not changed greatly.

Land is an important source of power and status in Nepal and is transferred from fathers to sons, but not daughters. Policy amendments mandate that daughters can now claim a share of the parental property, if they remain unmarried at or after the age of 35. At present, the wife is likely to have a claim on her husband's property only if he fails to take care of her, fails to provide her with food and clothing, or throws her out of the house.[16] Even with incentives, practices have not changed; land tax is reduced if land is registered in a woman's name alone or jointly with men. Yet, women own only 10 percent of Nepal's landholdings, with average holdings only two-thirds of those of the average male owner. While the skewed nature of land ownership in Nepal, complex inheritance patterns, and the large size of the rural landless population are marked, women's very limited land ownership is worrisome.

Despite meagre access to and control of resources, women's contribution to both agriculture and forestry activities is significant. Nepali agriculture is highly feminized with substantial male outmigration,[17] resulting in added responsibilities and workload for women. Women work some four to five hours more than men on a daily basis in Nepal[18] and collect most of the fuelwood, fodder, leaf compost, non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and bedding, as well as control grazing. In community forests, women prune and thin trees, and help raise fodder species, patrol forests and contribute to fire management. Collecting fuelwood and water fodder is more tiring and time consuming in the Mid-hills and mountain regions due to difficult terrain and poor access to roads, markets and water supplies, thereby consuming more of women's time, particularly for women-headed farm households.

> *Despite meagre access to and control of resources, women's contribution to both agriculture and forestry activities is significant.*

Male and female interests and incentives for environmental resource management differ even within the household. Studies indicate that women focus on fulfilling daily household consumption needs which require forest access and prioritize fuelwood, fodder and grass, whereas men opt for timber, fuelwood, and NTFPs, in the hope of supplementing their household income with cash earned from their sale.[19] Men perform most of the farm/forestry work that requires public contact or that is geared towards earning economic resources. Wealth, caste, age, family status, family support, education and exposure all affect the extent of women's decision-making over forests.

Even educated and urban women's access to governance structures is limited, particularly in regional and national level institutions. Very few women occupy senior positions within the forestry sector, whether within the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MFSC) or the Forest Department (FD). Forestry is predominantly seen as an area for men only, though women occasionally manage to have a successful career.[20] Likewise, some gender-friendly structural changes such as Gender Responsive Budgeting govern the allocation of resources based on the needs of women. There is a new, gender-code classification system for programs and projects and there are gender focal points in key ministries and at district level (in District Women's Development Offices). The MFSC has enacted a 'Gender Equality and Social Inclusion' guideline (GESI) against gender or other social discrimination to mandate needed affirmative action. Such sweeping policy changes have had limited structural change in practice.

Two important second-tier community institutions have emerged to advance community forestry and ensure that forest users have strong advocates within the State: the Federation of Community Forest User Groups (FECOFUN), and the Himalayan Grassroots Women's Association for Natural Resource Management (HIMAWANTI), a nonprofit coalition of women that that collaborates with FECOFUN. FECOFUN is a 17 year old national federation that has become politically strong and highly visible as the dominant constituency that works on community empowerment in natural resource management, through Community Forestry. FECOFUN has mandated 50 percent election of women in its national and district structures and related capacity development programs for advocacy, and yet these are not yet well implemented at grassroots level. The current elected chair of FECOFUN is a woman.

In parallel, HIMAWANTI emerged as a separate federation of women's forest user groups as a change agent on human rights and natural resource management, and functions in 32 districts of the three geo-regions. HIMAWANTI works through its women change agents, in tangent with FECOFUN, to strengthen that federation's gender strategy. HIMAWANTI is effective in channelling the concerns of grassroots women but greater knowledge, capacity building and support is needed for it to have an adequate impact at the national level.

3.2 Development and status of gender in forest tenure

Nepal has 3.6 million hectares of forest, covering 25 percent of the country,[21] defined in the 1993 Forest Act as any area that is wholly or partially covered by trees. This definition emphasizes that forests are to be managed primarily to keep the forest intact; it is less clear on aims and extent of forest use.

Nepal's forests are categorized as government-managed forests, community forests, leasehold forests, religious forests, and protected forests. Community, leasehold and religious forests account for 24 percent of total forest cover and are managed by local Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs), while the majority (76 percent) are government-managed and protected forests, which are directly administered by the State.[22]

Table 1: Evolution of forest tenure with salient features[23]

Historical period	Focus of forestry	Major stakeholders	Salient feature and state of tenure
Privatization (1768–1951)	Revenue, timber export, military protection, gifts to elites, household use, resettlement.	Local elites, Army, Royal loyals, Rana autocrats.	Traditional indigenous system, followed by state allocated tenures for privatization (e.g. Birta, Jagir, Raikar) and collective arrangements (e.g. Kipat, Guthi).
Nationalization (1951–1977)	Industrialization and nation welfare, ecological doom and fuel crisis in the West, Resettlement in Terai forest, Timber Export, Retract forestland from local elites.	State, Department of Forest, Global economists, World Bank, local political administrative units, local communities.	Control and management rights to state. Forest officials were mainly men. The trees planted in private lands were considered as forests. Access to forests prohibited. Recognition of local participation in forest management. Decentralized rights to existing political administrative units, i.e. the Panchayat.
Populism (1978–2000)	Forest conservation, provision of forest needs to local community.	State, donors, local forest communities, federations, civil society constituencies such as women's group, indigenous group.	Community participation legitimized through Acts and Regulations. CFUG considered as a autonomous, self-sustaining, perpetual entity. Expansion of CF in Terai. Rights of use, manage, exclude were entitled to community. DFO retains ownership to forest land and provides facilitatory role. 100% benefits to CFUG.
Post-populism (2000 onwards)	Forest conservation and enterprises, economic and social justices, forestry as an integral part of nation's development and climate change mitigation and adaptation.	State, donors, local forest communities, federations, civil society constituency, such as women's group, indigenous group, Political parties, market companies, legal court.	Massive expansion of CFUG over the country. FECOFUN defends community rights. Contention between state and community over benefit-sharing mechanism, especially from the high-value forest products, enterprises and carbon trade. Tenure in Community Forestry becomes a political agenda.

Nepal's forestry has undergone major changes in the last half century in terms of tenurial arrangements and the ensuing management practices. National and international pressures were instrumental in shaping forest management and tenure arrangements. Forest history can be tracked into four broad categories: privatization (till 1950s), nationalization (1951-1977), populism (1978-2000), and post-populism (2000 onwards). (See Table 1.)

Privatization (1768-1950)

Prior to the 1950s, the forest was owned by the State or elites, but managed by traditional indigenous institutions. The Nepalese feudal state used forests primarily for securing revenue and bolstering its military strength.[24] After 1846, forests were handed over to local elites in various tenurial forms which include *birta, lalmohr or talukdar, kipat, guthi, and jagir*.

Elite individuals, families or institutions controlled and inherited forests, and depending on the tenure form owed state taxes on the collected forest products. In 1907, an official document (*lalmohr*) provided guidelines for such systems to manage inheritance.[25] In *lalmohr*, according to Adhikari,[26] people were required to ask the owner (named a *talukdar*) for timber, and vice-versa. Local people had free access to the forest for limited commercial value of fuelwood, fodders, and medicinal herbs;[27] but they obtained timber in return for labour or other gifts and services. Forest watchers were hired and paid in kind by villagers for the protection of forest. Such forms of tenured privatization (until 1950) often included sophisticated indigenous forest management balancing local needs with forest conservation.

The Rana dynasties ruled the country on the basis of an ancient Hindu scripture, 'Manusmriti', which states men's authority and control over women and denies women's rights to property: "a wife and slave can have no property and the wealth they acquire belongs to the person to whom they belong."[28] Due to such ideology, management rights to forests were formally granted to men only.

Nationalization (1951-1978)

In 1957, after the fall of the Rana regime in 1950 and the reinstatement of the Shah regime, the government nationalized all forests and took over their management in an attempt to get back the forests and land from elites.[29] This event coincided with a global advocacy for state-led industrial development as a mechanism to foment broad economic prosperity.[30] In the nationalization, all trees planted in private lands were considered as "forest." Forest owners started to convert forests and areas with trees to escape the forest criteria.[31] The Department of Forest was not able to control deforestation, despite strong legal backing. The result was rampant forest destruction and degradation and consequent regional flood disaster in lower plains supported a Theory of Himalayan Environmental Degradation.[32] In the late 1970s, alarmed by rampant forest degradation, the World Bank pledged new investments in forest sector development at the community level, urging the government to recognize its inability to sustainably manage forest resources without peoples' participation. In 1975, the ninth national forestry conference laid the foundation for a 1976 national forest plan recognizing local community's participation.

The Shah dynasty continued to follow 'Manusmriti' ideology in legal policies. With nationalization, much forest land had been converted into individual property owned by men—mostly the existing tenure holders from the Rana regime. This furthered the unequal distribution of land and forests between men and women, and also further legitimated men's authority to regulate access and use of land. Despite state control, in national forests women have access rights over forest products needed for their household subsistence needs. The Land Reform Act 1964, in an attempt to redistribute (forest) land, placed a ceiling on maximum land size to which households were entitled. Again, it did not consider women as landowners and the authority to control land resources remained largely vested into men.

Populism (1978-2000)

The call for participatory approaches in the late 1980s invested forest management rights in local political units called the Forest Panchayat, where only men were political representatives, was justified with the assumption that men were the sole family bread-winners and women dependent family members. Legislative policies became more favourable to community participation and in the early 1990s statutory communal tenure was granted for community forest management. In 1988, the 20-year 'Master Plan for Forestry Sector' (Plan) mandated community participation by giving local communities full responsibility over management of forests recognized as theirs. It also allocated 47 percent of the total forest Ministry (MFSC) budget for community forests and emphasized the reorientation of foresters from traditional policing to new facilitation roles for encouraging local community participation in forest management. The community forestry programme, the largest component of the Plan, was explicitly designed to meet fodder, timber and fuelwood requirements of local people. Guided by the Plan and the establishment of multi-party democracy in 1990, Nepal promulgated a Forest Act, 1993[33] and a Forest Regulation, 1995,[34] both still guiding the majority of forestry programmes in Nepal.

In parallel with multi-party democracy, women's right to vote and be equal citizens was established through 'right to equality' in the 1990 Nepal's constitution. Nepal also became a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to affirm legally binding measures to achieve equal rights for all women, regardless of marital status, in all fields of political, economic, social and cultural life. Yet, weak monitoring, enforcement and accountability structures, limited implementation and multi-party politics favored men, whose freedom to mobility and acceptance in public spaces game them an advantage in mass demonstrations and meetings, and the chance to extend their political linkages and networks. As Giri and Gurung[35] state, the call for participatory approaches in forest management demanded change to achieve its goals—more women facilitators to work with rural women—generating massive encouragement and financial support from donor agencies (e.g. USAID, SDC, DFID) for women's forestry education.

Community forestry unfortunately became too centred on the environmental objective of curbing deforestation in the Mid-hills and interpreted women's extraction of multiple forest products as something to be heavily curtailed, even though they were recognized as "primary users" of the forests. It was assumed that women should be "motivated" to leave the forest intact, rather than enabled as essential users and managers of the resource. The 1988 Plan mandated 33 percent of women's participation in the decision-making (executive) committee of Community Forest User Groups. Female foresters, with their training and expertise in forestry, were to mobilise local women and legitimate their entry into public meetings. Indeed, working with male foresters in difficult, remote settings have been instrumental to create new political space for women in the public sphere. In the initial stages, the entry and recognition of women in public settings contested women's identity as confined to a household or family level. When FECOFUN emerged in 1995, it proactively demanded greater rights to community and to women and men in forestry.

Post-populism (2000 to date)

A decade of experience in community forestry has brought to light "second generation" issues of equity, gender and livelihoods, and massive recognition that communities are not homogenous rights holders. The variation within communities, especially in terms of gender and caste, were reported to undermine equity in community forestry. These issues have prompted new efforts to promote more democratic relations among community forestry institutions. The consolidated struggle of FECOFUN was instrumental to contest, negotiate and bargain for better community rights in forestry tenure. Even during the decade long internal conflict in Nepal, tenure rights of community in forestry programmes were not compromised. HIMAWANTI emerged as a more explicit advocate of women, trying to address limitations in FECOFUN's role to safe-guard the rights of women in natural resource management sector, including forestry. The internal civil conflict and process of preparing a new constitution have created important political space for these federations in the absence of other strong rural institutions and voices. Furthermore, the new agenda of climate change and carbon trade possibilities (in particular from REDD) brought forth a multitude of donors, international and national companies in the forest tenure agenda, revisiting an old debate on forest management, use, protection, and conservation and rights. The focus shifted to expansion of protected areas in Nepal at the exclusion of community rights, submerging past lessons around livelihoods and equity. Continuous heavy deforestation in Nepal's Terai region engendered proposed amendments that are understood as an attempt to curtail community rights.[36]

Currently, the role and tenure of forests are burning contemporary issues in Nepal's structuring of federal states and ensuring gender justice in forestry.

4. TENURE IN FORESTRY PROGRAMMES

Community, leasehold and government-managed forestry differ in terms of forest condition, primary management objectives and tenurial arrangements. Community forestry is the flagship programme of Nepal, which gained worldwide attention and support to meet its twin goals of forest conservation and livelihoods. Leasehold forestry is touted in parallel as forestry for the poorest of the poor.

Government-managed forests occupy the largest area of national forest and are managed primarily for conservation. A synopsis of area coverage, beneficiaries, major stakeholders and guiding legal framework is presented in Table 2: Scope and coverage of Community, Leasehold and Government-managed forests. Table 3 depicts tenure arrangements in the forests by bundle of rights and by right holders.

4.1 Community forestry

Community forestry operates through state-granted contracts to a historical group of users of local forests, called as community forest user groups (CFUG). CFUGs are cohorts of local users of a certain forest that enjoy rights to protection, use and management of the forest, while the State retains ownership. Membership unit in CFUG is allotted to the individual household.

The main forest management document for a community forest is the operational plan drawn up between the District Forest Office and the CFUG, normally prepared for five-year periods and reviewed and revised intermitantly. When an operational plan is being prepared or renewed, a ranger (a mid-level forest technician) prepares an inventory of the forest stock in each block or compartment and over the whole community forest area. This inventory provides the basis for planning activities in the community forest, which is divided in four to eight blocks or compartments for this purpose. There is no ceiling for community forest area size.

Both men and women users enjoy use rights to forest through the registration to a CFUG regulated through a "forest constitution". An executive committee along with a village hamlet committee make management decisions, based on solicitation and agreement of the households. The general assembly, held once or twice a year, is the convening space where all users of a CFUG share management decisions and make future plans.

Table 2: Scope and coverage of Community, Leasehold and Government-managed forests[37]				
Scope		**Community Forestry**	**Leasehold Forestry**	**Govt. managed forests**
Coverage	Area (% total forest)	1.22 Mha	14,735 hectares (.20%)	4.63 Mha (79.5%) natural forests
	Districts/ georegions	74, Terai, Mid-hills, Himal	37, Mid-hills, Himal	21, Terai, Mid-hills, Himal
Beneficiaries	Groups (women-only)	1,4572 (802)	2,756 (71)	
	Population (households)	35% (1,647,717)	(25,463)	(4,631,085)

Table 3: Tenure arrangements by bundle of rights and right holders in Community, Leasehold and Government-managed forests in Nepal[38]				
Type of forestry	**Bundle of rights**	**Right holders**		
		State	**Community**	**Household/Individual**
Community	Access/benefits	Approve Operational Plan (OP) & handover. Tenure period guaranteeing access (but not ownership) not defined by law, normally for 5 years with extension.	Entry through membership, normally with an entry fee and renewable. 100% benefits to community. Access to forest resources. Recognizes traditional use rights and access.	Membership entails access to forest products and other benefits. Compliance with associated responsibilities required.
	Management	Approval of OP, allowable cut, sets targets for expenses in particular fields, pose taxes, monitoring.	Rights to make management rules and revise management plans. Executive Committee (EC) and hamlet committees guide decisions for CFUG related to protection, plantation, silvicultural practices, benefit-sharing, fund management, and monitoring/evaluation.	Representation in decision-making bodies. Participation in tole meetings, general assembly, monitoring/evaluation committees.
	Alienation	Revoke rights, can change land use.		
Leasehold	Access/benefits	Lease forests for a period of 40 years extendable to 40 years. System of inheritance not defined.	Access to group through membership. 100% benefits to community. Access to forest resources. Involves poor households only.	Membership entails access to individual forest plots for households. Compliance with associated responsibilities is required.
	Management	Approves operational plan. Restricts forest type and tree use. 100% benefits to local community.	Operational plan provides the basis for forest protection, management, access and distribution of products among the leasehold group members.	Representation in planning, livelihood improvement activities, monitoring, decision-making etc. Benefits to individual households.
	Alienation	Revoke rights, can change land use.		Right to transfer or sell their rights to others after successfully completed one-third of the lease period.
Goverment-managed forests	Access/benefits	Tenure is unlimited. Benefits to state. Protection through guards.		Access to grasses, dead branches and certain fruits.
	Management	Management defined through an annual scheme or plan.		Access dependent upon the decisions of forest guards & forest officers.
	Alienation	Ownership.		

Approximately 802 CFUGs are women-led and managed. Women make up a significant percentage of the members in mixed male and female CFUGs, but there are generally few in leadership positions, particularly as one moves up to regional and national levels. This translates into a dramatic disproportion between opportunities for rural women's voices and decision-making roles, and women's existing contribution to forest management.

Community forestry has reversed past trends of deforestation, and has enhanced a number of livelihood assets. In a number of innovative cases, they have created provisions to directly benefit the poor, women and other excluded groups. FECOFUN and its networks from local to national level also provided

opportunities for communities to raise their voice at different levels of governance, and to promote collective efforts for forest management and carbon marketing.

> *Community forestry has reversed past trends of deforestation, and has enhanced a number of livelihood assets.*

Recently, community forestry is seen to play an important role in the UN-REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) and climate adaptation programs. With the inception of REDD+ in Nepal, tenure rights to forestry have been vehemently debated. State forestry officials espoused that CFUGs have only use rights to forest resources and not to land (as state is the owner). Furthermore, the government can abolish a CFUG or restrict its control. The REDD+ preparedness plan states that rights to carbon are vested on ownership and thus, the below-ground carbon in Community Forests would belong to the State. While these issues are still contested, some CFUGs that piloted REDD+ have already received significant monetary support against their rights. Massive piloting is underway but critics also caution about gender-blindness of REDD+ and its potential implication on women's lives.[39]

4.2 Leasehold forestry

Leasehold forestry started almost a decade later than community forestry with two specific goals: i) to alleviate poverty by raising the income of families in the Hills of Nepal who are below poverty line and ii) to contribute to improving the ecological conditions of the degraded forest land. Thus, blocks of degraded forests with or without scattered trees are handed over to groups of select poor households.

A leasehold forest (with an average area of three to 20 hectares) is handed over for a maximum of 40 years, which is extendable for 40 more. As in community forestry, the operational plan provides the basis for forest protection and management and the exploitation and distribution of products among the leasehold group members. The leasehold group prepares an operational plan for its leasehold forest with technical assistance from the Forestry Ranger, the Livestock Junior Technician and/or local NGOs.

Leasehold groups establish plantations of multipurpose tree, fodder and fruit-bearing species on their leased land for forage development and animal husbandry. Credit schemes are also supported. Forestland is intensively managed using both horizontal and vertical space. While all the benefits from the forest directly accrue to the leasehold group members, they need to contribute some of it in the group fund. This is done so that the members of the groups can pay back their debts. The groups are responsible for protecting any surviving old and large trees on the leased land, but these trees remain the property of the government. Likewise, they cannot sell the leased land or pledge it as collateral for obtaining loans. However, they can transfer or sell their rights to others after they have successfully completed one-third of their lease period. These provisions have led to a strong sense of ownership over the leasehold forest among participating leaseholders and are a driving force for intensive management of the forest. Seventy-one of the leasehold groups are comprised of women only, and women occupy about 33 percent of the membership decision-making bodies.[40]

A visible impact of the leasehold forestry programme has been the increased forage production, which supports animal husbandry (mainly of goats and buffaloes) as the main income source of the households concerned. It has also vastly improved the condition of degraded forests.

4.3 Government-managed forests

Government-managed forests occupy the largest area under the national forest. They are regulated by the 1993 Forest Act and 1995 Forest Regulations. People are allowed to collect grasses, dead branches and certain fruits. The level of concessions to collect these items is mainly dependent upon the decisions of forest guards and to a certain extent of forest officers. From time to time, the government has devised different modalities to manage this type of forests. One of these is the Operational Forest Management Plan (OFMP), which was to be implemented in 19 Terai and Inner Terai districts. But this could not be successful. In 2000, the government formulated a forest policy to include collaborative management system of forest in government-managed forests.

5. COMPARING FOREST TENURE AND GENDER EQUITY

Gender equity in relation to forest tenure can be measured by the existence of gender-equity mechanisms, their use in practice, and gender equity impacts of forest tenure and rights on conservation and livelihoods. While community and leasehold forests apply different approaches to gender mainstreaming, government-managed forestry has no mechanisms. (See Table 4.)

Table 4: Provision for gender equity in relation to bundle of rights in Community, Leasehold and Government-managed forests[42]

Tenure type	Bundle of rights	Provisions for gender equity
Community Forestry	Access/benefits	Women are identified as primary users. Both men and women of a household are registered as members of the CFUG. Ease of access to forest products, public space and exposure, community benefits, capacity enhancement and saving schemes.
	Management	At least 50 percent members in EC are women. Either chairperson or the secretary is a woman in EC. Both man and woman from each household should participate in all decision-making processes. Attempts made to ensure 50 percent women in General Assembly. Special programme for women, in benefit-sharing. Women to be included in self-monitoring/evaluation. 35 percent of forest fund to be used for poverty alleviation programmes, focusing on the needs and development of poor, women, and the so-called lower caste.
	Alienation	
Leasehold Forestry	Access/benefits	Women are identified as primary users. Both man's and woman's name must be listed as household heads of the respective household.
	Management	Gender is an integral part of program component from planning to monitoring. One man and a woman from each cluster participate in district planning workshop. One man and woman (throughout the district) participate in district level forest coordination committee. One man and a woman participate in a cluster level field coordination meeting. Both man and women from a household participate in group formation work, operational plan preparation and renewal training. Capacity building on operational plan and renewal, land development training, gender awareness training to both man and women (from a household). Group promoters and village livestock health worker (women only) for social mobilization work.
	Alienation	
Government-managed forests	Access/benefits	Access to dead branches, grass.
	Management	No management rights.
	Alienation	

5.1 Provision for gender equity in relation to bundle of rights in Community, Leasehold and Government-managed forests

Recognition: In both community and leasehold forestry, women are mandated to hold at least one-third of forest committee positions. Likewise, the 1993 Forest Act identifies women as 'primary users' of forest and outlines their dependence on forest as underlying their rights in forestry programs.[41] However, these policy documents neither adequately appreciate women's contribution in forestry nor identify them as change agents.

The community forestry GESI strategy paper (2008)[43] and community forestry implementation guidelines are the important policy documents that reiterate provisions to ensure women's participation. Adhering to GESI provisions, the recent community forestry guidelines (2008) have specified that along with 50 percent women in the executive body, one of the two most decisive positions (chairperson or secretary) should be filled by a woman. Additionally, it also mentions that both husband and wife need to be included as household head in the constitution of the forest user group as opposed to the prior arrangement where only men's name used to be listed (in turn locally interpreted as men's exclusive right in decision-making forums). Many women may be unaware of their rights or may not have benefitted even when aware; yet such legally-binding recognition has corrected the local assumption that only men hold the legal rights to participate in the program. Despite having legal recognition of both men's and women's membership within a CFUG, in practice most decisions regarding management of forest resources and mobilization of CFUGs' funds are made by men. Households will generally send one member as a representative to committee meetings, and in most cases this representative will be male, leaving his wife behind to complete household chores and childcare. Upon returning home, men often do not share important decisions made during the meeting; consequently, women cannot fully participate in the implementation of these decisions.

In leasehold forestry, gender is integral to each project cycle component, from design through to evaluation "*…gender issues and considerations would be mainstreamed in all activities of the leasehold programmes, in particular staffing (female group promoters), group formation, forest allocation, training and capacity building. For instance, the land development training provided on site to two members of each leasehold (one male and one female) would include at least one full day training session on gender awareness.*"[44] Such strategic inclusion of gender mainstreaming in the design document of leasehold forestry programme is key to the good practices that follow.

In both programmes, membership entitles access to a group and in turn, access to products and benefits. Women-only user groups are also formed. Critiques, however, argue that the state handed over 'token forests': the less and poor quality forests to women in community forestry.[45] Even so, some women user

BOX 1: THE SUCCESS OF A WOMEN-ONLY CFUG - 'BINAI BAGAR'[46]

Binai Bagar provides an excellent and successful example of a forest-based enterprise that completely aligns with local practice (e.g. livestock rearing, supplementing local livelihood with women's agency and visibility.) CFUG women users massively plant medicinal, fodder and fruit species and established a well-functioning mechanism of rearing livestock with sustained fodder supply. Recently, they networked with other organizations/networks and earned support through a program named "*Gai Mai*" (the cow mothers) that insures both food for the livestock and an income for the owner of the livestock (the women). Using the milk from all the livestock, they have established a milk-enterprise earning them income livelihoods, increased recognition and respect in their households and society.

groups with support on innovation mechanisms and improved networking brought exemplary results and benefits. As example, 'Binai Bagar' CFUG of Nawalparasi district did commendably well. (See Box 1.)

Women hold 38.6 percent membership in Executive Committees of community forestry institutions,[47] and 33 percent membership in decision-making bodies in leasehold forestry.[48] This number also includes the members from women only groups. Women's promoters employed in the LF programme are said to play crucial roles to strategize women's space and role in decision-making positions in the Leasehold forestry and Livestock Program.[49] In Nepal, women hold leadership roles – president, vice-president, secretary or treasurer – in 42 percent of mixed-gender Executive Committees. The ratio of women holding office exhibits a threshold effect; the larger the percentage of women in the Executive Committee, the more likely it is for women to hold leadership positions.[50] Moreover, it is a common to find the same woman, a relative of a male committee member, representing various committees. Many factors have been reported instrumental for women to play decision-making roles in committees – men's outmigration, support from family for public meetings, education, public exposure and social acceptability. Bina Agarwal's study has found landless women most outspoken on committees she studied in India and Nepal, and more vocal when they have a critical mass of at least one-third of committee positions.[51]

Access to benefits: Through both programmes women gained access to varied benefits ranging from forest products to improved livelihoods. In community forestry, women gain access to subsistence forest products via fodder, firewood, bedding material and to some extent timber and NTFPs. Women report an ease of collecting forest products compared to earlier times. Yet, some report that community and leasehold forestry added to workloads of women, for now they need to spend significant time on these programmes, without any support from their male counterparts in family, unlike the findings of the LFLP national study.[52] While activists frame it as gender-burden, local women perceive their participation in public meetings as an exposure from where they can learn new skills. Women also report having better access to water, due to forest conservation. Nonetheless, when it comes to plantations, women and men vary with men opting for timber and women for firewood and fodder species. With REDD in place, there are observation that communities started strict conservation to sequestrate more carbon and get income benefits, compromising their subsistence needs and women's concerns.[53]

There is a provision to allocate 35 percent of CFUG's fund to the benefit of the poor and excluded. But due to the lack of appropriate monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, this remained a paper plan in many CFUGs, particularly as only some CFUGs distribute income to individual households, though in some cases, poor households are provided with a minimal income support. CFUG invest their major chunk of income in development infrastructure including roads, schools, electrification etc.

In leasehold forestry, women get access to forest plots which are used for inter-cropping of grasses and fodder, fruit and bamboo, to be in turn used for cattle rearing. Income is enjoyed by the individual households. A large part of income is utilized for their children's education and the remaining utilized for the purchase of food and other items. However, with increased crown cover of the trees in leasehold forest over time, the possibility for inter-cropping is reduced, with adverse effects in production of income-generating species. There are no provisions so far in leasehold forests to apply forest management operations even where forest are too dense to allow any understory growth.

Both programmes enabled women's space and exposure to public settings, which women report as a benefit. Both community and leasehold forestry programmes have initiated several programmes and activities on capacity enhancement of their users which include training in different subject areas, saving credit programme, leadership development of women and recruitment of women only group promoters in

leasehold forestry and social mobilizers in community forestry. Compared to community forestry, leasehold forestry integrates equal participation of men and women in all kind of planning, capacity building and training activities. In leasehold forestry, women have participated more in the trainings run at village level and they all are related to group formation, and operational plan preparation whereas all the training and exposure visits run at district headquarters and beyond headquarters are dominated by men. In CFUGs, men dominate all meetings. Training and exposure visits have contributed significantly in building the capacity of both men and women. Women are far behind in increasing their access beyond their village, though formal invitations from service providers to potential groups specify how many women and how many men should participate, and this has ensured women's inclusion.

Saving credit institutions are more visible in leasehold forestry group, which offer both social and financial empowerment of women to enhance their leadership with increased recognition of their agency in household and communities.

Management rights and responsibilities: Management rights and responsibilities in both programmes determine the outcome of decisions on rights and rules. Committees are considered as the central decision-making spaces. Despite women's presence in such spaces, many decisions do not balance rights and responsibilities, particularly between men and women. Intra-community differences and women's dependence on forests puts more forest management responsibilities on women than men. And in practice, men enjoy more rights in areas related to forestry. As examples in community forestry, women provide much of the needed labour in community forestry activities viz. silvicultural operations, fire lines construction, forest monitoring etc. Women take it as a matter of duty to get involved in activities that will sustain the supply of forest products. Such an imbalance burdens women and skews committee choices and future external support towards monetary/enterprise-related activities at the cost of subsistence products prioritized by women. Committees currently favour spending more forest funds in infrastructure development, rather than investing in improving livelihoods.

Despite women's access to decision-making spaces, women tend to not control the decisions. But they may have their own legitimate reasons for not speaking up, such as deference to those who 'know', to safeguard social cohesion, time constraints set by their household duties, lack of eloquent linguistic skills or because they do not expect to be heard. Mostly in Nepal but also elsewhere in a South Asia, women tend to use informal structures (using their household men's network) or practices (e.g. underlying submissive request saying that women are ignorant or using women's domestic identity) to steer decisions in their favour. Such informal decision-making arrangements result in reinforcing patriarchy, and are less sure, depending on the good-will between the contenders and not backed up by legal provisions. Yet again, women opting to such informal practices report this as a more practical approach than attempting for fundamental change. They find a direct route more often results in rejection or negative consequences (future negotiations undermined, risking social dignity/respect or ruining their family). Poor monitoring of gender-equitable decision making and a lack of enforcement and accountability mechanisms even by the major stakeholders such as CFUG members, state forest agencies, and international and local NGOs, makes this behaviour understandable.

Women can play key roles in management of rights and responsibilities, dependent upon capacity building activities, recognizing women as capable change agents and creating mechanisms to reduce their day to day household chores-expected due to their identity. Male facilitators are reported to be effective actors to discuss how discriminatory gender relations can be democratized in relation to forestry and everyday lives. Also, provision of women's groups and promoters, such as female group promoters to mobilize and support leasehold forestry groups, has been important to empower women in leasehold

forestry groups. These group promoters expand beyond forestry work to other support activities relevant to the needs of the leasehold members. Female group promoters themselves become 'role models' and the 'demonstration effect' has given a positive message for changing gender roles and associated gender stereotypes in the respective communities.

Management of rights and responsibilities at community level is also influenced by how wider constituencies, such as FECOFUN and HIMAWANTI, lobby about community and women's rights while working out their agenda on forest tenure. Even within FECOFUN, which so widely and emphatically speaks for community tenure to forestlands based on community contribution, the calls for gender equity rarely make it on agenda. FECOFUN's history of struggle, recognition, timely capacity enhancement from civil society organization and donor's support provides a relative advantage to FECOFUN, when compared to HIMAWANTI, to defend the rights of its constituency in relation to forest tenure.

5.2 Effects of forest tenure to livelihood, conservation and gender equity

Reforms in accessing forests in Nepal have led to considerable changes in the way people manage forests. Forest conservation has progressed and many of the Mid-hills slopes have re-greened. The case of community and leasehold compared to government-management forestry indicates that secure tenure rights to communities are essential to meet the multifaceted objectives of conservation, and livelihoods. Additionally, if the tenure rights consider gender as an integral part and prescribe specific guidelines of mainstreaming, gender equity can be consolidated – as Leasehold forestry profoundly demonstrates.

6. GENDER IN FOREST TENURE: AUTHORITY OVER BUNDLE OF RIGHTS

Skewed tenure rights in Nepal's forestry imply that the main issue with effective forest management lies in power and equality and not in the physical availability of resources. The evolution of forest tenure reforms enabled greater rights for the communities to manage forests. While secure community tenure rights are essential to meet the multifaceted objectives of conservation, livelihood and equity, consolidated tenure rights to forest communities don't necessarily lead to gender-equity. Prioritizing community rights over gender equity in community forestry compared to leasehold forestry can undermine women's rights with increased responsibilities, especially if committee decision-makers are insensitive. Tenure arrangements that instead consolidate community rights with intra-community differences need not entrench an already existing hegemonic authority (further marginalizing women and others) but rather allow spaces to contest and transform it, as existing research has also indicated.[54]

The existing forest tenure structures women's rights more on an instrumentalist notion of women's dependence rather than empowering women as forest managers. If women are recognized based on their social identity, their forest dependence will identify them as the primary "users." But the same identity undermines women's authority in decisions; particularly in community and leasehold forestry programmes where decisions are taken at public settings--a sphere identified as male. The current focus on existing needs alone has given women more 'responsibility' than 'right'. The reverse is true for men. Secure tenure only gives a fair share of benefits if rights and responsibilities are both balanced in the "bundle of rights." This requires recognizing that women are also essential actors for efficient, just, and effective forest management.

With appropriate support in laws and regulations, community tenure can support greater rights for women. Where women have more management authority to take decisions regulating forests, they shape important questions of what forest products will be favoured, what harvest quantity is allowed, and how the livelihoods can best be supported.[55] Even when forests are managed to yield large economic benefits, such as expected in case of REDD or community forest-based enterprises, how use and users will be decided and whether good practices will be upheld over time remain key issues. The first pilots in REDD+ in community forestry have favoured strict protection, restricting women's access to forest products and undermining already gained tenure rights to access and use. Statutory legal frameworks should ensure that gender rights are not easily revoked, especially considering persistence of a patriarchal culture.

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Along with a positive statutory framework, the major challenge ahead is to expand the prevailing notions of men and women as equal right-holders to management decisions. In both community and leasehold forestry, statutory provisions provided a legitimate entry point (through quotas in committees) for women to have a space in the committees, despite the public arena being traditionally male (from 33-50 percent). However, such statutory provision even when applied is mediated strongly with customary practices, and women become 'token' participants, without real authority or influence. As example, women fear to out-rightly reject customarily defined authority, given the real social risk for their family and social status. Under such circumstances, women resort to various formal and informal mechanisms instead. Yet, the extent to which women can effectively make use of those decision-making spaces depend on many factors, such as gender awareness trainings, support from service-providers, capacity enhancement programs, and accountable monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. As demonstrated in Leasehold Forestry, gender mainstreaming focused on sensitization to change gender attitudes and behaviours among both men and women and women's empowerment led to better access to project resources and more control over their lives. Such attempts to democratize and manoeuvre with discriminatory structures are crucial in Nepal and South Asia, where family holds a special social status.[56] Thus, while women want to expand their authority and be liberated from discriminatory structures, they still want to consolidate the family and seek family approval of their authority and their support.

Whether women are empowered or further marginalized by policies that strengthen local management of forest resources will at least partly depend on the conceptual understanding of facilitating agencies (governments and NGOs) and federations about the dynamics of hierarchical gender relations within communities, and on whether such agencies have an explicit commitment to altering the existing balance of power in favour of women. As in the case of FECOFUN, despite stated federation goals of gender equity, advocacy campaigns have failed to incorporate gender as an integral element of community forestry when assuming community rights would guarantee gendered rights, despite access to research findings warning that the concept of 'community as a homogeneous mass' leads to inter-community differences and undermines equity.[57] For HIMAWANTI, a more proactive actor on gender, they still lack the capacity, presence, recognition and reach of FECOFUN to press greater claims

for women's rights in forest tenure effectively. Both need to work more in tandem to play to each other's comparative advantage to affect their stated goals.

Overall political context also matters. Initiatives for promoting community governance of common property resource cannot provide stronger property rights for women when these are overwhelmed by pressures on the government from international donors more interested in promoting more privatized, neoliberal development models. In pluralistic forestry, changing priorities of tenure reforms are also mediated through global interests and donor support. Change in government's priority from community forestry towards protected area can reduce impetus to community rights. Strict protection of community forests for REDD+ can compromise gender-equity. These examples indicate that wider interests of multiple actors are central to shaping the direction of tenure reforms in forestry. The collective constituency can play a significant role to influence the direction of tenure reforms, and assert greater rights to their constituency as explained in FECOFUN's engagement to ensure greater community rights.

Likewise, forest reforms depend on related reforms that challenge traditional patriarchal systems more broadly. As the evolution of Nepal indicates, women's enacting authority in forest management was challenged by the age-old land tenure system that perceived men as the only legitimate authority to decision-making and women as a "beneficiary." Only if forest tenure reforms are complemented and synchronized with cross-cutting tenure reforms in other sectors, can women emerge with real authority. Property rights and resource rights are linked: gender differentials in property rights lead to inefficiencies in resource use and management, and threaten household welfare and food security.[58]

For tenure to be considered an important means to achieve social justice, it needs to explicitly address unequal gender and power relations, and ensure firm provisions from policies and legal frameworks support the livelihood interests and the rights of the women and the poorest are given priority and protection. In doing so, it has to expand the current focus of ensuring women's access to and benefits over forest resources through legislative frameworks.

7. CONCLUSION

Using Nepal's forestry experience as a case, this paper explored and analyzed linkages between gender and forest for sustainable forest management in South Asia. It shows that women's access to and benefits from forest resources do not necessarily ensure women's rights to forest resources. Rather, rights and authority to make and implement decisions around forest management rights to women are also important for adequate access and benefits to women and their families from forests.

As Nepal's forestry experience indicates, the bundle of rights brought through statutory laws provided a legitimate recognition of women's authority over management, use and benefits of forest resources. Since tenure rights are thought of as defining institutions regulating access, control of Nepal's forestry, they are deeply embedded in history and local culture and are affected by it. Thus, in practice, this enabled women's spaces in management committees but with fewer roles since the claims to rule-making authority is customarily vested in men. Such contestation can transform in many-fold ways, sometimes reinforcing discrimination by limiting women as observers of the process, sometimes challenging them and empowering them with extending recognition of women's space and role in public decision-making.

For tenure to be considered an important means to achieve social justice, it needs to explicitly address unequal gender and power relations, and ensure firm provisions from policies and legal frameworks support the livelihood interests and the rights of the women and the poorest are given priority and protection. In doing so, it has to expand the current focus of ensuring women's access to and benefits over forest resources through legislative frameworks. For law and policy to influence gender relations in forest tenure, a more nuanced framework is required to deconstruct, reconstruct, and reconceptualise authority in both the rules and the laws that govern use and benefits, as well as the institutions that make and enforce such rules and laws.

Combined with progressive sensitization and education of women on their rights as regards forest tenure, support from service providers, and accountable monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, such a framework can lead to the anticipated changes. Thus, enacting gender equity through forest tenure in South Asia is to be best understood as a multifaceted social and political process rather than instating a system of laws and rules only. Actors engaging collectively can be key change agents, especially if they use adaptive strategies informed from their own ground realities.

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THE RIGHTS AND RESOURCES INITIATIVE

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Fostering Women-led Natural Resource Management Reform Amidst Conflict

Brief #2 of 4

June 2012   Joan U. Jamisolamin[1]

The Challenges of Securing Women's Tenure and Leadership for Forest Management: The Asian Experience

RRI PARTNERS

Women are equal stakeholders in accessing and managing the natural resources of the Philippines. The remaining natural resources are located in rural, upland landscapes holding the remaining biodiverse ecosystems, and are crucial for economic empowerment of the poor. But most of these resources are also located in the corridors of extractive industries which creates potential conflicts. Almost 50 percent of the Philippine population are women; and 51 percent of the total population are living in rural and upland communities. Women have distinct roles from men in these economically valuable, biodiverse landscapes. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) states that women differ from men in terms of access to and control of their resources, and thus they also differ in knowledge, skills and decision-making with regard to their resources.

Rural and indigenous women's relationships to their natural resources are intimately linked to their traditionally assigned social roles. While men utilize the natural resources to earn cash income for the other needs of the family, women look to natural resources primarily for their source of food, drinking water, fuel, and medicine, among others. Access to land and water means the ability to provide food for the family and children. While prevailing gender biases may confine women to the private sphere inside the home, women also take on multiple important roles in economic activities, in community life, in indigenous traditional governance structures and in managing natural resources.

Gender mainstreaming in the environment and management of natural resources in the Philippines has been given attention through the Engendering Program of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in 1989. The adoption of Gender and Development (GAD) principles has led to the development of policies to recognize women in awarding of tenurial stewardship, the incorporation of gender parity in the Community Resources Management Framework, the inclusion of women in protective area management boards, the inclusion of gender concerns in environmental impact assessments, and the development of tools to mainstream gender in community-based forest management. However, there are still a very wide range of issues that remain untouched in recognizing women's key contributions in natural resource management (NRM). Discussions on sustainability and on the

issues besetting the use and management of the country's rich natural resources will be made more complete by taking a closer look at the value of the role and contribution of women in natural resource management. This paper is a snapshot of the experiences and insights of rural and indigenous women leaders of the Philippines, and captures the lessons learned from women engaging in the context of land and armed conflict on the island of Mindanao.

I. THE PHILIPPINES' NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT REFORM ISSUES

The Philippines natural resources potential is huge, but is not currently allocated to serve the needs of the poor. Conservation International ranks the country as the world's 17th most "mega diverse" country with its tropical forests, waters, and rich biodiversity. However, these resources are rapidly decreasing and degrading at an alarming speed, a cause of concern for food and water for the poorest upland and resource-dependent dwellers, especially women. Diminishing resources bring about new forms of conflict and competition, especially between men and women.[2]

1.1 Rich ecosystems, poor people, burdened women

The rich biodiversity and resources in the Philippines, unfortunately, does not translate into the improvement of human living conditions in the country. This is especially true in the areas where we find the remaining forest ecosystems intact, especially in Indigenous Peoples ancestral territories.

Forest cover in the Philippines shows that the majority of the rural provinces in these regions also have a high poverty incidence[3] where subsistence incidence is very high.[4] World Bank figures in 2004 show that 31 million poor Filipinos were found in the rural areas, including sugarcane farm workers, small farmers in coconut/rice/corn, fishermen and forest dependent households. Current government figures show this to be true even to date. Indigenous Peoples comprised around 10-12 percent of the population in 2002. They remain the most disadvantaged because of the high incidence of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty, and live far from basic services resulting in high morbidity, mortality and malnutrition rates. These poor sectors stand to be more severely affected by the depletion of the natural resources resulting from over utilization of the resources or the effects of climate change.

Agriculture is the main livelihood of the majority of the Filipino population, and yet there is a high concentration of land in the hands of less than 20 percent of the national population. Land redistribution under the various programs, and most recently RA6657 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) has so far distributed a total of 2.56 million hectares to small farmers,[5] to a cumulative total of 6.4 million hectares distributed until 2005.[6] Almost all CARP beneficiaries are male, as they are recognized to be the regular land tillers, while women are only relegated to the second rate status of seasonal farm labourers. Only 27 percent of women had been awarded emancipation patents and Certificate of Land Ownership Agreements percent in 2004.[7] By 2010, government figures showed that only 32 percent of the CLOA-holders are women.

Rural poor and indigenous women's access to resources and income remain low. Studies show that indigenous women's contribution to productive and care work are often overlooked in resource management activities, despite the implication such projects may have on increasing reproductive risk on women.[8] The study cites the priority given to men participants in World Bank-funded environmental programs such as Village Forest Joint Management, Community Forestry Groups, and Forest User

Groups, while women participated in the marginal economic activities. The study characterizes women's participation in local resource management organizations to be "nominal and passive."

II. CHALLENGES AROUND THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The survival of rich biodiversity is threatened by mounting pressures from the utilization of the natural resources. Government policies bear inherent contradictions in the exploitation of natural resources and their conservation. In its report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Philippine government recognizes that the rich biodiversity areas are in critical state.[9] Not all key biodiversity areas are considered as legally protected, and the effort of many communities is directed towards applying some form of tenure security through various instruments, such as the Protected Area Community Based Resource Management Agreements (PACBRMA), or integrating the sustainable development and protection in the applications for Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADT) (p.25-28, 2009).

Mining is the most significant threat to the remaining forest ecosystems and access of the poor to natural resources. It has excluded women and men by effectively taking the land out of agricultural and protected area functions. The displacement of communities, the conversion of productive agricultural land, the reversal of reforestation and forest protection efforts, and the pollution of watersheds, ground and surface water are astounding. The government's CBD report states that the "government's decision to pursue mining as a revenue-generating industry clashes with bio-diversity related concerns," because "mining applications are mostly located in forest areas, threatening the integrity of biodiversity in this ecosystem."[10] The 23 flagship mining projects identified by the Arroyo government currently sit in the key biodiversity areas in the Sierra Madre, Palawan, Mindoro and Mindanao.

"…mining has serious negative impacts on women's lives, livelihoods, social and cultural status, physical and sexual rights, ecological spaces, access to and control over natural resources, legal and customary rights and traditional knowledge systems. Mining has also generated serious development myths, which we challenge from the gender perspective. We reassert our respect for the earth, our natural resources, our uniqueness, diversity and commonality. We want to lead healthy, peaceful and productive lives that will promote human well being and ecological richness. We want the participation of women in positive economic activities and sustainable livelihoods."[13]

Mining takes a heavy toll on the community, socially and economically. Gross human rights violations are documented in many communities, especially where there is resistance to the mining operations. A report in the Asia Study Session on Women and Mining[11] shows that mining has grave social costs for women. Contamination of toxic chemicals in food and water sources, and pollution result in health hazards such as

asthma, gastrointestinal diseases, and even cancer. Women's reproductive health suffers from spontaneous abortion and malformed babies. Carreon's study further cites that the increase in the number of domestic violence cases against women, and incidents of alcohol and drug addiction, gambling, incest, and even wife swapping and infidelity have also been reported. Women in mining communities suffer trauma from loss of their homes and lands, loss of subsistence food sources and displacement and economic disempowerment. The disintegration and social disorders, as a result, destroy traditional values and customs, and even family unity is attacked by coercive measures of mining companies. The loss of land results in the difficulty to live on subsistence resources and in more deprivation. Women engaged in resistance campaigns against mining are especially vulnerable to violence and threats to their lives. Reports of extrajudicial killings and sexual harassment, rape, physical and psychological torture of women result from militarization. Cases of prostitution, for example in Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga del Sur have been linked to mining.[12]

The intensive use of water in hydraulic mining and in mineral processing negatively impacts the access of women on available water resources. Riverine and coastal communities are affected by the heavy metal effluents coming from mine operations, found in the river and flowing into the coast.

2.1 Monopoly plantations: Competing against food for the children

Mono-cropping tree plantations are one of the tracks endorsed by the government to address the need for reforestation. However, this curtails the actual regeneration of indigenous forests because of the introduction of invasive and alien tree species, increased of pests and diseases, and eradication of other species. While social natural resource management is identified as a key strategy, large scale commercial investments are not limited.

The introduction of forest plantation systems also affects the perpetuation of traditional forest knowledge of Indigenous Peoples. The Cordillera Peoples' Alliance notes that the "forest production sharing agreements are generally directed towards the protection, development and rehabilitation of forestlands to ensure their continuity in productive conditions, (mostly) for profit, rather than recognizing and protecting indigenous knowledge systems' that conserve and promote biodiversity and cultural resources."[14]

The *pinugo* or *muyong* system of the Ifugao people has long been internationally recognized by the FAO as an ideal forest management system. The *pinugo/muyong* are clan-owned and clan-managed woodlots within the ancestral domain of the tribe. Each clan takes care of their *pinugo/muyong* as this is their "source of food, fuel, lumber for housing and woodcarving, medicinal plants, botanical pesticides, irrigation, domestic water and cash."[15] The *muyong* protects the lower farmlands from erosion during the rainy months, and becomes the source of water into the *payok* (rice terraces) during the dry months. The *muyong* system allows for both human activity and biodiversity to co-exist. However, this system, and perhaps other systems used by other indigenous tribes, is not necessarily promoted under the forest management system of government. The *muyong* system basically answers the household needs, while commercial tree plantations seek to satisfy market demand.

2.2 Hydropower resource conflict

The privatization and commercial exploitation of water resources through large scale energy projects have also fuelled conflicts and increased threats to forest ecosystems and food security of resource dependent communities. Large scale energy projects are mostly found in ancestral domains of Indigenous Peoples (IPs).

Efforts to pursue the construction of large dams were resisted by Indigenous Peoples with significant participation of women, like the Kalinga and Bontoc who fought against the Chico River Dam Project. Around 600 Ibaloi families were displaced by the construction of the Ambuklao and Binga dams.[16] Despite the tradition of non-acceptability by the communities and the possible effects on food security, the government continued to pursue large-scale energy projects along the Agno river. The San Roque Dam located in the lower Agno River of Pangasinan Province forcibly displaced 160 families in 1998, but will displace another 402 families in Pangasinan, and around 2,000 Ibaloi families from Itogon, Benguet.

In Mindanao, the plan to build the Pulangi V hydropower plant in Pulangi River in Bukidnon, for example, will flood at least 23 villages of the Manobo tribe.[17] The Manobos genuinely feel that this will result in their ethnocide from the possible starvation resulting from flooding of their farms. The dam will also destroy sacred burial grounds.

2.3 Social natural resources policies and programs

The Philippine government puts a premium on community managed resources. This shift stemmed from the demand to look at the redistributive potential of natural resources management in addressing poverty. Amidst the conflict ridden resource management environment, the shift since the early 1980s has been towards local participation. It introduced social, environmental policies like the promulgation of the 1987 Philippine Constitution upholding the rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral domains and the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992 and others.

However, the actual impact of the aforementioned policies in curbing poverty and addressing conservation issues may be less than the touted objectives. These socialized natural resource management policies fall short of recognizing the traditional role of indigenous women in resource managers. It does not necessarily reflect the differentiated role of women in the community stewardship of resources, neither has it necessarily resulted in strengthening the women's roles. It is important to look into the differentiated roles of women and men in the management of the natural resources, and the differentiated impact of natural resource related conflicts on women and men if a sustainable approach to finding solutions is to develop.

III. RURAL AND INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND THE CHALLENGES THEY FACE IN COMMUNITY NRM

The social discrimination against women are rooted in gender and poverty. Women continue to be doubly burdened with their domestic responsibilities and their public role. It is a double 'minoritization' for the Indigenous women because they belong to a 'cultural minority' which reinforces their marginalization. Household-based work, although recognized to be the crucial support system of the family, is not given economic recognition or financial valuation. Feminization of natural resource management takes place when most of the male population migrate to the urban centers for work. When political conflicts arise, they are left to tend to landscapes that sustain culture and biodiversity.

In rural communities, majority of the women work in the agricultural sector[18] as farmers in their own lands or as laborers in big plantations. Many rural women also work in the fisheries sector. The State of the Women of Mindanao report shows that women earn significantly lower than male counterparts. Anthropological studies of the uplands state the importance of women in agriculture, such as root-crop

production and rice cultivation. Women contribute important labor demand in production and in the household. The gathering of non-timber forest products is shared by both men and women as a main livelihood activity.[19] Women process these products, like cleaning of the vines and other materials, weaving handicrafts, and packaging. They are also responsible for financial management and marketing. Ella's study reported that productivity by women and children in processing of NTFPS, is generally stable, thus resulting to dependable income. The Center for Empowerment and Resource Development (CERD) report states that up to 90 percent of fishing activities are done by rural women. They earn income by gathering fish, seashells and seaweed farming and processing. Mangroves are also important resources for firewood.[20]

Water is especially significant for women, as it accompanies most of their home duties, such as care for the babies and children, preparation of food, laundry, cleaning of the house, their personal hygiene, and even in the rearing of animals for food. Rural women spend a lot of time and effort in fetching water. Thus they have local knowledge of where water is available; they have the ability to manage water budgeting for the various household needs and systems in storing the water.

Women are the first to feel the challenges that their communities face in managing their declining or degrading resources. They have to answer their family and community's demands for food and water. The government livelihood programs on cottage industries, crafts, food processing and animal rearing have at best, alleviated the living conditions of women and their families, in terms of providing a few hundred pesos of additional income; and at worst, have encouraged the 'domestication' of the women's role in society. A study on integration of gender and participatory governance in poverty reduction programs in the Philippines and Vietnam concludes that for genuine poverty reduction, programs need to build social capital, and that includes building women capacities and opening platforms for women to have equal power and decision-making within their homes and in their communities.[21]

3.1 Keepers of culture, indigenous knowledge and practices

Traditional management of natural resources are embedded in the cultural and spiritual values, and knowledge of the indigenous peoples. In Bukidnon, rituals remain a part of their way of doing in their day to day life, reinforcing their sacred regard for the land and its produce. In the Daraghuyan community, they regulate the season for hunting deer and wild pigs, refraining from hunting during the animals' mating season, when they expect the mother animals to become pregnant.

Indigenous Women transmit cultural practices to the next generation. They keep oral customs and traditions alive by instilling in their children the virtues of respect for the land and for their resources, and respect for the people. They are the teachers for their Schools of Living Tradition. As mothers, they grapple with the changing social contexts that affect their communities and families, as well as the changing attitudes and goals of the younger generations. Traditional knowledge and practices are being lost in the face of external pressures on their resources; yet at the same time, there is a need to establish a level of regulation and protection to conserve what available resources are left.

3.2 Land tenure and security

There is significantly lower percentage of land ownership among women, as compared to men in the Philippines. The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) institutionalized the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) and Certificate of Ancestral Land Title (CLT) and provides for their land ownership, the waters and resources within, considered as community property rights and governed by

their traditional by-laws. However, it comes into conflict or overlaps with other laws, such as the NIPAS, the Fisheries Code, the Forestry Code and the Mining Act of 1995.[22] There is urgent demand to review these gaps and conflicts, especially as IPs face grave threat and competition for the resources within their domain. As mentioned earlier, many land reform and tenure programs prioritize male beneficiaries. Ownership by women is attached through recognizance of conjugal property in married couples. Previous studies point to the need to have disaggregated data so that land distribution and control of access to property can be monitored and can influence appropriate programs which can help small producers, such as the women.

Less or no access at all and control of their resources results to the feminization of poverty. There is inability to meet their household needs, especially for female-headed household. This is also caused by dependency on the male member of the household who has the access to the resources, such as land ownership. Deprivation leads to food insecurity and extreme powerlessness among women.

3.3 Caught in the crossfire of natural resource conflicts

Existing conflicts from the management and conservation of natural resources significantly and differently affect women, albeit this is oftentimes undocumented and remains obscure.

In Bukidnon, crop plantations are encroaching in ancestral domains, such as the rapid expansion of sugarcane. Not only does it intrude into indigenous territories, but it competes as well with production of food. Small farmers of corn or rice, who cannot sustain their production because of the expensive cost of seeds and chemical inputs, have either converted to planting sugarcane or have rented out their lands for sugarcane. This situation greatly diminishes the family's capacity to provide for their food needs. Whereas, previously they were small land holders, they become mere farm hands in the lands they once owned and tilled. Both men and women employ as helpers in sugarcane plantations. Even children assist their parents in this work, since the labor system is through pakyaw or by package deal per hectare.

The Country Study on the Oil Palm Industry[23] reveals that oil palm expansion seriously encroaches on forest and food production areas and ancestral domains of indigenous communities. Small farmers, including women, lose access to and control of their lands and close their options for growing food or going into other land-based economic activity. The projected rise in domestic demand for biofuels and other oil-based products have prompted more speculation for land and have opened up ancestral domains to oil palm. The DENR Memorandum Circular No. 2004-12 identified forest areas under existing tenurial instruments which can be utilized for oil palm. Oil palm plantations employ mostly men. In the case of the Kenram Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Multi-Purpose Cooperative (KARBEMPCO), in Sultan Kudarat, the Certificate of Landownership Award (CLOA) in the oil palm plantation set-up did not redound to more access and control for women on their land resource. They were not employed in the plantation and continued to earn marginal income. There are only two women out of the 413 members in the cooperative and they did not have representation in the coop. They earn income by gathering fallen fruits from the plantation which they sell at P30-40/kilo. There were no projects that were designed for the women in the post-agrarian reform (AR) support. Issues that were surfaced include conflicts with existing tenurial arrangements. Arrangements with private oil palm corporations are always in the interest of the corporation, as communities are not able to negotiate with the companies on equal terms. In cases where deforestation is related to crop expansion, women lose their sources for fuelwood, for subsistence gathering, and for medicine. A more demanding process of food production results, which also has implications on personal health and the health of children and family.

Though there are women leaders in IP communities, most communities are still led by men or the Datu, as they are traditionally addressed. In one of our conversations with a *Timuay* (leader/elder) in North Cotabato, "in most cases where ancestral domains are affected by mining and plantation, the decision is made by the leadership, and mostly, women cannot have significant involvement in the decision-making."

3.4 Leadership and managing conflict

In indigenous communities in Northern Mindanao, the women sit in positions in their traditional governance structure. Usually, this is tied to being the wife of the supreme and sectoral datu's. But *Bae's* (women tribal elders) also sit as members of the tribal council, in the council of elders or as officers in the community's organization. Indigenous women, especially leaders, play a crucial role in mediation of conflicts. They preliminarily investigate cases and mediate between aggrieved persons to create a calm atmosphere, and to bring conflicting parties to the table for dialogue. Wives of the tribal chieftain, serve as advisers to the Datus and act as a bridge between constituents and their leaders. The Bae willingly takes on the responsibilities of attending to the community, as an extension of her husband's leadership. The Council of Elders are composed of men and women (*Ininay* and *Inamay*). The decision is arrived at through a community process and clear discussion by the members of the Council, and this is considered as a decision made equally by both women and men.

The mediatory role of women is also crucial in the community's position before external groups or forces. In the case of the Bae's in Bukidnon, they stand up to armed groups, either to the military or to rebel groups, to appeal on behalf of their community and to negotiate for an agreement. There is still a prevailing culture of respect for women recognizing them to be more vulnerable, and not regarded as an opponent to be attacked or killed. This experience is particular to inter-tribal confrontations and to migrant groups, but does not necessarily reflect other conflict and mediation approaches to other external groups such as corporations.

3.5 Support system in conflict situation

Conflict situation gives rise to a different set of challenges for women. Although cases of women soldiers in the frontline may be rare, but they suffer more in terms of emotional trauma, disrupted lives, loss of loved ones, displacement and poverty.

From our interviews, we learned that Moro women play a significant role in the present conflict situation. Wives of members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) provide an important support system to their husbands who are in the war-front. When the men go to war, the women are left alone with the responsibility of providing for and nurturing the children and family. During outbursts of encounter or attacks, the women have to ensure that they and their children have a safe place to run away to and hide. The women also provide organizational service to the MILF, by taking charge of certain tasks, like going to the city for various transactions and maintaining communications. Displacement literally removes the ground from where women are able to make a stand for themselves and their families, loss of control on their resources, and loss of control on their lives. This is not to mention women as casualties of war or victims of war-related violence.

In Lanao del Norte area, one common thread that ties together the stakeholders in the land and political conflict is poverty. In the recent years of sustaining the movement of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front,

many recruits to the battalion are Moro and IP men who have families living in dire poverty. There is admittance that the men resort to the armed movement because they do not have other viable source of income, either in farming or employment. Some pin their hopes that when the liberation movement is successful, they will be given jobs or a means of living.

This great gap stems from the lack of access to land, inability to source out a means of living or subsistence from their immediate natural resources. They do with subsistence farming, and usually these are rootcrops and occasional hunting of big animals from the forest, like wild pig and deer. Thus the territorial conflict is underscored with the needs of men and women who are unable to utilize their natural resources within because of the lack of ownership and lack of equitable access to it.

Families also remain poor because they do not have the proper support system to utilize their resources. When it comes to agriculture for indigenous communities in the hinterlands of Lanao del Norte, families have to contend with harvesting corn and rootcrops which is just enough for consumption. They are not able to afford high-quality seeds or fertilizers for a good cropping. There is no excess production to earn cash for other needs such as education, healthcare, decent clothing and adequate shelter. Because these villages are too far, there are no access roads that will enable farmers to bring crops from the mountains to viable markets in town. The only means of transportation is through a single motorcycle called habal-habal, which is around US$8 per person and practically wishful thinking for them to spend on transporting goods. This reflects on the neglect of local governments to extend assistance to communities that are in the most need.

One of the women's daily ordeal is in getting water. In the case of hinterland Indigenous communities in Lanao, their water source is located very far from the village site. Women and children need to trek a good two hours before reaching their water source. They are only able to bear the weight of about eight to ten liters of water to take back to their homes. This spells their difficulty to provide drinking water, in cooking, cleaning and caring for their children. With the phenomenon of bodies of water drying up, the women's source gets farther and farther from their reach. Women have no means to access government support so that water utilities can be built closer to home.

Many times there is non-recognition of the women's abilities to mediate and negotiate due to stereotyping that women are only good in performing roles within the home and the public sphere is a man's domain. In the hinterland Higaonon communities that are still in the middle of ideological war, women remain unrecognized and unheard. In Gingoog City, where the NPA movement has taken refuge in the mountain ranges in the area, women are generally not regarded in the discussion of the community's security and position. As one Bae said that, their explanations are not accepted by the military, and that the latter would rather speak to the Datu than to her.

Cases of family feuds or rido, both in indigenous and Muslim communities have led to displacement for entire families. Rido, usually carried through generations, have been found to come from land disputes, among others.[24] For Muslim culture, this has also become an accepted way of seeking justice in lieu of a reliable and fair justice system. For indigenous cultures, their belief in sala or payment for grievances committed against others take sway. This includes if one has violated the other's properties, including family-owned resources. Women of the clans bear the emotional trauma and the responsibility of having to re-establish the family in new places, away from her usual support system. In the provinces of ARMM, a total of 16,099 families have been displaced by rido in the past years. Although women leaders account for only two percent of the mediators who stepped in to resolve rido cases, it is also recognized that efforts to resolve rido are usually multi-actors that include women, such as in the case of NGOs.[25]

Challenges that emerge from threats such as competition for land use and water resources and conflict exacerbate women's difficult position caused by inequitable access to natural resources, lack of tenure security and conventionally imposed roles.

IV. RESPONSE TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION: FROM BEING VICTIMS OF CIRCUMSTANCE TO ACTORS LEADING THE CHANGE

Indigenous and rural poor women have risen above these challenges and created spaces for participation and asserted rights to these resources, in a significantly proactive way. Many grassroots movements and documented cases have shown that indigenous and rural women have had their share of successes in defending their rights to natural resources and in resolving conflicts rooted in contesting natural resources.

Example 1: Women at the forefront in the defense of their precious water resource against mining: The ABAKATAF experience

The village of Anislagan, located in the municipality of Placer, Surigao del Norte, Philippines was mined for gold and copper in the 1980s. After a disastrous collapse of the tailings dam of the Manila Mining Corporation (MMC) in 1995, the residents of Anislagan have since protested and strongly protected their community against the re-entry of mining operations in their community. The strongest argument that they hold against mining, and its promises of prosperity and development, is the preservation of their water source and watersheds. It services drinking water not only for Anislagan, but the whole of the municipality of Placer; as well as irrigation for their farms. Women have led the multi-sectoral campaign of the community through the Anislagan Bantay Kalikasan Task Force (ABAKATAF).[26] The women are passionate in saying that their environment provides for them, and they have sufficient agricultural production for their food needs. The village of Anislagan, blessed with lakes, rivers and springs, has an abundance of clean water for their homes as well as their farm irrigation. They foresee though, that in 25 years' time, when all the minerals have been excavated from their lands, there will be nothing left for their children to inherit, but the wasteland, and worse, the loss of valuable water source. In the last ten years of their struggle, ABAKATAF has gone through many community mobilizations, including the filing of legislative cases locally and internationally against the mining companies, and even the government. The women leaders of the task force have been a strong pillar in the campaign and the continuous pressure that the community is under from mining companies and pro-mining state actors. The simple recognition and valuing of their natural resource, that comes from the women's needs and from their long-term perspective, have helped to solidify the community's position against mining. Their experience shows that certain policies need to be reformed in order to lessen the disruptive effects of resource extractive and resource utilization projects.

Example 2: Enhancing food security and climate change-preparedness of small islands: LUMOT-Dev

One of the gravest impacts that climate change will bring about to the country is the increase in sea level, and its implication on the many small island communities. One place particularly in jeopardy is Hinatuan Island in Surigao del Sur, due to its close proximity to the Pacific Ocean. To ensure the sustainable management of their coastal resources, seven fish sanctuaries were established in Hinatoan

Bay. One of these is the 19-hectare sanctuary in Mahaba Island, which is managed and led by the Ladies United Movement Onward to Development (LUMOT-Dev).[27] Their activities include providing security to the area, planting of mangroves to prevent coastal erosion and provide breeding grounds for the fishes and other marine life. The sanctuary helps to improve sources of income, since it provides the community with fish fry and mangroves increase other shellfish and seafoods that can be gathered. Support systems like electrification, potable water projects, and a transportation for children studying across the island help to buffer the women in managing the sanctuary. This initiative was initiated and assisted by the Center for Empowerment and Resources Development (CERD). This experience calls attention to the need to provide alternative livelihood to the women and men in coastal communities who are highly dependent on fishing for livelihood. There is a need to work on mitigation and adoption to be fully prepared for climate change, and not act on emergency-response mode, as is the present status quo. They also state that there is a need to look at how climate change affects men and women differently, so that in addressing the impact can be done with a gender perspective, and women's full potential can be harnessed to make a difference.

Example 3: Mothers for Peace[28]

Carrying the simple message that "Women should not continue to live with war and in displacement. Women should be able to live in peace, to bring up their family and children in peace," the Mothers for Peace (M4P) promote the value of peace and the principle of peace-building. Convened by the Mindanao Commission on Women (MCW),[29] the M4P is a national movement that creates platforms for women's development and peace in Mindanao and seeks to bring the women's agenda in the peace processes.

With around 200 members, the Mothers for Peace are both Moro and indigenous women from selected communities of Lanao del Norte and in Iligan City. Those who have joined are perceived to be more open-minded and ready to accept the relatively new concepts of peace and peace-building. Women from other communities have remained closed or aloof to the idea. They are already burdened with their domestic obligations and grappling with providing for the family's daily needs. Areas that are bulwarks of armed groups cannot be easily penetrated. In other areas, male leaders do not recognize women's rights, which is why there is a need to bring women's rights on the table during the peace talks. M4P aims to channel the issues on gender equality and women development through the formal process. Many of the members do voluntary organizing work and there are limited funds. Women who show potential, and have the mind and guts to speak out about their situation and for their rights, those that can extend the energy and time for organizational activities and campaigns are trained to become organizers. Because of the accepted fact that the Mothers for Peace would have to compete with their members' main obligations to their homes, M4P has widened their campaign with the Maranao and indigenous youths to re-orient them on the values of peace and positive change, countering the common culture of war to which they have grown apathetic.

The M4P partners with other service-delivery organizations to provide livelihood options for the members of the community affected by conflict. They see the importance of addressing poverty as a way of deterring from joining or supporting the war. As they said, "if the people have enough to eat, if they could send their children to school and provide medicine for the sick, why should they volunteer themselves to die in the war?" Instead of carrying guns and arms, the community should be carrying shovels and seedlings for their livelihood. Patigbabaw Mindanao helped in establishing the abaca

livelihood in 2005. They already have affirmed cases wherein the youth, instead of joining the war, have opted to join the abaca farming. It is still the men who are the identified main beneficiaries, while the women assist in this initiative. Aside from livelihood, the Mothers for Peace are able to build constituencies for campaigns in environmental conservation. Recently, they engaged in advocacy to stop the privatization of the Pulangui and Agus hydro-electric power supplies. MCW and M4P are able to articulate how critical environmental concerns impact on the peace processes, and on the peace in Mindanao itself. At present, MCW is leading the multisectoral effort to push gender-sensitive provisions in the peace talks that are about to resume between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Example 4: The Circles of Peace is a reversal of a 'broad network' approach to forge forward

They envision it as "a place for sharing talents, blessings and works so that our communities may be places of healing and peace." The Circle of Peace can be anchored on a woman's community, or within existing organizations, thus creating small local nodes of leaders and community actors to come together. The key support system that enabled these women to respond to these challenges where space for dialogue and funds for to put these small solutions into action. The Circles build support systems for emerging self confidence and leadership. Peace Circles are encouraged to conduct and celebrate a core program of activities aimed at peace-building, making it local and community led. Small in scope, and yet, the magnitude they reach grows quite wide when put together.

The efforts of these women allowed for their communities to enjoy a brief reprieve from fire fighting, at the very minimum, and to chart ways forward towards more sustainable and productive activities.

V. LESSONS LEARNED

When spaces are opened for women to contribute to development and peace processes they are able to negotiate and mediate in conflict situation that leads to resolution – not only informally but formally, as in the peace process panels as well. This happens when there is recognition of women's contribution, especially when their day to day engagement is represented collectively and through an organization that genuinely represents women's interests, as with MCW's own initiative in coming together and standing for their rights and beliefs. The agenda that MCW is pushing forward in the peace process is grounded in the works and communities of their members, thus this brings with it the weight of the voices and representation of many women and communities.

Women's small, yet collective action helps to address food security as shown in cases of LUMOT-Dev, ABATAKAF and Mothers for Peace. Women provide a valuable support system for male income-earners and in the rearing and training of the young, but this is not yet fully valued by society. It is important to harness Indigenous women as key players in leading environmental protection and conservation efforts. Women can fulfil multiple roles of conscientious producers for food security, teachers and advocates for sound environmental practices while providing the balance between cashing in on their natural resources and the sustainability of their ecosystem and way of life. To achieve this, women need to have consistent recognition from within their community members, such that their voices are heard during consensus decision-making processes in the community, and thus equally represented in a community's decision

engaging with external actors. As expressed by the Indigenous women leaders, they also need a kind of a moral support system, where they are able to discuss together with other women leaders the various challenges that they are facing and those that are cropping up, so that they are able to gain advice, inspiration and strength from one another. Even with the progress in the recognition of women's rights and gender sensitivity, there is still a lot of work in engendering programs and support for women for them to be truly empowering and to enable women to secure their access to their resources, to the water, to raw materials that will provide them stability.

Seed funds can enable women to establish livelihoods at a manageable scale, while the right mentoring and guidance can enhance their skills and capacity to grow their livelihood and strengthen their organization.[30] Trainings and skills development need to be anchored on the women's aptitude and develop their potential. Indigenous women leaders have spoken that there is a need to deepen the understanding of women rights and empowerment, so that they are able to stand and uphold their culture and their environment. It is important to equip Indigenous women to be on equal and level grounding when it comes to negotiations with corporate investments like in mining and plantations.

Still present is the need to pressure local government units to provide basic services to the communities. For women, this is especially true for their need for good access roads and a potable water system. Steps to integrate indigenous community development plans and ADSDPP to LGU development plans are a positive development in recognizing and prioritizing the needs of Indigenous communities. Another aspect in the natural resources management is ability to cope with the impacts of climate change, risk reduction and disaster preparedness.

National legal frameworks for women participation should be brought to ground implementation, translating into policies and guidelines that ensure equal recognition and enabling mechanism for women, such as in defining beneficiaries in land tenure programs, or providing credit access and agricultural support and skills training.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Gender Justice: Forest Tenure and Forest Governance in Indonesia

Brief #3 of 4

June 2012   Mia Siscawati[1] and Avi Mahaningtyas[2]

The Challenges of Securing Women's Tenure and Leadership for Forest Management: The Asian Experience

RRI PARTNERS

Exploration of the dynamics of forest tenure and forest governance in Indonesia has focused mostly on contested processes between the State and forest-dwelling communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples, customary communities and other local communities. Many documents presenting the results of this process view "community" as a homogenous entity. Limited attention has been given to the heterogeneity of "community," in which gender, class, ethnicity, religions, and other socio-cultural aspects provide critical contributions to the formation of sub-groups within a "People" as well as multiple identities of the members of each sub-group. Therefore, gender-based injustices in forest tenure and forest governance, as experienced mostly by women who occupy certain positions within the community, have so far not been adequately addressed.

In Indonesia, most of the advocacy work on forest tenure and governance reform has focused on how to resolve the conflict between customary forest tenure systems and the "political forests" under state control (with its associated system of territorialization, zonation, and management) established under law. These conflicts and disagreement over who should control and manage forest lands lie in large part in the present definition and classification of the "Forest Zone,"[3] which is itself a product of the establishment of "Political Forests" by the previous colonial administration.[4] While this advocacy work seeks to both change the legal framework and its implementation, as well as address systems of conflict resolution, all too often the question of gender inequity is never considered a part of the issue.

This paper attempts to explore how gender, both as cultural construction and as an analytical concept, as well as its intersection with variables such as socio-economic class, ethnicity and geo-political location, plays a critical role in the practice of forest tenure and governance in Indonesia. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the how gendered relationships create differentiated social and environmental outcomes so that appropriate actions can be taken that lead toward gender justice.

Activists and academics in Indonesia, along with their counterparts in other countries, increasingly employ the term 'gender justice' because of the growing concern that earlier terms like 'gender equality', or 'gender mainstreaming' are inadequate both on conceptual and practical fronts to give "a strong enough sense

of, or adequately address, the ongoing gender-based injustices from which women suffer."[5] Gender justice requires addressing the relevant processes needed for eliminating the inequalities between women and men that are produced and reproduced in the family, the community, the state, and the market. It also requires that mainstream institutions are accountable for tackling the injustice and discrimination that keep too many women poor and excluded.[6]

This paper will start with an explanation of its conceptual approach, followed by narration of socio-cultural dynamics of forest tenure and forest governance through case studies. It will then discuss lessons on gender injustices in forest tenure and governance stemming from the case studies. In order to understand how gender injustices happen at various levels, we will trace the history of structural aspects and political dimensions of gender blindness in forest tenure and governance in Indonesia.

1. CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

This analysis of gendered relationships within forest tenure and governance practices in Indonesia has been written drawing on two sets of conceptual frameworks, namely feminist political ecology and the theory of access. By combining these two conceptual approaches, we can usefully investigate both the broader structural set of power relations as well as the specific institutional practices that lead to particular forms of gendered political and social practices and discourses in the forest tenure regimes of Indonesia.

Political ecology as an analytical framework was originally developed to facilitate the identification of underlying political, economic, and social forces in the process of natural resources degradation;[7] it permits an examination of how the context of local land use practices and the wider political economic and social systems play a critical role in decision making processes of land users.[8] It thereby enables an exploration of injustices associated with unequal access and control over resources, in short, to investigate the complex analytical and practical associations of environmental politics and the institutions of civil society in which knowledge and practices are encoded, negotiated and contested.[9]

Aligned with this analytical orientation, feminist political ecology views gender as a key variable in conjunction with its interface with class, caste, race, culture, and ethnicity in creating various processes that determine resource access and control, ecological changes, as well as local actions of women and men in maintaining their livelihoods.[10] Feminist political ecology is also employed to recognize, examine, and translate local experience in the context of global processes of environmental and economic change. In doing so, feminist political ecologists combine three critical themes: 1) gendered knowledge, 2) gendered environmental rights and responsibilities, which include property, resources, space, and different forms of gendered legal and customary rights, and 3) gendered environmental politics and grassroots activism.[11] Recent work of feminist political ecology scholars explores how struggles around livelihood and natural access relate closely to subject formation.[12] These scholars view "gender" beyond an overarching descriptive term or categorization but rather locate "gender" as an analytical concept for examining how a set of power relations work.[13]

Completing this broader feminist political ecology framework is the study of access that focuses specifically on the multiple ways people gain benefits from resources. Access retains an empirical "… focus on the issues of *who* does (and who does not) get to use what, in *what ways*, and *when* (that is, in what circumstances)."[14] Within this framework, access can be seen as "bundles and webs of powers that enable to gain, control, and maintain access."[15] Different people and different institutions can hold and exercise different bundles and webs of powers. Therefore, some people, group(s) of people, and

institutions control resource access while others must maintain their access through those who have control.[16]

2. UNDERSTANDING PROBLEMS AND DYNAMICS OF FOREST TENURE AND FOREST GOVERNANCE PROBLEMS THROUGH "HER STORIES"

To understand gender-related aspects of the dynamics of forest tenure conflicts and forest governance problems in Indonesia, we propose to use the above analytical perspectives in observing three case studies focusing on women's accounts from various backgrounds confronting forest tenure problems in their daily life. In narrating these stories on a variety of forest tenure conflicts and forest governance problems, the writers are informed by the feminist methodologies that affirm the importance of positional perspectives that are bounded by "a commitment to the empowerment of women and other people."[17] Feminist methodologies enable women of different sub-groups and other marginalized groups to have spaces to share their valuable knowledge.

Case Study 1: A spectrum of tensions in Kasepuhan Banten Kidul, Banten[18]

Ibu Asih[19] is a female member of one among eleven sub-groups of the Kasepuhan Banten Kidul customary community (also known as Kasepuhan community). This customary community lives in the upland area of the western part of Indonesia's Java Island. The Kasepuhan customary area is one of few remaining locations of Java Island covered by tropical rainforests, known as the Halimun ecosystem.

The Kasepuhan Community implements a customary system of forest tenure. Many areas within the customary territories established by the Kasepuhan Community are communal lands. The areas that are considered as communal are customary protected forests (known as *leuwung tutupan*), customary reserved forests (*leuwung titipan*), and managed forests (*leuwung garapan*). The *leuwung tutupan* is designated as a protected area in order to maintain ecological, socio-cultural and spiritual functions of the forest. The *leuwung titipan* is reserved forest lands that can be used during certain times (through specific access mechanisms) to meet basic needs which include foods, medicines and housing materials. The final category *leuwung garapan* involves forest lands that can be opened by Kasepuhan Community members and converted into dry agricultural land or mixed garden. This arrangement is achieved through certain access and control arrangements managed by customary leaders.

Customary traditions in the Kasepuhan Community allow Kasepuhan women to have inheritance rights over land and other properties such as the house and animals. However, their male counterparts usually have more access to lands, as many families believe that men need more land to support their traditional role as the head of household. Men of families with higher social status, such as families of customary leaders or those who have conjugal or close connections with these families, have better access to lands represented by more and larger land plots.

Ibu Asih is a middle-aged woman who has been married three times. She has access to five small plots of land *in leuwung garapan* areas. Two of these plots of land are considered as "her lands," one of which she inherited from her parents while another was the result of her own hard work after she ended her second marriage. She worked hard as a laborer in her relatives' and neighbors' lands and she was able to "purchase" this plot of land from her neighbor by paying to get access to use it. In other words, she paid the previous access holder to transfer the access rights to this piece of land to her. Although she

mentions these areas as "her lands," she is fully aware that these lands are actually controlled by one of the male customary leaders in her village. Following custom, this male leader allows Ibu Asih's parents and Ibu Asih's neighbor to transfer the access to use his lands to Ibu Asih through an inheritance process and monetary transactions, as long as he receives certain portions of the harvest from these lands. Ibu Asih manages these two plots of lands as dry agricultural ones. She mainly cultivates local varieties of dry paddy and other crops to meet subsistence needs of her family.

The third and fourth plots of land Ibu Asih manages are considered as "her husband lands," as her third husband inherited access to the use of these lands from his parents. The fifth plot she manages is conjugal land, as she and her third husband "purchased" the access to use this land. Similar to the first and second lands Ibu Asih manages, the access to use all three plots of land are controlled by the male customary leader in their village, therefore she and her husband have to share with him certain portions of the harvest from these lands. Ibu Asih mentions that what she understands from this system is a customary mechanism to arrange utilization of *leuweung garapan* area so that there will be no overlapping claim over plots of land in the area.

The above mechanism, however, has been disturbed because the government claims control over all the lands within the customary territory of Kasepuhan community, which include various types of customary forests, mixed gardens, swidden agricultural areas and wet paddy fields because it regards them as state lands. The Basic Forestry Law No. 5 established in 1967, which adopted the earlier colonial policy in claiming forested areas as state lands, was used as a basis to develop regulations on forest land use in Indonesia. In the 1970s the government began subdividing the Halimun ecosystem area into multiple purpose zones: production forest areas managed by a State-owned Forest Company, conservation areas were managed by the Halimun National Park, and agricultural plantation areas were managed by both state-owned and private companies. Until 2003, the lands Ibu Asih managed were claimed as state production forest lands managed by the State Forestry Company (*perhutani*). As a result, Ibu Asih has experienced hard times, especially during the 1980s, when she confronted state forest guards while working in her lands, her husband's lands, and her conjugal land. These state forest guards threatened to put her in jail as she was considered as an encroacher on state forest lands. Ibu Asih managed to escape from this threat by sharing certain portions of the harvest from these lands to one of the guards who lived in a nearby village outside the boundary of the customary territory of the Kasepuhan community. As the lands Ibu Asih manages are barely enough to meet the basic needs of her family, sharing of harvest from these lands as a way to maintain access has created problems for Ibu Asih and her family. They adopted various ways of survival, including marrying off their daughters at a relatively young age and sending other daughters to big cities to work as domestic workers.

The enlargement of the Halimun National Park area through a decree signed by the Minister of Forestry in 2003 changed the status of all lands managed by the Kasepuhan People including those managed by Ibu Asih and her family now incorporated into the new national park boundaries.[20] In addressing the situation where the boundaries of the Halimun National Park now overlapped with the customary territories of the Kasepuhan community, the National Park management (with bilateral aid support from Japanese government) developed several approaches including a conservation village model (*Model Desa Konservasi*/MKK). This model allows members of the Kasepuhan community to manage forest lands through certain arrangements and agreements with the National Park. A project was specifically set up to develop this model in the field with a number of professional community organizers (COs) hired to support the process. However, these paid COs mostly communicated the project plan with customary

leaders and informal leaders (mostly male) whilst seldom communicating with women, especially those belong to lower social class such as Ibu Asih.

Ibu Asih and her female counterparts received information about how the enlargement of the National Park area together with current relevant regulations and government-sponsored programs may affect the lands she manages from an NGO that has been working closely with the Kasepuhan community in advocating the recognition of customary rights. She mentioned that although this NGO has been working in her village for a certain period of time, its activists mostly worked with customary leaders and other informal leaders of her village who are mostly the male members of elite families. She shared that she was finally able to have more interaction with this organization when it began to have a female CO and started to develop specific activities where she and other Kasepuhan women, especially those who share a similar background with hers, have space to fully participate.

Case Study 2: Tenurial conflicts in the Central Kalimantan ex-Mega Rice Project area[21]

The areas that are part of the Central Kalimantan Ex-Mega Rice Project Program were historically managed by Indigenous Peoples, dominantly by the Ngaju Dayak people. Studies have revealed that before the 20th century these peoples conducted two main activities related to forest resources: 1) gathered forest products, including non-timber forest products, for subsistence needs and limited scale of trading, and 2) swidden agriculture.[22] This started changing in the early 20th century when the Ngaju Dayak people began to plant rubber in their former swidden agriculture plots in the early 20th century, influenced mostly by the rubber price boom at the time.[23] Later, in the early 1970s the Ngaju Dayak forest lands came under external threats once it became part of the newly established "Forest Zone" (under Ministry of Forestry control) following the establishment of Basic Forestry Law no. 5 of 1967. Now, timber companies begin timber extraction once they obtain "official" logging licenses from the Ministry of Forestry.[24]

Soon after, the Ngaju Dayak people continued to face tenurial conflicts when the central government established a transmigration program in their customary territories in the late 1980s. Adding to this, in 1994 the central government enacted a plan to convert 1.4 million hectares of peat swamps into rice paddy fields known as the Mega Rice Project. Although this project was finally terminated in 1999, it caused serious peatland ecosystem degradation and destruction of livelihoods as well as socio-cultural disruption. The tragedy continues as some parcels of the ex-Mega Rice Project area were subsequently allocated for oil palm plantations and sand mining.[25]

The Provincial Land Use Plan of Central Kalimantan, which was enacted through regional regulation in 1993 and revised in 2003, has not yet been approved by the Central Government since the Ministry of Forestry is in disagreement with the data presented in the proposed spatial plan. The Ministry of Forestry considers all areas within the boundary of the ex-Mega Rice Project as the "forest zone." Therefore, all activities carried out in the ex-Mega Rice Project area except those covered by forestry permits, including the release of land certificates for transmigrants by the National Land Agency (Badan Pertanahan Nasional) are "illegal." The existence of customary forest tenure of the Ngaju Dayak people is also not recognized.[26]

As a result of these different sets of changes in production and planning systems, there are numerous tenurial conflicts in the Ngaju Dayak territories. Over time, there have been smaller parcels of land available for each Dayak household. Inevitably, these have caused negative impacts on livelihoods, social

economic, health and education of the Ngaju Dayak people with women, youth and children, especially those belong to lower social class within the community being the most vulnerable subgroups. Many women have a low education level. They often marry in their teens, causing significant risk during pregnancy and contributing to relatively high maternal and infant mortality.

As access to customary lands became more restricted, with smaller areas of lands managed by individual families, the customary land tenure system gradually became more male-dominated. Women, who generally have a lower education level than men, are in a subordinate position when securing control over the lands that they inherit.

Even where there has been a recognition of customary territories, many women of the Ngaju Dayak do not often benefit. As a result of regulations on customary lands issued by the provincial government of Central Kalimantan, some customary leaders (*damang*) that are authorised to issue a letter of reference on customary land (*Surat Keterangan Tanah Adat*/SKTA) within the boundaries of their customary territories, were used by the oil palm companies to grab lands from their communities through legally endorsed mechanisms. Backed by the oil palm companies, some customary leaders issued SKTA and provided compensation fees to community members whose lands will be used by the companies for plantation.[27] In doing so, they mostly communicated with male members of their communities, and as such, many women were not included in this communication process, causing many of them to lose their lands and sources of livelihood.

After a wide public debate about this problem at the local, national and international levels, the Central Government enacted a decree that restricted the operation of oil palm plantations and allocated the area for the purpose of ecological restoration and greenhouse gas emissions reduction.[28] This has then triggered another set of problems, as tenure insecurity continues to occur in the area. Multiple claims on lands take place between the government and the communities (both Indigenous Peoples and local communities), between central and local governments, between customary leaders and their people, among groups of people within one community, and between male and female members of a family or a clan.

Case Study 3: Gender-based and class-based inequality problems in government-sponsored Community Forestry in Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta Province[29]

Ibu Tuti and her family live in a rural village in Gunung Kidul of Yogyakarta Province in Java, Indonesia. She and her husband are farmers who participate in the HKm program, a state-sponsored community forestry initiative to assist small farmers to access lands for tree crops. Ibu Tuti is a middle aged woman who did not complete her primary education, while her husband completed his secondary education. They were married when Ibu Tuti was 16 years old, and she gave birth to three daughters. The first daughter married at young age and has two children; she lives in the same village as her mother and works as a farmer while her husband works as a seasonal construction worker in a nearby city. The second daughter completed middle school education and works as a domestic worker in Jakarta while her third daughter is still completing her high school education in a nearby village.

Prior to their participation in the HKm program, Ibu Tuti and her husband had access to two small plots of state lands which they managed as dry agricultural plots. In securing access to these state lands, they paid fees to several people in their village whom they know as "the guards of the state lands." They also have two small plots of their own land. The first one, only 250 m², is owned by Ibu Tuti. She inherited

this land from her grandmother and planted teak and other trees on this small plot. The second plot of land is jointly owned by Ibu Tuti and her husband (Pak Tukiman), but the title of the land belongs to Pak Tukiman. The couple bought this 1,000 m² plot of land by selling their only cow. They got the cow from Pak Tukiman's parents but according to Ibu Tuti she was in charge of taking care of the cow until it was ready to be sold. They manage this second plot of land to plant cash crops.

Although Ibu Tuti and Pak Tukiman work hard to manage all of these lands, they still struggle to cover the basic needs of their family, particularly the education cost for their youngest child. To earn more money, Pak Tukiman works as handyman in the village while Ibu Tuti opens a very small, kitchen-based shop in the evening. While waiting for her customers, she makes soya bean patties (*tempe*) and sells them the next evening. As she is very busy meeting her family's needs, she does not have time to participate in women's group activities such as Koran/Qur'an reading or participating in a traditional micro finance group known as *arisan* in her hamlet.

The participation of Ibu Tuti and her husband in the HKm program is through membership of the village-based forest farmers group. Membership into the group is as household unit which is represented by the husband as he is considered the head of the household. For Ibu Tuti's family, her husband (Pak Tukiman) is listed in the list of the HKm farmers. The list of members of the HKm farmers in Ibu Tuti's village only has two female names, representing female-headed households. These two households are not the only female-headed ones in the village but they were the ones able to join the forest farmers group because the NGO which facilitated the formation of the HKm group considered these two women to have sufficient literacy skills to participate in the group's work.

Since their family joined the HKm farmers group, Ibu Tuti and Pak Tukiman have been allowed to manage one hectare of HKm land. They practice a division of labor in managing this HKm land. Pak Tukiman's main task is to prepare the land and obtain tree seedlings from the HKm group and other government-sponsored reforestation projects, while Ibu Tuti's main task is to cultivate the seedlings, and take care of the young trees, including weeding and pruning. This division of labor enables Pak Tukiman to earn additional money by working as handyman in their village.

Although Ibu Tuti has a significant role in managing the HKm land assigned to her family, she never attends HKm meetings or other public meetings. Even so, she stated that her husband does not share information with her that he gained from the meetings, while she herself never asks him or others about HKM related information as she feels too tired from her daily activities. One day, a meeting of the HKm farmers group took place in her house (as the venue of its meetings take place in houses of its members). Ibu Tuti did not join the meeting as she was busy preparing food and beverages for the meeting. Not only did she feel that it was inappropriate for her to join the meeting, her husband was quiet throughout the meeting. After the meeting finished, Pak Tukiran mentioned that it was hard for him to fully understand the many topics discussed in the meeting, especially when it came to regulations. He confessed that although he completed junior high school, he feels that he does not have good literacy skills as he rarely uses them.

Ibu Tuti shared that due to the hardships that her family experiences, she sometimes has to harvest young trees to meet urgent financial needs. NGOs label this activity as "*tebang butuh*" (urgent needs-based tree cutting). At the time, she was not aware that this action might put their family into a difficult position. Since this action is considered breaking the management plan of the HKm, the HKm group may impose some sanctions on her family. The hardest sanction would be to be dismissed from the HKm group.

Ibu Tuti is not alone. She and her fellow women of lower social classes play a critical role in managing forest resources but their involvement in decision-making processes related to forest lands and forest resources at the household and the community level is very limited. Many of them, for example, do not even know that their husband has joined the forest farmers group at the village level, so they do not know that forested lands they manage are part of a collective management plan.

In Ibu Tuti's village, due to special circumstances, several women were recruited as members of forest farmers groups. They were either the heads of households due to being widows or were temporary heads of households due to their men leaving the village to seek outside substantive employment. However, these women members have not been active in the HKm meetings, which are usually conducted at night or at a time where the women are busy working. Moreover, an NGO that intensively works with the HKm group in Ibu Tuti's village has not paid attention to gender-related issues. Due to lack of gender sensitivity as well as cultural barriers, male community organizers of the NGO that supports the HKm mostly communicate with male villagers, particularly those who occupy important positions both in the HKm group and in the village. These male community organizers assume that these leaders will transfer the information to male members of the HKm group and later these members will inform their wives. Consequently, Ibu Tuti and many other women are not aware of the information regarding relevant government regulations and the collective management plan which affects the way they should manage the lands. This low level of understanding influences their actions such as cutting the trees for immediate urgent needs, which later could risk the position of their families as members of forest farmers groups.

3. GENDER INJUSTICES IN FOREST TENURE AND FOREST GOVERNANCE: LESSONS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

From these case studies, we learn that women of different social status and classes have certain forms of relationship in managing forest lands and resources. One woman may have access to variety of different plots of forest lands, ranging from her own land(s), her husband's land(s), her conjugal land(s), her relative's or neighbor's land(s), as well as state lands. Multiple identities carried by one woman, contributed by her marital status, socio-economic class, age, occupation, and other factors will influence her position in the daily application of forest tenure and forest governance at multiple levels, from the household, clan, and community levels.

> *Multiple identities carried by one woman, contributed by her marital status, socio-economic class, age, occupation, and other factors will influence her position in the daily application of forest tenure and forest governance at multiple levels, from the household, clan, and community levels.*

We also learn that in gaining access to forest lands and resources, indigenous women and local women gain and maintain access to such lands and resources through those who assert control via specific mechanisms, processes, and social relations. For the cases of Ibu Asih of Kasepuhan Community and Ibu Tuti of Gunung Kidul, those with control are actors (male customary leaders, male members of the family, male neighbors, male state forest guards, etc.) that occupy different positions in relation to the lands at certain historical moments. This is in line with the argument of Ribot and Peluso (2003) about the notion of access as bundles and webs of power relations that enable actors to gain, control, and maintain access of natural resources. Women therefore have to navigate the webs of power that exist within the household, clan, community, state and the market.

The case studies show that during these processes women face various forms of gender injustice such as sub-ordination, marginalization, discrimination and stereotyping. At the same time, these forms of gender injustice contribute to the degree to which women can gain and maintain access to lands, and in what ways and how long they can maintain access. Indigenous women of the ex-Mega Rice Project area, who have lower level of education compared to their male counterparts, have very limited access to knowledge, particularly about changes of policies on forest tenure and forest governance that affect the lands they manage. All of this has contributed to the sub-ordination of the women in decision making over their own lands and those held with their husbands. Customary leaders, their husbands and other male members of their families make decisions without involvement of women. This subordination contributes to the marginalization of indigenous women in various processes that happen in their own family and community. This has led to women losing access and or control of their lands, making them more vulnerable.

When NGOs started to work with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, they often ignore gender-based problems as well as various forms of gender injustices that relate to forest tenure and forest governance. When NGOs began to facilitate community members in the ex-Mega Rice Project area to develop collective actions to challenge government policies and programs on forest tenure and forest governance, they hardly considered the involvement of indigenous women. The NGOs who work with Kasepuhan Community and the HKm group adopted similar approaches that ultimately marginalized women, thereby further contributing to gender injustices.

How do various forms of gender injustices continue to exist in the application of forest tenure and forest governance in Indonesia? The following section explores an institutional analysis of what we would call gender justice blindness within forest tenure and governance systems in Indonesia.

4. GENDER JUSTICE BLINDNESS IN FOREST TENURE AND FOREST GOVERNANCE: TRACING HISTORIES

Gender-blindness originally means ignoring the different roles, responsibilities and capabilities of men, women, boys and girls, and the social processes that determine these. Gender-blind policies and programs are based on male-centric experiences as the 'norm' and on the assumption that everyone affected by them has the same needs and preferences.[30] Using the above concepts, we apply the term "gender justice blindness" in this paper to mean ignoring the existence of gender injustices and neglecting efforts to eliminate marginalization, discrimination, multiple-burdens, stereotyping and violence against women and other marginalized members of community as well as other forms of gender injustice.

Through the following sub-sections where we trace histories of forest tenure and governance as well as gender politics in Indonesia, we argue that the state-controlled forest tenure framework and government-orchestrated forest governance system in Indonesia exhibit gender justice blindness.

4.1 Brief history of forest tenure and governance in Indonesia

The institutionalization of "political forest" giving the state control over large forest areas during the colonial era[31] has substantially structured the contemporary landscape of forest tenure and governance in Indonesia. The legacy of the political forest concept is still strongly reflected in forest resource access, control, and exclusion through the active reproduction of authority over heterogenic groups of men and

women as well as space in contemporary Indonesia.[32] This continuous authority, which is informed by a variety of power processes, establishes and shapes resource access through the production of categorization of certain geographical areas, including uplands and remote islands as empty, alienated, backward or uncivilized therefore justifying that both territorial and managerial control over these areas should be in the hands of the state.[33]

According to Peluso and Vandergeest (2001), the term "political forests" refers to lands declared by the State as forests. Adopting the work of various scholars (such as Guha 1990; Vandergeest and Peluso 1995; Bryant 1997; Sivaramakrishnan 1999; Agrawal 2001), they further argue that political forests played critical roles in the establishment of the territorialization and legal framing of forests. In colonial Indonesia, the Dutch Colonial Forest Service (*Boschwezen*) developed "political forests" through colonial forestry laws by drawing boundaries between agricultural and forest lands, declaring all unclaimed and forest lands as the domain of the state.[34]

In managing "political forests" in Java Island, particularly the teak forests, the colonial administration adopted the German structures and ideology of 'scientific' forest management.[35] Moreover, it transformed scientific forestry into industrial forestry. The application of industrial forestry in Java's teak forests played a significant role in the commercialization and industrialization of agricultural products in colonial Java such as rubber, sugar, coffee, tobacco, and indigo. Teak wood was heavily used in the development of state railroads and the shipbuilding industry.[36] Later, the shipbuilding industry turned into another lucrative business, and made the teak forests of Java Island one of the biggest economic resources for colonial administration at the time.[37]

The government of post-colonial Indonesia, particularly Suharto's regime during the New Order era, adopted industrial forestry as one of the main tools for controlling lands and forest resources. In particular, this approach was applied in order to further extract timber. To secure this process, Soeharto's regime enacted the Basic Forestry Law No. 5 in 1967 which continued the colonial declaration that all non-private forested lands are state property and therefore should be managed under the state-controlled system. In setting up the "political forests" and applying a state-controlled system of forest management, this regime exercised the alienation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities from their communal forest lands. Through this process, this regime established the official licensing system of the forests to private and state-owned logging companies as well as timber plantation companies throughout the main islands outside Java.[38]

Most importantly, the frameworks of political forests and industrial forestry adopted by the New Order regime both neglected the existence of community-based forest resources management systems that had been developed by generations of Indigenous Peoples and local communities across the Indonesian archipelago. The existence of these systems, along with indigenous tenurial systems, had already been identified by Dutch researchers during the colonial era. They wrote in scientific journals about a variety of models of community-based forest resource management systems, including the Tembawang system developed by the Dayak peoples of West Kalimantan and the Repong Damar system developed by the Krui people of Lampung, Southern Sumatra.[39] The exploration of community-based forest resources management systems has been continued by NGOs, academic institutions and research organizations since independence. These studies have been followed-up by various actions aiming to reform forest-related policies toward the recognition of these rights of Indigenous Peoples and the adoption of community-based forest resource management systems.[40]

As a result of this long advocacy process initiated by various actors, particularly conducted in the late 1980s and during the early to mid-1990s, several regulations related to community based forest

management (CBFM) were enacted. However, the tenurial rights of Indigenous Peoples and the existence of local community-based forest systems are still not officially recognized.

Substantial changes in forest tenure and forest governance policies began during the late period of the New Order era and right after the New Order regime collapsed. One progressive policy was a ministerial decree creating a zone with special purpose to protect the 'damar' agroforests of Krui, Lampung (southern Sumatra). This decree is considered historic since it recognizes the legitimacy of community-managed agro-forests on a significant area of State Forest Land.[41] Another important policy was the enactment of Forestry Law No. 41 of 1999, which replaced the Basic Forestry Law No. 5 of 1967. This new forestry law serves as the legal basis for Government Regulation (PP) No. 6/2007 on "Forest Allocation, Forest Management Plan and Land Utilization," later revised and replaced by regulation PP No. 3/2008. This regulation provides a legal basis for managing conservation forest, protected forest and production forest through the integrated forest management system, known as Kesatuan Pengelolaan Hutan/KPH (Forest Management Unit). The KPH/FMU system aims to achieve sustainable forest management through increasing the economic value of forest products. At the same time, this regulation provides a legal basis for community empowerment through village forest (*hutan desa*), community-based forestry (*hutan kemasyarakatan*), and partnership (*kemitraan*).

Although the new forestry law and associated regulations provide access for forest villagers to use and manage state forests, it still adopts a state-based centralized control over "political forests." Moreover, the forestry law does not fully recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples (*masyarakat adat*) to forest lands and resources.

4.2 Brief history of gender politics in Indonesia

Gender politics play a significant role in the different political regimes in post-colonial Indonesia in sustaining their power, which include controlling the political forests. In tracing gender politics in Indonesia, it is critical to explore the application of the so-called *Ibuism* ideology, which defines women only as mothers and wives. The word *Ibuism* comes from a word *ibu* in the national language of Indonesia, which means mother. *Ibuism* is a term first coined by Madelon Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis in her article "Ibuism and Priyaization: Path to Power?" published in 1987 to describe the combination of Dutch petit-burgeois values and traditional priyayi (Javanese aristocrat) values. Madelon Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis defines *Ibuism* as an ideology that sanctions any action taken by a mother who looks after her family, a group, a class, a company, or the state without demanding any power or prestige in return.

When the New Order regime came to power in 1966, it restrained all forms of mass organisation, and existing political parties were either demolished or rendered powerless. Consequently, people's movements, including women's movements which were quite large and politically influential in the pre-New Order period, were to a great extent destroyed. Gerwani was one of the dominant organizations in the women's movement in the pre-New Order era, particularly during the 1950s and early 1960s.[42] In 1961 it had more than one million women members. Local branches of Gerwani were established all over Indonesia. Most members had joined this organization because its activities related to their basic needs and basic women's problems. It established critical education processes and literacy programs for women and training for women on technical skills such as management and accounting for small/informal businesses. It developed microfinance programs in rural areas and urban slums. It created kindergartens and childcare centres in both rural and urban villages, in markets, agricultural plantation areas as well as in many areas where women worked in the informal economic sector. Gerwani created campaigns against

> *By defining women according to the Ibuism ideology as mothers and wives and not endorsing women's access to political power, the New Order has domesticated, segregated and depoliticised women.*

sexual harassment, women trafficking and child marriage. It also formed campaigns on the rights of working women and agrarian women.[43] From the late 1950s Gerwani became more closely aligned with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). As the PKI itself fully supported President Soekarno and his international projects (opposing the formation of the new state of Malaysia), Gerwani put the needs of mothers in a secondary place and emphasized their identification with the on-going revolution. This position was in line with Soekarno's abstraction about Indonesian women. In his polemical work *Sarinah* Soekarno (1963) asserted that women are to devote themselves to the nation, and concerns like national unity should take precedence over women's issues. At the time Soekarno encouraged women to educate their children in revolutionary beliefs and to participate in drills and other preparation for armed struggle against neo-imperialism.[44]

The New Order regime that followed Soekarno, which worked with military power in maintaining a fear of "communism" to sustain its power and control, adopted an Ibuism ideology.[45] The state *Ibuism* concept derives from the most oppressive aspects of both bourgeois "housewifeization"[46] and Priyayi (aristocrat or white-collar Javanese) *Ibuism*. Due to its fear of the power of women's organizations like Gerwani, Soeharto's New Order government organized women and forced them to become members of organizations controlled by the government such as Dharma Wanita, Dharma Pertiwi, and the PKK. By defining women according to the *Ibuism* ideology as mothers and wives and not endorsing women's access to political power, the New Order has domesticated, segregated and depoliticised women.[47]

The legacy of this ideology still affects the contemporary era. This can be seen in forest-related policies and programs developed by both national and local governments that neglect the significant role of women in forest tenure and forest governance.

As a result, many programs initiated by civil society organizations aiming to facilitate community empowerment in securing forest tenure and forest governance also unwittingly adopt this ideology. Many NGOs that are involved in this process prioritize their efforts to help Indigenous Peoples and local communities, whom they view as homogeneous and gender-neutral groups, seeking to gain and protect their political recognition and rights through various forms. Many activists who work in the field of forest tenure and forest governance share a similar view that gender justice should be included within the emerging agenda. Meanwhile, activists who are involved in the women's movement focus their work mainly on the elimination of gender injustices in urban areas. Collaboration between Indonesian NGOs who work in forest tenure and forest governance with those who work in achieving gender justice is still very limited.

5. ONGOING GENDER MAINSTREAMING PROCESSES: SLOW PROGRESS

Gender mainstreaming refers to strategies for program/policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in addressing gender issues within all sectoral programs. These strategies apply data and insights from gender analysis. Gender mainstreaming frameworks offer baseline definitions of key

concepts, propose guiding principles for action and spell out the lines of responsibility within an organization to mainstream gender throughout its programs.[48]

Gender mainstreaming processes in forests-related institutions, which include government agencies, local governments, funding agencies, NGOs, Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs), and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) have been on long and bumpy roads. In developing gender mainstreaming processes, each institution adopts a variety of approaches.

5.1 Government efforts

The New Order regime established a framework aiming to advance the promotion of women in national development in which women had an equal partnership with men. This framework was strongly influenced by the concept of "women in development" rather than "gender and development." It focused on merely enhancing women's participation in the development process rather than addressing gender

BOX 1: REGULATIONS ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING, ESTABLISHED BY SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS OF THE POST-NEW ORDER ERA:

• **Instruction of the President of the Republic of Indonesia No. 9/2000 Concerning Gender Mainstreaming in National Development (2000)**
This instruction aims to enhance the position, role and qualities of women to achieve gender equality in the family, society and the nation. It instructs all government bodies to implement gender mainstreaming for planning, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national development policies and programs in accordance with their responsibilities, functions and authorities.

• **Manual of Implementation Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming in National Development (2002)**
 This manual was issued by the State Minister for the Empowerment of Women to provide guidance for government bodies in implementing the Instruction of the President No. 9/2000 concerning Gender Mainstreaming in National Development.

• **National Development Masterplan for Women's Empowerment (RIPNAS) 2000-2004**
The Masterplan was enacted by the State Minister for the Empowerment of Women. Its main objectives are "improving the life quality of women in any strategic sectors; increasing the socialization of gender equality and gender equity; eliminating any forms of violence against women; enforcement of Human Rights for women; and empowering and increasing the independence of women institutions and organizations."

The Government of Indonesia was one of 189 countries that supported the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2000. Goal 3 deals specifically with gender equality. The eight goals of the MDGs form an overarching framework that places human rights and poverty at the center of development policies. The government of Indonesia is committed to achieve the targets of the MDGs by 2015. In 2005 the government of Indonesia stated that Indonesia has made considerable progress in promoting gender equality. The ratio of male and female education, literacy rate, women's contribution in the non-agricultural sector and the participation of women in politics and legislative programs are cited as evidence of success. According to a government report, the expansion of the education system in Indonesia has benefited females, particularly the introduction of nine years compulsory basic education and the abolition of primary school fees in 1999.

issues that contribute to many of the problems women face in development. Nevertheless, this framework can be taken as a preliminary step toward gender mainstreaming in Indonesia.

It is important to note that the Government of Indonesia ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1984. In doing so, the government committed itself to efforts to promote and protect women's rights, and to implement measures to eliminate discrimination in public life, employment, education, health care, and other areas. The Government of Indonesia has to implement Article 14 of CEDAW, which states that "State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas ... and ... shall ensure to such women the right … to have access to … and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes."

Although the Indonesian government has initiated various steps in gender mainstreaming, the result of these processes has not been effective in reforming gender justice blind policies and programs related to forest tenure and forest governance.

There is one policy that clearly addresses gender justice in natural resources management and agrarian reform, known as the Decision of People's Assembly No. IX in 2001 (TAP MPR No. IX/2001). This policy was enacted by the highest body of the Indonesian State as a result of intensive lobbying by social movements at the time. Unfortunately, since 2004 this policy along with other policies enacted by the People's Assembly, were not effectively implemented.

5.2 Mainstreaming process of gender justice initiated by Non-Government Organizations

Gender justice mainstreaming among NGOs who work in forest tenure and forest governance has also been slow. Environmental and forest-related NGOs developed their understanding of gender-based problems and gender injustices in forest resources and natural resources management through close collaboration with women's NGOs. Among the very few initiatives to increase awareness and capacity building for activists and community organizers toward gender justice in community-based forest resources management, one was initiated in the late 1990s by RMI—the Indonesian Institute for Forest Environment, with support from KEMALA—Biodiversity Support Project and the Ford Foundation. Representatives of NGOs from various regions participated in a series of intensive training processes that RMI developed in close collaboration with Kapal Perempuan. Nevertheless, the result of these processes was not effective since many NGOs only sent junior staff that were not able to apply the skills they gained from the training process, as they did not have strong a bargaining position in their organizations.

Many NGOs working on forest tenure and forest governance still have very limited understanding of gender-related aspects including the concept of gender justice. The result of a gender assessment conducted for the Forest Governance Program of Kemitraan[49] shows that many key staffs/members of national NGOs that work on forest-related issues are not aware that gender justice is one of the core issues in forest tenure and forest governance. Many of them associate gender aspects merely with involvement and participation of women in their programs/projects. They also think addressing gender justice is not the business of their organizations as they work on forest tenure and forest governance, not on women's issues. Due to this low awareness of gender justice and gender-related aspects, it comes as no surprise to find that many NGOs working on forest tenure and forest governance have no gender justice policy to guide their planning, monitoring and evaluation processes. This contributes to the situation

6. TOWARD GENDER JUSTICE IN FOREST TENURE AND FOREST GOVERNANCE

where the principles of gender justice have not been included in the design, planning, monitoring and evaluation of programs and various forms of actions that they develop.

Adopting the above conceptual framework, we argue that gender justice in forest tenure and forest governance can be defined as the ending of injustices and inequalities between women and men that result in subordination, marginalization and discrimination of women and other vulnerable members of the community as well as violence against women and other vulnerable members of the community in the establishment and practice of forest tenure and governance.

We believe that in order to achieve gender justice, the following urgent steps and actions are needed.

- **Placing gender justice within efforts to reform the forest legal and regulatory framework**

The reformulation of the legal framework for forest lands and resources, which should include the recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, should also include gender justice principles and actions. Ongoing efforts initiated by various parties including public-interest lawyers and NGOs working on legal pluralism in advocating the reform of the regulatory framework for forest tenure and governance need to incorporate existing laws that provide recognition and protection of women's rights as well as a commitment to eliminate all forms of gender injustices.

- **Systematic capacity building on gender justice in forest tenure and governance among government institutions, civil society organizations and donor agencies**

Government agencies, donors, research institutions, NGOs and other civil society organizations should develop capacity building on gender justice in forest tenure and forest governance for their key members and staff. By doing so, their key staff that will be able to apply gender analysis and adopt gender justice principles in projects and programs. Furthermore, it is expected that these institutions will be able to develop gender justice policies that guide their planning, monitoring and evaluation processes.

- **Increasing voices of women and vulnerable groups in decision-making**

Gender justice is dependent on the ability of women and other vulnerable groups to participate in and influence the decision-making process at all levels, from household and community to national, regional and global levels.

> "As an outcome gender justice implies access to and control over resources, combined with agency. Gender justice requires that women are able to ensure that power-holders—whether in the household, the community, the market, or the state—can be held to account so that actions that limit, on the grounds of gender, women's access to resources or capacity to make choices, are prevented or punished."[50]

Efforts to increase the role of women and other vulnerable groups in decision-making process related to forest tenure and governance can be carried out through the following steps: a) involvement of women and vulnerable groups in policymaking at community and district levels, as well as at higher levels, and b) supporting the participation of women and vulnerable groups in community organizing processes. This step will contribute significantly to increasing women's role in decision-making within the home and at the same time prepares and encourages women to participate more actively in their communities.

- **Adopting gender justice principles in community organizing processes and in applying multistakeholder approaches at all levels in reforming forest governance through tenure conflict resolution**

Civil society organizations that work at the grassroots level should adopt gender justice principles and practices in community organizing processes. One means is by recruiting female community organizers/village facilitators in order to encourage participation of female villagers, particularly those that belong to vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, in their programs/projects aiming to secure community forest tenure and just forest governance.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ENDNOTES

[1] Ph.D. Candidate in Socio-cultural Anthropology, University of Washington, U.S.A., a founding member of RMI-the Indonesian Institute for Forest and Environment, and a member of the advisory board of KAPAL Perempuan.

[2] Chief of Cluster, Environmental and Economic Governance, Kemitraan-Partnership for Governance Reform, Indonesia, and a fellow of the Samdhana Institute

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[16] Ribot and Peluso 2003.

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[18] This case study has been written based on the accounts narrated intensively by Kasepuhan women during a series of community-based field school organized by RMI-the Indonesian Institute for Forest and Environment in 2009 in which Mia Siscawati served as one of the facilitators for the event.

[19] This is not her actual name. For protection purpose, all names in the case studies are pseudonyms.

[20] For detailed account on tenurial conflicts faced by Kasepuhan community, please see Moniaga, Sandra. 2009. Fighting over the land and forest: century-old conflicts persist in the vast tracts of Indonesia that are designated as state forest. Inside Indonesia 98: Oct-Dec 2009.; Hanafi, Imam, Nia Ramdhaniaty, and Budi Nurzaman. 2004. Nyoerang Alam Ka Tukang, Nyawang Anu Bakal Datang: Penelusuran Pergulatan di Kawasan Halimun, Jawa Barat-Banten. Bogor: RMI-the Indonesian Institute for Forest and Environment.

[21] This case study is written based on the involvement of Avi Mahaningtyas in the process of facilitating the development of forest governance in Central Kalimantan facilitated by the Kemitraan-Partnership for Governance Reform, and from the study on land tenure conflicts in Central Kalimantan prepared for the Kemitraan.

[22] (MacKinnon et al., 1996)

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[26]   Afiff, 2010.

[27]   Afiff 2010.

[28]   Galudra et al. 2010.

[29]   This case study is written based on accounts narrated by female villagers during gender assessment process of the Forest Governance Program of the Kemitraan-Partnership for Governance Reform, conducted in 2009.

[30]   Kabeer 2003.

[31]   Peluso and Vandergeest 2001.

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[44]   Wieringa 2002.

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[46]   Maria Mies in her book Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale (1986) coined the term "housewifization." She defines it as a process by which women are socially defined as housewives, dependent for their sustenance on the income of their husbands, irrespective of whether they are de facto housewives or not. The social definition of housewives is the social definition of men as breadwinners, irrespective of their actual contribution to their families. "Housewifization" is primarily an economic concept.

[47]   Suryakusuma 1996.

[48]   UNESCO 1999.

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[50]   Goetz 2007.

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RE-ENVISIONING REDD+: GENDER, FOREST GOVERNANCE AND REDD+ IN ASIA
Brief #4 of 4

June 2012   Jeannette Gurung[1] and Abidah Billah Setyowati[2]

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last several years, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) has gained momentum as an effective means to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. REDD is an initiative to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. "REDD+" goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. It is predicted that financial flows from developed to developing countries in the tropics for GHG emissions from REDD+ could reach up to US$30 billion a year. This significant North-South flow of funds could reward meaningful reductions in carbon emissions and could also support new, pro-poor development, help conserve biodiversity and secure vital ecosystem services. A core principle underlying REDD+ is performance-based payments, in which payments will be made to forest owners and users who can demonstrate reduced emissions and/or increased carbon stocks. It is aimed at paying carbon rights' holders with sufficient incentive to maintain or increase carbon stock in the forests.

Despite the lack of a global agreement on emissions reduction at the UNFCCC Climate Change conference in Copenhagen in 2009 (COP 15), many countries in Asia-Pacific have received a flood of international assistance to support REDD+ 'readiness'. These readiness projects are supported by numerous sources, such as the United Nation's Collaborative Programme on REDD (UN-REDD), bilateral cooperation, government-supported pilots, and private institutions for voluntary carbon markets.

REDD+ presents significant challenges and opportunities for countries in Asia. If properly designed and implemented, REDD+ will be able to contribute to significant reductions in the region's carbon emissions and deliver important co-benefits, such as biodiversity conservation, poverty reduction, opportunities for sustainable livelihoods in poor and marginalized communities, improved governance and tenure rights, as well as climate change adaptation benefits. While opportunities to

simultaneously mitigate climate change, conserve biodiversity, and improve local development sound ideal, there have also been growing concerns regarding the possible socio-economic impacts of REDD+ projects on forest-dependent communities. Limited participation by Indigenous Peoples, women and other marginalized groups, and the increased risk of losing access to forests due to limited acknowledgment of their rights over forest resources have both been cited as potential problems.[3] In this light, women are among those most likely to be negatively affected by climate change.

Although there have been numerous studies conducted to understand the potential socio-economic impacts of the REDD+ initiative to forest dependent people and governance issues,[4] thorough investigations to understand how the initiative impacts men and women differently are still entirely lacking. Despite several decades of forestry policies and programs seeking to foster and/or support community forest management and related livelihood and enterprise initiatives, and a wealth of lessons learned about the need to understand the gender dimension of community forest resource governance, use and management, as well as experience in implementing targeted actions to address gender disparities, the lessons learned have not been reflected in the design or implementation of REDD+ initiatives. In this case, gender analysis can be an invaluable tool to illuminate the ways in which REDD+ and Payment for Environmental Services (PES) projects bring about gender-differentiated consequences, recommend steps to be taken to mitigate negative impacts on women, and develop gender equitable outcomes throughout the project development and implementation.

Institutions responsible for REDD+ programs and projects are not situated in a vacuum and cannot be separated from the influence of the larger society in which they are situated; an institution's culture tends to reproduce the norms, values and attitudes of the larger society. In this study, we further explore how patriarchal institutional culture contributes to the shape of REDD+ program and activities.

This chapter is based on the authors' recent study for USAID on gender and REDD+ in the Asia region.[5] The study aims at identifying and assessing existing practices of REDD+ and PES projects that contribute to women's empowerment and gender integration, and provide recommendations on how REDD+ initiatives in Asia can successfully incorporate gender perspectives. The study also analyzes how different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace and households affect the achievement of sustainable results for REDD+ projects, and how the anticipated results of the project affect men and women differently. To do so, the authors conducted in-country consultations in Viet NamViet Nam, Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal and Cambodia, and desk studies for India, Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea. Interviews were conducted with various stakeholders engaged in REDD+ project development and implementation and some representatives of international organizations, including World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), UN-REDD, and RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC). The authors also conducted field visits to some REDD+ and PES pilot projects, including: Oddar Meanchey REDD+ project (OM-REDD) in Cambodia; Ulu Masen REDD+ in Aceh, Indonesia; UN-REDD and a PES projects in Viet Nam; and NORAD REDD+ and PES pilot projects in Nepal.

2. INCORPORATION OF GENDER INTO REDD+ PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

Despite the evidence of women's extensive engagement in forest management, few institutions in the countries studied have incorporated gender into their activities and plans. The current, almost complete neglect of gender issues and women's roles as stakeholders within REDD+ policies, plans and projects

globally provides evidence that little has changed in the way that members of the forest sector view these concerns. This is despite the fact that gender equality is currently understood in the community of development practitioners as key to reaching goals for poverty alleviation and human development.

The study finds that institutions implementing and/or supporting REDD+ projects in the region are not systematically incorporating gender considerations within their REDD+ policies, plans and projects. In Cambodia, there is no evidence that the REDD+ Roadmap planners recognize that women and men have different roles and knowledge related to forest management, and that women should therefore be recognized as significant stakeholders. There is no gender-based targeting of REDD+ activities or consideration of gender as an indicator within the Roadmap's Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA). Within the OM-REDD Project in Cambodia, there is evidence of an awareness of the need to secure women's participation and benefits to ensure project success, but the project's planning and implementation lacks a systematic incorporation of gender concerns. A proposal to strengthen women's almost non-existent leadership in the Community Forests Management Committees (CFMCs) outlines a set of activities for women's empowerment, but has not been implemented, as it was not incorporated into the original budget and plan of work.

In Viet Nam, gender issues have either not been considered, or if considered, have not been systematically incorporated within project objectives and activities of the projects reviewed, including

BOX 1: SUCCESS STORY OF SUSTAINING LOCAL ECONOMY THROUGH DEVELOPING MICRO FINANCE FOR WOMEN

Lubuk Beringin is a village covering 2,800 hectares (84 percent of the area is watershed protection forest), is located in Bungo District in the edge of Kerinci Seblat National Park (TNKS). The majority of people in the village live below poverty line. The main source of local income is rubber from agroforests that provide not only rubber but also durian and other fruits as well as medicinal plants. Under Integrated Conservation and Development Project (ICDP) in TNKS (1997-2002), the villagers agreed to maintain the forest areas, planting bamboo along the riverside and not cultivating land with more than 80 degree slope. A local NGO, KKI Warsi, assisted men and women to empower village institutions to enhance villagers' economic status and to sustainably manage natural resources. In 2000, the NGO started to facilitate women, all of whom were Muslim, to hold a meeting on Fridays. The meetings began with religious teachings and continued with arisan, a private lottery similar to a betting pool. Each participant is obliged to submit IDR 2,000 (1,000 for lottery share and the rest to support the religious teaching). In the long run, they eventually managed to develop a credit union that provides micro credit for women to start up small businesses and offer financial support when they face unexpected expenses.

Despite the failure of other ICDP initiatives in this area, Dahlia, a women's cooperative, sustains and successfully supports the local economy. A PES project was initiated by ICRAF after the closure of ICDP project. An agreement was developed between villagers who have protected the watershed areas and ICRAF. In return, the communities were granted micro-hydro facilities to generate electricity in the village. The women's credit union also got additional revenue for their credit union. The credit union is now a legal entity, a women cooperative that provides its members with small loans. The cooperative also rents items for wedding parties or meetings, and home handicrafts industries. An annual meeting is held for members to distribute the net profits of the cooperative to its members. Some portion of the profit is allocated for watershed conservation expenses and some other for new investments. Currently the cooperative has total assets of IDR 200 million (approximately US$23,000).

Source: Akiefnawati et.al. (2010); Syaifullah (2008)

those of the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), Winrock and UN-REDD. While there were initiatives to incorporate gender in the original project design of Winrock's Asia Regional Biodiversity Conservation Program (ARBCP), project implementation has not supported gender-specific activities other than to support women as bamboo handicraft entrepreneurs. More often, project leaders assume that household benefits—such as payments from PES projects—automatically reach women and lead to women's empowerment, without dedicating attention to this objective, nor addressing the costs of women's participation in these activities. Attention to gender in the programs/projects reviewed is limited to counting the numbers of women versus men engaged in activities and benefitting from services, and is lacking in approaches to ensure that women's strategic needs to access and influence the design and monitoring of the projects are met. The UN-REDD program in Viet Nam has addressed gender issues by ensuring significant women's participation in its awareness programs, by developing the capacities of rural women to participate in a meaningful way, and inviting members of the Women's Union into these sessions. However to date, there is no evidence of how gender is to be addressed beyond this stage, either in capacity building activities or through the benefit distribution system. All of these programs lack tailor-made approaches to empower women through recognition, assimilation, capacity-building and leadership for ensuring gender consideration into REDD+ and PES projects. Likewise, there is no mention of how REDD+ projects might affect women's needs for non-timber forest products (NTFPs) or agricultural resources, or impact their current workloads.

In Indonesia, the REDD+ National Strategy does not mention gender issues or provide ideas about how REDD+ projects might have differentiated impacts on women and men, and there is no clear plan to ensure women have equal access to project information and benefits. Although the document provides a specific section on the importance of enhancing multi-stakeholder participation in the processes of REDD+ policy and project development, women are not considered as an important stakeholder in these processes. Planning documents for the Ulu Masen REDD project refer to the need to engage women in the consultative processes and incorporate women's voices into project activities, but the project has not succeeded in engaging women in this way, in part due to its lack of a strategy to address the strong patriarchal character of the mukim (local administration) structure that effectively denies women access to public meetings. In many community forestry projects in Indonesia, women are significantly involved in numerous activities such as planting, nursery management, maintenance, replanting trees, harvesting NTFPs and marketing the products.[6] However, women's participation and representation in the forest farmers groups (Kelompok Tani Hutan), an institution that is usually established in the village located close to forest areas, is almost absent.[7]

In Nepal, women are projected in REDD+ readiness documents as vulnerable communities, despite recent policy changes that recognize new rights for women to own land and have their issues addressed at the highest levels. Within Nepal's Readiness Plan, consultation is recommended as the only strategy for attending to gender issues. The REDD Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) does not discuss the possible costs of REDD+ mechanisms in Nepal, which may have negative impacts on women's access to fuel wood and other NTFPs by restricting their access to forest use because of claims by other actors on forest resources for carbon sales or conservation purposes. None of the existing projects have identified the Convention to End Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as a binding agreement to safeguard women's rights in REDD+ programs; indeed the study team found little awareness of CEDAW amongst staff of the institutions and projects visited.

In the UN-REDD document for Papua New Guinea (PNG), there is no specific consideration of the ways REDD+ projects and policies can affect women and men differently, or acknowledgement that

women are important stakeholders to be consulted in the process. The document cites the outcomes to be achieved by UN-REDD to reduce gender inequalities in PNG by 2012 but there is no further discussion of how REDD+ schemes can be an avenue for achieving the intended outcomes.

Similarly, within the international and regional organizations interviewed, gender is just beginning to be considered and not yet mainstreamed throughout programs of research, capacity building and advisory services delivered by RECOFTC, ICRAF and CIFOR. ICRAF has recently conducted the first study to compare gender-disaggregated profiles and gender analyses of three PES sites in the Philippines to determine the perspectives of women and men on environmental conservation and rewards for environmental services, and elicit issues and implications for integrating gender in project policies, plans and activities. This study concludes with two vague recommendations: "harness gender differentials for effective participation in natural resource management and address women's strategic needs but avoid the 'multiple role syndrome'."[8] Otherwise, ICRAF has produced tools to generate sex-disaggregated data on tenure rights to land and carbon and recognizes the gender implications of benefit sharing. CIFOR has initiated research on women's involvement in REDD+ through a module within its Global Comparative Study on REDD+, that contains a 'women's questionnaire' to gather data on women's livelihoods and how they change over time; women's participation in village decisions; perceptions of changes in women's wellbeing; and women's knowledge of and involvement in REDD+.

These organizations have stated their intentions to build internal capacities to enhance their activities to incorporate gender into REDD+ and other programs of work in the near future. To date, RECOFTC has not yet systematically incorporated gender or paid specific attention to women as stakeholders or professionals in their capacity building or publications related to REDD+, but has expressed interest in doing so; they have initiated a Gender in REDD Net list-serve that is informing users of new publications and developments.

The study shows that countries and organizations in the Asia region have far to go before they are effectively addressing gender within their REDD+ policies, plans and projects. These findings mirror global trends that have excluded women and gender from traditionally male-dominated forestry and environment sectors for decades, as described above.

It should be noted that the very process of discussing this topic with people in the countries covered in this study generated an overwhelmingly positive response by those interviewed, several of whom demonstrated high levels of interest to champion gender equality and women's empowerment in their projects and institutions. These positive demonstrations of commitment, however, are in stark contrast to institutional realities, where institutions have not seriously considered gender or viewed women as key stakeholders in forest management. Despite that fact, there has been positive development since the completion of this study, wherein some institutions and projects, such as UN-REDD, USAID and KFCP projects in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, have recently hired gender consultants to assist the development of a work plan for gender within its programs.

3. PARTICIPATION AND BENEFIT SHARING

The participation of local communities and marginalized groups living around the forest in the development and implementation of REDD+ projects is central to ensure sustainable outcomes of these initiatives. The degree to which local communities can meaningfully participate in REDD+ activities will depend on accurate information they have about REDD+: what it is about, what their participation will be and what costs and benefits they might incur from their engagement. However, the complexity of

REDD+ frameworks and the highly technical language used in the consultations have rendered meaningful participation by representatives of marginalized groups impossible. A lack of understanding about the REDD+ framework, its benefits and risks have been a major barrier for their effective participation. Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is promoted as a way to achieve a higher level of participation throughout all phases of REDD+ project development and implementation.[9]

Most of the REDD+ initiatives assessed in this study have acknowledged the importance of stakeholders' engagement in REDD+ project development and implementation. Nevertheless, women's participation in these processes has been minimal due to limited acknowledgement of women as a distinct stakeholder, with perspectives and experiences that may differ from those of men. In Indonesia and Cambodia, women have been minimally involved in REDD+ decision making processes from village to national levels. In one of the project sites visited by the team in Aceh, Indonesia, a women's group had neither an understanding about the project and what benefits could be gained, nor had they received an invitation to be engaged in any consultation processes. Despite women's involvement in maintaining a tree nursery and organic composting site, they had not been involved in the broader discussion about the project scheme. The patriarchal culture and conservative religious views on women's roles in the public spaces give considerable challenges for women to fully participate in the project. Male villagers repeatedly mentioned women's lack of formal education and confidence to speak in public as reasons not to invite women in the meetings. In Viet Nam, however, women have been reported to participate in the UN-REDD FPIC process in Lam Dong province, in which more than half (51.8 percent) of the village level meeting participants were women. At these meetings, women were reportedly outspoken and also clear on their assertions about REDD. However, women's presence and influence is almost negligible at the higher district and national levels.

Regardless of the discouraging fact of minimal levels of women's representation and participation in REDD+ project development and implementation, there are many women's formal and informal organizations that can potentially be empowered to engage in the REDD+ project development and implementation and to channel benefits from the initiatives in the future. In Indonesia, the study finds many formal/informal women's organizations at the village level, such as those of women farmers' organizations (kelompok wanita tani). In Viet Nam, there is the Viet Nam Women's Union (VWU), a mass organization representing all strata of women throughout the country at the local, provincial and national levels. The VWU and the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) share responsibility for implementing the Gender Equality Law but their involvement in the REDD/PES is noticeably absent. In Nepal, the Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association (HIMAWANTI) is a federation of women-led Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) of 32 districts, representing all geographical locations. HIMAWANTI works through its women change agents on several topics, ranging from human rights to natural resource management. A large formal body of CFUGs, FECOFUN, has stipulated that 50 percent of positions within its national and district structures should be for women members, providing appropriate capacity development programs for advocacy. Yet this policy is not fully operational at the local level. FECOFUN's lack of advocacy for women's issues in REDD awareness programs was evident during the R-PP preparation phase and within its own project, the RECOFTC/FECOFUN REDD project.

As REDD+ projects investigated in this study are still at the initial stage of development and implementation, most of them have not clearly designated a benefit sharing mechanism. In some cases of REDD+ projects in Cambodia and Indonesia, the percentage of benefit allocation among different project proponents has been decided but how the benefits will be distributed within communities is still unclear.

It is commonly assumed that if benefits flow to village level institutions, despite these being predominantly male-led, then benefits will trickle down equally to other beneficiaries in the village, including women.

This view is rooted in a misleading assumption that forest dependent communities are homogenous or balance the power of different community members and neglects power relation dynamics embedded in cultural and social structures within communities. Experience with PES and community forestry projects has shown that if women are not clearly targeted as project beneficiaries, for example by including their names on certificates and contracts, they will not likely obtain the project benefits.[10] In this way, REDD+ may serve to actually widen gender disparities. Therefore, in implementing REDD+ initiatives, benefit sharing mechanisms and payment structures should be gender sensitive.

4. WOMEN'S ROLE AND STATUS IN RELATION TO LAND OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT UNDER REDD+ PROJECTS

Forest tenure is one of major themes in the REDD+ debates. The rights to obtain benefits and participate in the decision making processes of REDD+ project is often determined by tenure rights over forest land. Clear tenure arrangement, roles and responsibilities in the REDD+ implementation will enable the project proponents to devise equal and just benefit sharing mechanisms and determine incentive for behavior change. The larger context of discussions amongst REDD+ supporters reveals a consensus that, "secure titles and access rights are seen to be fundamental for an effective REDD design."[11] In this regard, some authors have argued that REDD+ could prompt governments to clarify and formalize tenure rules, which would enable forest dependent communities to use forest conservation incentive payments to improve education and health care and as a source of direct revenue.[12]

In the current REDD+ discussion, widespread attention to Indigenous People's rights (in reference to the UNDRIP), in particular, brings a strong rights-based approach that should, in theory, carry over to a consideration of women's rights to land, as stipulated by CEDAW and other international treaties signed on by the majority of the world's countries, guaranteeing these rights. Without secure tenure rights, local communities, including women, are very prone to dispossession, especially if REDD+ projects increase land values and outside interests.[13] Based on her study on land tenure reform in Latin America and Asia, Larson argues that even if the REDD+ programs are planned to ensure secure tenure rights, there are still risks of elite capture, conflict and inequity.[14]

Although clear and secure tenure has been acknowledged as a necessary pre-condition for making the REDD+ initiative successful, such a condition can hardly be found in countries assessed in this study. Unclear tenure arrangements over forestland are common. In addition, due to institutionalized gender biases and the widespread exclusion of women stakeholders in global and national forums on REDD+, women's rights to land and forest resources have not been part of the discussions. Women risk exclusion from REDD+ and other carbon payment opportunities by virtue of their weak rights to land and trees. They suffer from not only a lack of legal rights, but also weak traditional rights over land and trees.

It is important to note that recognition of rights to forest products and carbon credits from forests is critical in order for women to be included in the revenue sharing from REDD+ activities on such lands. Given that REDD+ funding is based on performance indicators (and not development assistance as usual), the degree to which globally agreed indicators comply with international laws that assure women's equal rights to land affects whether or not REDD+ becomes a means of transformation for women's property rights. REDD+ has the potential to provide women with new rights to forest land, if women are recognized as stakeholders whose secure titles are required by REDD+ financing mechanisms, donors and private investors.

5. GENDER ANALYSIS

As described earlier, REDD+ provides both opportunities and challenges for numerous marginalized groups, including women. Our study points to potential gendered impacts of REDD+ initiatives and reveals the ways in which women can positively contribute to and benefit from the initiatives.

5.1 REDD+ projects' anticipated impacts on men and women

REDD+ provides a framework for supporting activities that can have positive impacts on communities, improve livelihoods, and conserve and restore forest resources, presenting some opportunities for positive outcomes for forest-dependent communities. However, REDD+ could also produce significant risks and harmful negative outcomes. Indeed, REDD+ projects will impact women and men differently. Current discussions on REDD+ are very weak with respect to the gender dimension and to its impacts on rural women who have few or no options. There are at least four factors that influence the ways REDD+ produce gendered differentiated impacts:

- *Women's higher workloads*

Studies and reports have suggested that in many rural communities, women often have higher workloads than men. In Nepal, women work four to five hours longer than men.[15] Their activities to collect fuelwood, water and fodder becomes much more tiring and time consuming in the hill and mountain areas due to difficult terrain and poor access to roads, markets and water supplies.[16] Women-headed farm households have considerably higher workloads, particularly when male labour is not available for numerous tasks, such as ploughing. In the context of REDD+, our study shows that women are often unable to participate in numerous capacity building activities and decision making processes because of their high workloads.

Furthermore, there are also risks that REDD+ mechanisms may not address women's differentiated roles in forest management (e.g. need of fuel-wood, honey, other NTFPs). Although women participate in forest patrolling in some of the countries of this assessment, men are often said to be the forest patrollers. Women are perceived to do the 'soft' work such as household and child rearing tasks, while men are perceived to do the 'hard' work, outside the home. Due to such perceptional boundaries, women tend to get no recognition for their contributions to forest protection and management. As such, their recognition as active agents for protection and thus, they may not be compensated under REDD+ or PES payments, despite significant increases in their work burdens that may result from additional forest management activities. Due to the differentiated roles and rights of women and men in relation to forest resource management, and the fact that REDD+ is performance-based, there is a need for specific gender analyses and provisions in all REDD+ mechanisms so that women can be directly rewarded for their forest enhancing activities.

- *Gendered access to decision making processes*

Within REDD+, there is a fairly high probability that rural women will be harmed by projects that exclude them from decision making processes and the use of forests on which they and their households rely. Consultations on REDD+ denote a marked absence of women in who represent these concerns, or who can influence decision makers. Due to the limited capacity and knowledge of women's groups about REDD+ impacts on women, it is much harder for women to significantly engage in technical and legal negotiations on REDD+ and benefit sharing. In addition, women can be displaced from forests that they depend on, when these are placed under conservation schemes for carbon sequestration. Without specific

plans to incorporate gender-based needs and priorities, it is questionable as to whether or not REDD+ benefits can extend beyond carbon revenues to social and subsistence benefits.

- *Gendered access to knowledge related to REDD+*

Access to knowledge about REDD+ initiative and its potential risks and benefits are very crucial for forest dependent communities so that they can make informed decision related to the initiative. Nevertheless, women and men have differentiated access to knowledge about REDD+. Men may learn more about REDD+ and participate more in public fora while women are left out, thus widening the gap. Due to their lower levels of literacy, the lack of recognition of women as significant stakeholders, and widespread gender biases, women may be further excluded while men are provided with more and more capacity building opportunities, as currently proposed by REDD+ protagonists.

- *Gendered access to REDD+ benefits*

As described earlier, access to REDD+ benefits are often differentiated by gender. Women are prone to be excluded from REDD+ and other carbon payment opportunities due to their weak legal and customary rights to land and trees and their limited participation in the decision making processes to determine benefit sharing. If women cannot participate in the decision-making process on benefit sharing, their aspiration and needs would unlikely be incorporated and considered in the benefit sharing systems.

The four factors above describe ways in which REDD+ can bring negative impacts to women. It is critical that this gap be addressed so that the policies, mechanisms and processes take full account of the differentiated rights, roles and responsibilities of men and women, promote gender equality and equity in REDD+ policies and practices, and reward women who protect and manage forest resources. If designed and implemented effectively, REDD+ has the potential to simultaneously serve as a vehicle for sustainability, poverty alleviation and women's empowerment. REDD+ can have positive implications for both gender equality and women's leadership. A REDD+ project that delivers carbon revenues to special groups of stakeholders who are rewarded for their contributions to reducing carbon emissions, enhancing forest protection, etc. could be making higher payments to women than men in a community, based on performance indicators and PES contracts. This would be the case if projects were implemented by women's organizations with the objective of providing maximum benefits from REDD+ projects to rural women managing forest enhancement activities through collectives. This is currently being piloted by groups of Indigenous Peoples in Nepal, for example, using funds allocated by donors sympathetic to their cause.

5.2 Women's potential contributions to REDD+ initiatives

Different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace and household can affect the achievement of sustainable results in REDD+ projects. Therefore, engaging all legitimate stakeholders who depend on forest resources and will be affected by REDD+ projects is central to achieve successful implementation of projects and to produce sustainable outcomes. Women can contribute to long-term success in several ways:

- *Women often have intimate knowledge of landscapes that can help REDD+ projects succeed*

As primary users and managers of forests, women often have local and very specific and sophisticated knowledge of the interlinked systems of forests, livestock and crop production, and have made significant contributions of labor and time to maintaining forest and soil resources. With such unique knowledge, derived from experience, women can provide added value to initiatives to mitigate climate change.

- *Women can play an essential role in forest monitoring*

Likewise, women's role in monitoring the forest health, forest protection and by extension carbon sequestration can substantially benefit REDD+. As the information from Nepal, Cambodia and Viet Nam indicates, monitoring of forests by staff of forest departments together with men and women of communities has been helpful to control forest misuse and improve protection.

- *Engaging and consulting women in project design and implementation is key to success at the local level and they should be rewarded for their efforts*

Women's use of forests for fuel wood renders them agents of deforestation, and therefore as stakeholders for whom behavior change can decrease carbon emissions. As such, they should be offered incentives that reward them for forest enhancement and avoided forest degradation/deforestation. For REDD+ to achieve sustained emission cuts, forests need to be well-protected and managed. Given the wide scope of women's activities in forestry, it is crucial that women understand the program, weigh the costs/benefits scenarios with and without REDD+, and then choose to engage in the project. For example, the substantive reduction in forest irregularities in the ARBCP project in Viet Nam (up to 50 percent) and thus, enhanced protection can be attributed to women's understanding, contribution and commitment to forest protection. Had the women not embraced and contributed to the program, the forest protection would likely have suffered and sustainability of forests could not be assured.

Some countries have developed and supported community forestry policies as a pathway for securing communities' rights over forest land. Given that forest land available for community management is, in almost all cases, owned by the government, rights for women to own land may not an option, making other means of assuring joint rights of both men and women to forests crucial. Success stories have been documented throughout Asia in which communities that obtain secure access to forests have successfully established sustainable forest management.[17] Women's engagement is critical for the success of community forestry initiatives. Studies in Nepal indicate that excluding women in forest management can result in negative consequences not only for gender equality and women's livelihoods, but also for efficient functioning and long term sustainability of these initiatives.[18] Women's CFUGs have successfully protected forest, rehabilitated degraded land, and managed nurseries. As a result, there have been fewer landslides, increased sources of fuel wood and livestock fodder for family members, among others. In Lubuk Beringin, Indonesia, assuring women's involvement in the community forestry project and PES projects has been the key to the generation of successful and sustainable alternative livelihoods in the villages.[19]

Studies in Nepal indicate that excluding women in forest management can result in negative consequences not only for gender equity and women's empowerment, but also for efficient functioning and long term sustainability of these initiatives.[20] The lack of women's participation in the forestry sector has proven to have detrimental effects. Reforestation projects in Nepal without a gender perspective faced problems when replanting, protecting the forests and implementing rules that protect the reserves.[21] Integrating women's needs and priorities in community forestry is thus essential to promote sustainable conservation.

Current gender roles assign women's responsibilities within household spheres, particularly in rural ethnic communities in Viet Nam. This also means that women need to cater to the household needs for forest products such as firewood, fruits, honey, etc. If REDD+ programs ban women's access and do not provide alternative ways to obtain these products, women's role may force them to break into forests to harvest trees and NTFPs, thus affecting the abilities of communities to protect forest resources. Similar cases have been reported in community forestry projects in Nepal.[22]

> • *Women's groups have proven to be effective structures for community-based forest management and should be engaged as a mechanism for capacity building and benefit sharing for REDD+*

Women's groups have proven to be effective structures for community-based forest management, and therefore should be engaged as a mechanism for capacity building and benefit sharing for REDD+. In Nepal, women CFUGs protecting forests, managing nurseries and afforesting degraded lands, which has resulted in fewer landslides, the provision of fuel and fodder resources, a tree survival rate of 60-80 percent, legal bans on tree felling, and increased sources of fuel wood and livestock fodder for member families. When women's groups were linked by an NGO in Cambodia to form networks, they were able to increase their power to negotiate prices; arrange transport to markets; set up and run community rice mill cooperatives to increase productivity and earnings; and influence decisions at all levels of government.[23] Thus, for REDD+ to be successful, forests have to be managed closely and belong to specific owners. Unless they are granted rights that provide them with clear benefits, rights and obligations, it cannot be assumed that women will contribute to the sustainability of protected forests.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

There are several recommendations that can be adopted to integrate gender perspectives in REDD+ programs, thereby ensuring that the initiatives do not harm women and can optimally contribute to gender equality.

First, REDD+ programs should incorporate gender mainstreaming tools. Key activities include:

Gender analysis:[24] conducting gender analysis to provide background information on gendered resource use, responsibilities, perspectives and needs. Collecting this information helps ensure the quality of REDD+ project design.

Gender-integrated design: Based on the gender analysis, develop a strategic plan to achieve change for women's empowerment and gender equality. This process should include women and men identified in Stage 1 and ensure their input and full participation in project decision making and entails identifying and working with opinion leaders, especially religious and women leaders/elders in communities on gender issues related to harmful practices; and consulting with external groups that can assist with strategic planning to change attitudes and increase acceptance of such approaches.

Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation: Develop a gender monitoring and evaluation (M & E) system that includes indicators for measuring behavioral and institutional outcomes, and ensures the participation of women and men leaders in this process. Use outcome mapping and participatory evaluation methods to determine effectiveness of women's groups to implement project activities, monitor, and distribute benefits. One specific suggestion is to incorporate gender indicators into existing standards and guidelines for REDD+ monitoring and evaluation, such as Climate, Community and Biodiversity Project Design Standards (CCB Standards),[24] to ensure that women have equal access to REDD+ benefits and avoid negative impacts.

Second, REDD+ projects should pay particular attention to incorporate gender into aspects of participation, capacity building, governance and benefit sharing.

Meaningful participation: To ensure women's meaningful participation in all stages of REDD+ initiatives, it is crucial to raise awareness among stakeholders to underline that women are a distinct stakeholder group in REDD+. Bringing these issues up in dialogue will raise awareness and embolden

those who already have an interest in addressing gender issues. Furthermore, it may be important to mandate at least 30 percent[25] of women's participation in consultations and awareness sessions and develop their abilities to advocate effectively, to assure that women have equal and timely access to information on REDD+ policies, processes, risks and benefits. Ensuring that women are fully participating in decisions related to REDD+ program activities that would affect the resources on which their livelihoods depend.

Due to women's multiple roles as caretakers, farmers and collectors of water, fuel wood and other necessities, they are often unable to attend meetings and are therefore denied access to information. Meetings therefore must be organized in ways that suit women's schedules, use appropriate language and terminology and allow sufficient time for discussion. Based on information acquired, women may have the right to withhold consent for REDD+ projects to be implemented within their communities[26] as FPIC provides to Indigenous Peoples.

Technical and leadership capacity building for women is important to enable women to become 'champions' who can influence and train others. In order for rural, poor women to feel sufficiently empowered to play an active role in REDD+, they must gain skills that include: literacy/numeracy, advocacy/public speaking, community development and organizing, influencing and negotiation and MRV (measurement, reporting and verification) of forest carbon (for baseline establishment and verification). In addition, men's support to women leaders is crucial to create an environment that enables women's effective engagement.

Strengthen women's organizations/self-help groups to provide them with skills and knowledge to enable them to negotiate the terms of their engagement with REDD+ projects and to obtain loans and technical assistance through technical and micro-finance institutions. Actions should include the following:

1. Map existing formal and informal women's organizations at the local level, including farmer associations, savings and micro-credit groups

2. Engage with mixed organizations of men and women (i.e. within farmer associations) to include unique knowledge and perspectives of both groups, and build their mutual support for REDD+-related initiatives

3. Develop systems of benefit distribution, using existing savings, micro-credit and self-help group mechanisms

4. Support/form federations of women's groups managing forest resources, so as to promote shared learning, and advocacy at the national level

5. Encourage vertical and horizontal alliances between local level groups and national women's organizations and service NGOs (vertical linkages, as in Viet Nam that spur innovation and synergistic actions)

Governance: Mandate at least 30 percent women's membership in governing bodies for community forestry and local and national development/administration, including those that make decisions related to fund disbursement. Based on this assessment's findings that the forestry and environment sectors in the countries surveyed are traditionally dominated by men to the detriment of women's advancement and consideration of gender issues at national, regional and local governance level, it is important to ensure that women are not only represented in decision making bodies, but also given the means and forums to effectively participate. Strengthening women's participation in Community

Forestry Management Committees would increase women's ability to address their needs and assure their right to benefits of REDD+. For instance, the CFUGs in Nepal provide a critical entry point for women to gain experience and confidence, and build networks that could be leveraged in seeking high-level support and promoting change in political structures.

Benefit sharing: Mechanisms of benefit distribution that recognize and reward women's contributions to REDD+ activities must be developed to ensure that women get equal access to the benefits. It is also important to analyze gaps and opportunities in current benefit sharing systems to incorporate gender and social equity into the design. This analysis should consider existing micro-credit and savings schemes used by local communities and women's groups. Use action research to test various benefit sharing and distribution mechanisms. Many of the existing recommendations geared toward ensuring that REDD+ helps poor communities—ensuring equitable benefit distribution; systems of accountability, information-sharing, and participation in decision-making; and accessibility on a smaller scale—can and need to be adapted to apply specifically to the situation of women.[27] Often women do not have their economic, household, or personal needs met when such mechanisms channel resources to a community or project. One way around this is to specifically include women's names on certificates and contracts, so they will obtain project benefits.

Third, provide secure tenure for women.

Official recognition and implementation of women's rights to forest products and carbon from forests is crucial to ensure women to get share from the revenue of REDD+ and ensure their traditional access to forests for fuel wood and livelihoods is not unduly restricted due to REDD+ activities. Actions to strengthen women's land tenure position are critical to enable them to benefit from payments for conserving trees and land. This includes formalizing women's collective rights to forest or wastelands in order to assure their long-term rights to carbon payments. REDD+ has the potential of providing women with new rights to forest land, if women are recognized as stakeholders whose secure titles are required by REDD+ financing mechanisms, donors and private investors. Furthermore, given that REDD+ funding is based on performance (and not development assistance as usual), the degree to which globally agreed indicators comply with international laws that ensure women's equal rights to land affects whether or not REDD+ will be transformative for women's property rights. REDD+ has the potential of providing women with new rights to forest land, if women are recognized as stakeholders whose secure titles are required by REDD+ investors.

Fourth, compensate women for their engagement in forest protection and carbon monitoring activities.

Women's role in monitoring forest health, forest protection and, by extension, carbon sequestration can substantially benefit REDD+. As information from Nepal, Cambodia and Viet Nam indicates, combined forest monitoring including forest department staff together community members (men and women) has helped control forest misuse and improve forest protection. Including women in and compensating them for forest protection and monitoring activities can increase the sustainability of REDD+ activities, while improving women's livelihoods and social standing. Field experience also shows that involving women in forest management improves management outcomes, whereas excluding them has a negative impact, especially since women often heavily dependent on forest resources.

Fifth, explore pilot projects that use REDD+ payments to reward women for their knowledge and roles as forest managers.

Through activities that increase carbon sequestration, such as tree planting or reforestation, or reduce GHG emissions from forests, such as protecting threatened forests, women forest users should be able to

generate carbon credits that can provide them with income while encouraging and enhancing their sustainable land use practices. Given the current state of REDD+ development, projects that work directly with women's forest users groups are likely to be looking to sell credits on the voluntary carbon markets or be part of national or regional level schemes to scale up REDD+.

Sixth, develop and analyze innovations through pilot projects to use forest carbon markets for income generation for rural women.

Seventh, look for ways to increase women's engagement and buy-in by increasing their living standards and wellbeing.

Design REDD+ activities in ways that enable women's participation in decision making, including reducing women's workloads to meet families' daily needs for food, fuel and income that are currently limiting their participation in community meetings and decision-making processes, and preventing them from achieving higher levels of well-being. Improved cook stoves, biogas, solar energy sources and other technologies provide ways in which to address drivers of deforestation while simultaneously decreasing the time women must spend for fuel wood collection, for example. These activities may be included in REDD+ strategies, as they relate to the reduction of carbon emissions.

Finally, promote technologies of renewable energy and agroforestry to meet the needs of women for fuel wood and fodder resources while building their climate change resilience.

Poor women are the most likely to be negatively affected by climate change, through their roles as farmers and food providers. Women of smallholder farming communities who rely on forest resources, and have limited ability to expand or intensify, will suffer most from the negative impacts of climate change. Agro-forestry can play an important role in improving the resilience of farming systems to climate variability while increasing food security and providing fodder resources for livestock, thus easing women's workloads and alleviating hunger and poverty.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ENDNOTES

[1]   Founder and Director, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN), Gender Expert of the Program Advisory Committee of the CGIAR Participatory Research and Analysis program, Steering Committee Member of The Forest Dialogue and President of Adelboden Bureau for Mountain Development (UN-FAO).

[2]   Project coordinator for Capacity Building for Women's Leadership in farmers Producers Organizations in Asia-Pacific Region, WOCAN, and PhD candidate in political ecology, Rutgers University, U.S.A.

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[21]   Upadhyay 2005:3; Agarwal 2002: 4.

[22]   Agarwal, 2002.

[23]   Giri, K. 2009. *Gender considerations into REDD policy in Nepal.* Paper presented at WOCAN national workshop, held August 13-14, 2010 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

[24]   Common strategies, steps, and approaches for conducting a useful gender analysis include: Identify and analyze the roles of women and men—both adults and children—in four spheres: productive, reproductive, community management, and environmental management that affect resource use in the project sites; Identify women and men most affected by project interventions and community leaders with the most influence and importance; Examine access and control issues regarding resources in projects (including those of Benefit Distribution Systems); Identify harmful cultural practices that might be supported or exacerbated by the project; Identify practical and strategic needs of both women and men affected by the project goals through the initiation of changes that are needed, to mitigate harmful practices and leverage social change.

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[27]   Rights to withhold is stipulated in Article 32 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People for Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) which should be understood to apply to women of forest-dependent communities, as well as to Indigenous Peoples.

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1238 Wisconsin Avenue NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20007
+1 202 470 3900

www.rightsandresources.org

Ensuring Poor Rural Women Benefit from Forestland Reform in China:
Summary of Field Research and Policy Recommendations

Xiaobei Wang[1]

July 2012

1. Introduction

China has surpassed other emerging economies in creating a gender sensitive legal framework for land rights.[2] While China's constitution grants broad equal rights to women in all spheres of life, the Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women,[3] the Land Contracting Law[4] and the Land Management Law[5] provide specific protections for women's contracted land rights.

China has engaged in forestland tenure reform since the 1980s, focusing primarily on decentralizing forestland tenure rights[6] from the collective to households.[7] These reforms, which cover an area of nearly 120 Mha[8] and aim to reduce poverty while protecting forest resources and biodiversity, have led to improved livelihoods for approximately 400 million farmers.[9] In 2008, the central government initiated a new policy, which, *inter alia*, extended household use rights to a term of 70 years.[10] This policy aims to clarify and secure farmer households' rights to access, manage and benefit from, collective forestland,[11] but does not account for gender differences or contain specific provisions for the rights of women. To better understand the problems that women continue to face on the ground, and to formulate tailor-made recommendations for the Chinese government, Landesa conducted research on the gendered impact of China's recent forestland reform.

A desk study was complemented by field research conducted from July to September 2011 in three of China's most heavily forested provinces: Hunan, Fujian and Yunnan. In each province, 10 randomly selected villages were visited. Focus group discussions and key informant interviews were conducted with 72 local people, including female and male villagers, village committee leaders, local officials of the forestry department, and forestry company staff, to understand the status of forestland reforms at the local level and their impacts on women.

2. Findings

At first glance, the reforms seem to be making great strides towards achieving poverty reduction and improving livelihoods, and, indeed, they generally succeed in protecting farmers' land rights. However, the findings of Landesa's field research show that women's forestland rights are still in a vulnerable position. Our research suggests that the main factors restricting women's rights are due to forestland decentralization, which leaves much discretion to village committees to allocate forestland benefits.

Often traditional gender practices, norms, and roles influence those decisions in such a way that renders women's forestland tenure insecure. The following list outlines the study's key findings:

a. **Some women are not allocated forestland and therefore cannot realize the benefits, including income generated from forestland.**

Under China's forest tenure reform, the nationwide forestland allocation grants farmers' households 70-year use rights of the allocated forestland, yet specific allocations vary from collective to collective. Generally the distribution of forestland use rights is based on the number of family members in the household. Only members of the collective[12] are eligible to be allocated shares of the forestland and the benefit generated from the forestland. Each collective can define its own collective membership through the villagers' assembly or villagers' representative meetings. Therefore, different collectives may vary in defining their collective's membership.

Furthermore, women in rural China follow the tradition of patrilocal residence, moving to their husbands' collective upon marriage. Consequently, a woman's membership of a collective or a household will change with her marital status. This crucial issue has direct bearing on whether women can enjoy the same rights and benefits as men. Whether women marry in or marry out, they seem to face vulnerability, which worsens when they divorce.

Nearly all the collectives visited in the study deprived some women's rights to the allocation of forestland and related benefits by setting up special rules for women who married-in or married-out around the time of this new round of forestland allocation in that collective.

Take village A as example. The new round of forestland allocation for 70-year use rights in this village was carried out at the beginning of the year 2010. One article of the village rules states that those women who married-out before Dec. 31, 2009, do not have the right to receive their share of forestland and benefits in their birth collective in this new round of forestland allocation while those women who married-out after this specific date have the right. Similarly, another village rule targeted to married-in women states that those women who married-in after Dec. 31, 2009 do not have the right to receive their share of forestland and benefits in this collective in this new round of forestland allocation while those women who married-in before this specific date have the right. Moreover, each collective may define the starting point of marriage differently, thus, causing more problems for women. For example, a village may require a marriage certificate, registered residence migration card, and birth control approval certificate, or a combination thereof. The application process is often onerous. For many rural women, acquiring these documents is difficult and predicated on factors beyond their control.

For many rural women, especially the poorest, acquiring marriage certificates, or other required documents, is not a simple exercise. In rural China, the poorer a man is, the more likely he will marry a woman from remote, poor areas. Because the woman's birth village could be far from his, the preparation of these documents would require traveling great distances at considerable expense. Some villages resolve this by recognizing married-in women from distant villages as members once they give birth to their first child. Under these circumstances, whether a woman receives forestland rights or benefits in her married-in village is predicated on factors beyond her residence in a village, and in many cases beyond her control. As such, some women may be deprived of forestland rights simply because they are married. This clearly runs counter to the goals of the forestland reform policy.

Broadly speaking, collectives do not automatically accept newly married-in women as members. Also, the application process is often onerous. Collectives may require different documents, including marriage certificates, registered residence migration cards, and birth control approval certificates. For many rural women, acquiring these documents is difficult and predicated on factors beyond their control.

Collectives also vary in their treatment of divorced women. Some collectives do not regard married-in women who divorce within five years as full members, and therefore do not allocate them forestland rights. Usually, but not always, birth collectives will accept them as members if they reregister residence there. Other collectives claim that the divorce was a sham orchestrated by members of the woman's home collective to unlawfully to benefit from the marriage. In these cases, a woman could lose *de facto* membership of both her ex-husband's and her birth collective upon divorce.

b. Even if allocated forestland rights, some women cannot use the forestland.

In addition to the collective's rules outlining who may be a member of a collective, each household may have its own informal rules. A daughter to whom forestland rights are allocated will likely leave her share behind for her parents and brothers when she marries-out. Since she is not regarded as a member of her parents' household after marriage, she will no longer collect benefits from her share of forestland.

Moreover, although inheritance law calls for equal inheritance rights for men and women, the pervading patrilineal norms generally dictate that only sons will inherit forestland rights of the household from their parents. Also, if a woman is counted as a member of her married-in household when forestland rights are allocated but she then divorces, she must leave her share to her ex-husband and children.

c. Women's names are not included on forestland certificates.

The issuance of forestland certificates to farmers' households is one of the most important achievements of the most recent forestland reforms. These certificates legally recognize households' 70-year use rights to the forestland allocated to them. But only the name of the household head, usually male, is included on the certificate standardized by the State Forestry Administration (SFA). Without their names on the certificates, women are adversely affected in the a number of ways: the household head can transfer forestland without his spouse's consent; women cannot apply for the cutting trees quota; married-out or divorced women cannot claim their share of forestland when needed; and when forestland is expropriated by local governments, women have no basis to claim compensation.

d. Women do not participate in decision-making processes.

In most collectives within the sample, the representative meetings discussed and voted on which forestland reform plans to adopt. Although the law requires that female representatives account for at least one third of all members of the villagers' representatives' assembly,[13] women are commonly insufficiently represented in the decision-making process. In about four-fifths of the collectives, there were only one or two women representatives out of 20-30 members. The other one-fifth had more women representatives, but still accounted for less than 20 percent.

e. Women have insufficient access to information on forestland reform.

Field findings suggest a clear pattern of unbalanced distribution of forestland information. Village committee members, party members and group leaders, all of whom are predominantly men, have the most information about forestland tenure reform in the collective. Also, male villagers usually have relatively more access information than women. Most women interviewed were ignorant of the relevant laws and policies, plans for reform implementation in their own collectives, and the nature, extent, and duration of their forestland rights.

3. Policy Recommendations

Our study shows that women, despite the laws aiming to protect their rights, are still in a vulnerable position when it comes to forestland tenure. We suggest the following policy recommendations intended to help China strengthen forestland rights for women:

a. Define the forestland rights of each household member.

The current legal framework does not currently define the forestland rights of each family member within a household. Forestland is contracted to each household for 70 years,[14] but during that period the household composition will invariably change. It is therefore necessary to clearly define and document the rights of each household member and to issue titles both in the name of husband and wife, in the case of marriage.

b. Legislate a gender-sensitive definition of collective membership.

As decisions about membership and allocation are decided locally, following local cultural and social norms, women's status varies accordingly, and their rights are not guaranteed. To avoid normative discrimination that contravenes Chinese law, the Judicial Committee of the Supreme People's Court issued suggestions on defining collective membership to the National People's Council, contending that this is fundamentally a civil rights issue for residents.[15] Thus, Article 42, Section 1 of the Legislation Law and the legislators of the National People's Council should propose a legal definition. However, this is still an unsettled issue in the implementation of the law and still needs to be addressed.

c. Committee decisions on forestland rights should be subject to review.

The Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees permits broad self-governance for collectives.[16] Collectives are granted the authority to make forestland rights allocation plans, which includes allocating forestland and benefits based on the collective's definition for membership.[17] Currently there is no mechanism to review or appeal the legitimacy of collective rules.

The Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees clearly states that decisions made by the villagers' assembly or the villagers' representatives assembly cannot conflict with the laws, regulations and state policies, and may not infringe upon the personal rights, democratic rights, and lawful property rights of villagers. This provision can only be enforced if a review and appeal mechanism is incorporated into the self-governance committees.

d. Inform women and build local support capacity.

Women's participation in decision-making is low and in most cases this is due to a lack of information and knowledge about their rights. Despite male outmigration, women are underrepresented at representative meetings and do not actively participate; consequently, governance decisions rarely reflect women's interests. It is therefore important for the local government, village committee, especially local women's organization, such as the Women's Federation at the county or township level to build women's awareness, encourage them to participate actively in decision-making processes, and provide them with the skills necessary to do so in a meaningful way.

More targeted and effective measures should be taken to ensure that women have a complete understanding of forestland reforms, decisions on forestland use and management, and relevant laws and policies. Moreover, considering the impact of forestry policy on farmers' forestland management, the frequent changes in local forestry policies, and increasing male labor out-migration, it is critical that women have information about up-to-date forestry policies, so they are not prevented from receiving maximum benefit from their farming efforts. Targeted measures to increase women's access to information could include face to face training, special informative TV and radio programs for women, setting up agricultural information and consultancy centers by Women's Federations at the township level, regular legal education and consultancy activities at the village level, and delivering information to women through printed media such as posters and brochures.

e. Identify and train local support and information services for forestland rights, policies, and gender issues.

Comparative experience suggests that one way to effectively implement natural resource policy in a gender-sensitive way is to provide access to a person or office who can give information, advice on forestland tenure and policies Training and awareness campaigns are effective in terms of providing basic knowledge, but for knowledge to be an effective tool for change for women, women must access information when they need it. Such support might also assist women in participating more deeply in collective level decision making which impact them.

f. Implement a policy for gender mainstreaming and hold implementation agencies accountable by monitoring progress.

Learning from the experience of other similar jurisdictions, China could consider developing and implementing a gender mainstreaming policy on all forestland tenure and management reforms and programs. However, a policy alone is not sufficient, and should be accompanied by mechanisms which make the implementation agencies accountable for gender sensitive policies and programs, in both their design and implementation. This accountability must be founded on gender disaggregated monitoring and evaluation systems, which can also be used to track progress towards reaching gender mainstreaming objectives.

4. Conclusion

This research clearly shows that although women play very important roles in the management of forestland in rural China, rural women have not benefitted from the forestland tenure reform to the same extent as men, and women's rights to forestland are far from secure under the present legal and policy framework. Insecure forestland rights for rural women, especially those women whose livelihoods depend on forest resources, can adversely impact their overall role in the household economy including intra-household decision-making, income pooling, in household food security and

their children's education level. The risk of complete loss of forestland due to the change of marital status may anchor some poor women even deeper in poverty. Meanwhile, given their status as key agricultural laborers in rural China with a continuing increase of male urban labor migration, insecure forestland rights for rural women will inevitably have a negative impact on the sustainable development of the forestry sector in China.

This research deepens the understanding of rural Chinese women's current access to forest resources, the challenges they face reaping the benefits from those resources, and their unique needs. Appropriate, gender sensitive laws, policies and supporting systems are needed in China to strengthen rural women's forest land rights to promote the well-being of rural households and ensure the effectiveness and success of forestland reform in China. Based on the knowledge, insights and solutions recommendations generated from this research, Landesa seeks to build awareness among government officials and civil society members on women's forestland rights issues and advocate policy change with targeted and practical solutions to address the gender issues within China's forestland reform. This information can serve as a valuable tool to guide the design of a gender-sensitive forestland tenure regime. Ultimately, a forest tenure policy which considers both women's and men's interests will be more effective at reaching its goals of reducing poverty and improving the livelihoods of rural Chinese people.

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《关于推进集体林权制度改革的意见》

[12] The collective here refers to "the rural collective economic organization". Chinese government recognizes generally a single village (sometimes several villages) as a "collective economic organization" which is the owner of land in the area of villages and distributes it to the villagers for cultivation or residence. The village committee is elected by villagers as an autonomous institution of the collective economic organization.

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[17] Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees. Article 24 states that the matters that involve the interests of the villagers shall be dealt with only upon the villagers' assembly's decision through discussion which include land contracting plans, and a villagers' assembly may authorize the villagers' representatives' assembly to decide on the above-mentioned matters through discussion. Article 27 states that every decision made by the villagers' assembly shall be adopted by a majority vote of the persons present at the assembly.

The Role of Women in Asia's Community Forest Enterprises
Naomi Basik[i]

July 2012

1. Introduction: Forest Enterprises in the Context of Women, Gender and Forest Research

As the international community has increasingly focused on poverty reduction and rural development since 2000, forestry research has responded in kind with a corresponding increase in literature on the production, commercialization and consumption of timber and other non-timber forest products (NTFPs).

These studies highlight the importance of NTFPs to rural livelihoods, disaggregate data by gender to illustrate the different ways in which men and women value certain forest products, and illustrate how the gendered utilization of forest products affects markets and commercialization. Research on forest enterprises and markets in Asia exhibits a slightly broader range than the majority of gender-focused forestry research – due in part to the importance of forest economies in China and Southeast Asia, as well as in Nepal and India – and points to two main conclusions: first, women and men utilize NTFPs differently, with women's incomes more highly dependent on NTFP production; and second, women's lack of market access precludes them from realizing tangible benefits from forest resources.[ii] This paper draws on existing literature to explore the gendered elements of community-based forest enterprises (CFEs), focusing specifically on the role of women. It identifies the overarching challenges that prevent women from realizing full participation in and economic benefit from CFEs, and argues that they can overcome these challenges, in part by organizing into networks and associations.

2. Characteristics of Small and Community-based Forest Enterprises

Small and medium and community-based forest enterprises (SMFEs) and broader CFEs are crucial to the forest economies of many forested countries, to the livelihoods of their citizens, and to poverty alleviation. Typically, SMFEs and CFEs employ 10 to 100 employees, with annual turnovers of US$10,000 to $30 million.[iii] They comprise approximately 80-90 percent of total enterprise numbers and between 50 and 64 percent[iv] of forest industry jobs, with nearly 400 million people worldwide dependent on NTFPs generated by enterprises for either sustenance or income.[v] CFEs are increasing in number because of the dramatic shift in community forest tenure, with 31 percent of developing country forest lands now community owned or administered. In Cambodia, for instance, more than 41 percent of rural households derive between 20 to 50 percent of their total livelihood value from forest use, while 15 percent of households derive more than half of their total livelihoods from forest use and harvesting.[vi] In Indonesia and Nepal, women engage in numerous activities in forest areas, to collect fuel wood and other NTFPs.

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CFEs and poverty alleviation

CFEs are well-placed as catalysts for poverty reduction. As grassroots democratic institutions, they can engage local entrepreneurship, improve social capital within and across communities, preserve cultural identity, ensure ecological sustainability, and reinvest profits into much needed community resources, such as education and health facilities. CFEs play a fundamental role as mechanisms for sustainably managing forest resources, securing livelihoods, and addressing broader dimensions of poverty and well-being.

However, the forest-dependent poor in many countries face substantial threats and challenges to realizing these benefits. Forest dwellers and their enterprises are critically underrepresented in policy fora and have weak institutional relationships with decision makers. Having little or no means to influence policymakers, local communities must often face inappropriate legal or policy frameworks and regulatory burdens that prevent them from realizing income-generating benefits. Moreover, forest dwellers are often isolated (geographically and/or culturally) from infrastructure and support services, resulting in lack of information, networking prospects, and knowledge of laws and policies currently in place.

Gendered characteristics of forest enterprises

Within the enterprises themselves, age, class, caste, ethnicity and gender often dictate individual roles, responsibilities, and associated benefits. In CFEs, there is a marked division in how men and women use, govern, and benefit from forest resources: women work predominately in the informal forest sectors as primary collectors and sellers of NTFPs, while men dominate more formal sectors and timber trade.[vii]

Forest products produced and managed by women are considered less commercially valuable than those managed by men, which contributes, among other factors, to their lower status in community enterprise and forest resource governance. While women's traditional knowledge and skills for NTFP cultivation and management are widely cited in both academic and policy literature, commercially-oriented CFEs remain largely governed by men, particularly elites. This is highly shaped by the traditional view in the timber industry and in many cultures that forestry, particularly timber extraction, is naturally a male domain.[viii]

Two studies in Nghe Anh, Viet Nam[ix] and Xishuangbanna, China,[x] illustrate the connection between household demographics and gender composition, and dependency on NTFPs as income sources. In Viet Nam, female-headed and lower-income households depend more on commercial NTFP collection, but benefit less from NTFP sales. In China a longitudinal analysis revealed that female-headed households, or households with no sons, depend more on NTFPs and less on rubber, traditionally the most profitable forest product in the region. However, when women have full participation in enterprises, and especially when they are involved in decision-making processes, they draw multiple benefits, such as an income independent of their husband's, increased livelihood security, and the ability to provide improved health and education services to their children.

3. Challenges for Women in Smallholder and Community-based CFEs

Women face two main barriers to realizing benefits from the SMFEs in which they participate. In this context, "benefits" are defined broadly in three terms: 1) political - the ability to actively participate in governance and decision-making, 2) economic - the tangible income returns and livelihoods development, and 3) social - the recognition of contribution to the enterprise.[xi]

Low participation in institutional governance

Despite their instrumental role in forest sector production, women continue to be excluded from most enterprise management, governance and planning. In South Asia, women have less access to information and are under-represented in decision-making bodies. Without adequate women's active participation in community forest or enterprise governance (a threshold defined by Bina Agarwal as one-third of total participants)[xii] women's interests will not be represented, and as such, will not factor into the institutional priorities of the enterprise. Women's involvement in CFEs exists on a spectrum from passive participation to co-ownership at different threshold levels.[xiii] The rate of women's participation in CFEs has also been shown to positively affect enterprise productivity and sustainable resource use.[xiv]

There are two schools of thought on women's participation in community institutions, including CFEs. One advocates for women-only enterprise groups, arguing that social deferment to men limits participation, thus women are more confidant and able to speak out in separate "safe spaces."[xv] A 2011 study of small-scale furniture producers in Central Java, Indonesia concluded that women felt less effective as a minority among men, however close to 50 percent representation was attained.[xvi] Another camp attests that separate gender groups worsen segregation, while groups with both genders perform better on governance and management indicators.[xvii]

Barriers to market entry

Successful CFEs are able to identify and enter markets (and adapt to changing ones), gain a certain level of technological competence, and invest in production or processing technologies.[xviii] However, throughout Asia, producers of forest products currently receive less than 10 percent of the total selling price of market goods.[xix] Women comprise the majority of producers in many Asian CFEs and face two distinct barriers to successful market entry: lack of access to information and lack of participation in value chain addition.

Women producers have limited access to financial services due to widespread gender discrimination[xx] and higher illiteracy rates in women than in men.[xxi] Many women also lack sufficient technological knowledge, which limits their access to forest markets.[xxii] Women are disadvantaged in all levels of the value chain, and often marginalized by men when a forest product historically managed by women gains commercial value.[xxiii]

Gendered discrimination?

Within communities, individual tenure rights of men and women vary. Discrimination against women can be deeply rooted in customary law and traditional forest management regimes, or embedded in statutory law meant to increase community-wide rights to forest resources. For example, women's

claims to forestlands under India's landmark 2006 Forest Rights Act are often subordinate to men's–meaning men submit claims on women's behalf-and they are processed in district level institutions where the vast majority of employees are men. The local forest elites, while differentiated along religious and caste lines, are also men, which can further undermine women's tenure access.[xxiv] In China, the Land-Contracted Responsibility System appears gender-neutral, but in practice serves to deprive women of control over land, as was evident in a 2004 case study of bamboo forest enterprises in Yunnan Province.[xxv] Wage discrimination is another problem, as evidenced in a Nepal case study in Dolakha District, which assesses socioeconomic variables, including gender and income distribution, and finds discrimination in wage structure in all three enterprises studied – even where women had higher proportional representation in the governing body than men.[xxvi] These challenges make it difficult for women to take up potential economic and diversified livelihoods opportunities offered by engagement in CFEs.

4. Positive Role of Networks and Action Research

Women across Asia can achieve greater participation in, and benefit from, CFEs by organizing into networks and associations. Networks have become widely recognized by small CSOs and international NGOs alike as mechanisms for sharing information, building social capital and exchanges, and spurring effective social action. As networks expand, they can achieve a "boomerang effect"[xxvii] by simultaneously mobilizing domestic civil society to influence international policy and, once empowered by international successes, turn pressure inward towards national or local level governance. Macqueen identifies two broad types of networks,[xxviii] both of which can serve their members by managing income generation and controlling local access to resources:

a. Umbrella bodies for a particular sector (e.g. bamboo producers' networks) that advocate on behalf of sectoral needs
b. Small community-based enterprise associations that work towards poverty alleviation

These networks are distinguished from organizations to achieve scale, like cooperatives, and can serve as a valuable tool for championing women's interests if well-organized and well-resourced. They can build members' capacity; sensitize women to the particular demands of CFEs; reduce transaction costs; scope new market opportunities; connect women to policy processes and the opportunity to shape reforms – including tenure reforms; and close information gaps within and between CFEs. The African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF) in Central and West Africa is an extraordinary example of a participatory network that has served to organize disparate women's groups and become a powerful advocate for tenure reform. (For more on REFACOF, see Interview with Cécile Ndjebet, this volume.) In Orissa, India, a federation of forest protection groups, the Maa Maninag Jungle Surakhya Parishad (MMSJP) has transformed its agenda to include and prioritize women's needs, and subsequently gained political space for forest-dependent women to bring livelihood issues to the fore, both within the network and in broader political spaces.[xxix] Supporting women's networks and collective CFE associations can help strengthen CFEs and increase women's market share.

Research focused on gender-disaggregated value chain analysis could help identify other ways to promote inclusion of women in CFEs and local forest-based economies. Lessons from other countries and regions on how women producers have acted collectively to gain market access and information, build members' capacity and enterprise organization, and achieve greater equity and livelihoods benefits for women, can be applied globally.

Acknowledgements

[i] Naomi Basik is an Associate at the Rights and Resources Initiative Asia Program.

[ii] See Fu et al, as cited in Endnote 7; Quan and Anh, as cited in Endnote 6; Shams, N. and M. Ahmed. 2000. Common and Private Property Linkages in the Low-land Forest-fishery-farming systems of Cambodia. *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture.* 15(4): 59-87.

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[iv] Macqueen 2008, as cited in Endnote 2.

[v] Molnar, Augusta et al. 2007. Community-Based Forest Enteprrises in Tropical Forest Countries: Status and Potential. Co-published by Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) and International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO).

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[xi] The following section draws heavily on data from the Asia region, but cites several studies from Africa and Latin America from which lessons can be applied to Asian CFEs.

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[xviii] Macqueen 2008, as cited in Endnote 2.

[xix] IFAD. 2008. Gender and Non-Timber Forest Products: Promoting Food Security and Economic Empowerment. Rome: IFAD.

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[xxii] Quang and Anh 2008, as cited in Endnote 9.

[xxiii] Shackleton 2011, as cited in Endnote 15.

[xxiv] Bose, Purabi. 2011. Forest Tenure Reform: Exclusion of Tribal Women's Rights in Semi-arid Rajasthan, India. International Forestry Review 13(2): 220-232.

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Interview with
Cécile Ndjebet – President, REFACOF

July 2012

Background

The African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (Réseau des Femmes Africaines pour la Gestion Communautaire des Forêts, or REFACOF) is a network of women involved in sustainable forest resource management in Africa. REFACOF was formed at the May 2009 International Conference on Forest Tenure, Governance and Enterprise: New Opportunities for West and Central Africa in Yaoundé, Cameroon, where 45 African women delegates first formed the network and developed its founding Declaration. REFACOF's goal is to advocate for governments' and international organizations' inclusion of women-specific needs, constraints and interests, as well as their ownership rights to land and forest resources. REFACOF aims to make concrete, relevant and effective contributions to forest governance in member countries, in order to influence national policies and international frameworks regarding women's rights and tenure.

The following is the transcript of an interview with Cécile Ndjebet, founder and president of REFACOF. This interview took place in October 2011.

1.0 | Since REFACOF is now two years old, it seems like a great time to reflect on its formation. How did the idea to create REFACOF come about, and what were your initial motivations behind forming the network?

At the Yaoundé conference, which was organized by RRI, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and its local partners, women representing Central and West African organizations organized side meetings to reflect on the current state of affairs for women in their respective countries? They produced the African Women Declaration, and presented it at the closing ceremony of the conference.

The Declaration illustrates the significant role that women play in forest management and in the broader scope of socioeconomic development in Africa, as well as the main challenges African women face throughout the continent in forest and land management and expectations for future action.

The primary motivation for creating REFACOF was the collective realization that despite varying country conditions, customary tenure regimes and levels of statutory recognition, African women play an essential and very significant role in the broader sphere of development and in the forest sector, and they want to retain this role. Unfortunately, discrimination in access and ownership to land and forest resources causes unnecessary hardship; preventing women from realizing their potential, particularly when this translates to an inability to access capital or market inputs,

RIGHTS + RESOURCES

effectively preventing women from entering the forest economy and realizing the full value of the timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) which they produce.

2.0 | **Initially, how did REFACOF plan on addressing gender inequity in forest governance and legal frameworks? Who were its target beneficiaries, and how were its interventions organized for effectively targeting a policy agenda?**

The central figures in the REFACOF organizational framework are its national Focal Points, who determine the structure and network systems in their respective countries and analyze how REFACOF can add value to the existing initiatives spearheaded by local organizations. REFACOF's current focal points represent both government agencies and civil society organizations.

As REFACOF's Strategic Plan (2011-2015) shows, our interventions are based on the research carried out by network members, drawing from the reality of the day-to-day lives of women and captured through observation, and interviews, from literature reviews of country and regional legal instruments, and other qualitative and qualitative analyses. REFACOF's target beneficiaries are women, from the community to the national and regional levels; and spanning rural and urban populations. In essence, REFACOF has a multi-faceted strategy for change. Its members address and attempt to reverse gender inequalities in forest governance and legal frameworks through a variety of context-driven approaches, including advocacy and lobbying campaigns, promotional communication, and dissemination of key publications and written works.

Among these diverse approaches, advocacy campaigns are REFACOF's most versatile tool for action, as they can be adapted to various audiences: decision makers at country and regional levels, the donor community, or other regional or global institutions. At the national level, REFACOF will target the local, provincial and federal governments and key policymakers. At the regional level, REFACOF will target institutions such as the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Our advocacy campaigns rely on our research findings, the terms of which were set forth in our Strategic Plan. Before initiating any advocacy, REFACOF did a literature review and policy analysis of gender and forest and land laws in Cameroon, Liberia, and Burkina Faso. After this analysis was complete, REFACOF organized a peer-review validation workshop, with the participation of network members who validated findings and added substantial input. Afterwards, an advocacy document was jointly developed into an advocacy document mean to draw attention to existing gender gaps and make recommendations on how to mainstream gender into reforms. One example of how this advocacy document was put into action is in Cameroon, where REFACOF presented it to the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) and got a verbal commitment from officials that our recommendations would be included in the revision of the 1994 land law. Another example is REFACOF's leadership of the national civil society platform on REDD.

Presently, REFACOF is made up of 14 country member countries: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), and Senegal. Membership is open to any African woman or women's organization involved in natural resource management.

3.0 | **As a network of rural, community-based stakeholders, how does REFACOF facilitate communication both among members and targeted to external audiences?**

REFACOF is still in the process of developing an official, network-wide communications strategy. Currently, members use a variety of existing communication channels to promote linkages between a wide range of stakeholders; these channels include, meetings and workshops; newspapers, press releases, radio and TV programming; brochures, policy briefs and letters; and word of mouth, through members and like-minded networks.

4.0 | **What are REFACOF's core strategic objectives, and how were these determined?**

REFACOF has put forth the following four objectives for the period 2011-2015:

a. Strengthen the network's institutional capacity
b. Promote reforms for equitable tenure arrangements
c. Influence the policy agenda and interventions promoting land and forest tenure at regional, subregional and national levels
d. Facilitate exchanges among network members

These objectives were formulated during the REFACOF planning workshop organized in September 2010 in Edéa, Cameroon, and developed collectively based on national plans developed by focal points.

5.0 | **What is the significance of organizing for women engaged in community forestry under an umbrella network? In other words, why a federation?**

The lack of collective action amongst women's organizations has been a pressing issue in forming strategic country and regional level development interventions. The Yaoundé conference presented an opportunity for the women delegates to understand the need for effective organization in order *"to redress the general lack of organization in women's forest management and in community forest enterprise development, and in the African context specifically."* Therefore, *"women committed to act collectively to confront the social, political, legislative and economic challenges surrounding forest management in Africa."*

The writers of the African Women Declaration were convinced that *"given persistent gender inequality in legal, institutional and traditional spheres, in acting collectively women will gain more opportunities within the framework of community forestry and decentralization. Such collective action will enable women to access property and to focus on the promotion of NTFP and agroforestry products.*[i]

6.0 | **Institutional strengthening is an important priority for any organization in its initial five years. How has REFACOF worked to strengthen itself and define its identity and strategic partnerships, both internally and externally?**

REFACOF members are active participants in national reform processes in some countries and attending various international meetings, dialogues and conferences on such REDD, climate change and forest/land tenure. This exposure has helped REFACOF develop relationships with other funding agencies, institutions and organizations. Our hope is to expand interest in REFACOF's ongoing activities among key stakeholders in the field and cultivate these strategic relationships to help REFACOF achieve its five-year plan.

7.0 | **REFACOF's strategic plan states its adherence to the objectives and goals of the African Women's Decade and its theme of "gender equality and women's autonomy." How does REFACOF differentiate between these goals? Do you take a holistic approach to gender development that includes male stakeholders, and how is this approach communicated on the ground?**

REFACOF's philosophy sees women's autonomy as key to achieving gender equity; likewise, gender equity is a prerequisite for achieving complete autonomy for women. While it is important to invite men and men's organizations to events, and to direct various strategic actions towards male stakeholders, men are not formally engaged in and are not eligible to become members of REFACOF, as REFACOF is by definition a women's network.

8.0 | **Do you foresee any strategic opportunities, such as a trend towards decentralized statutory tenure in Central and West Africa, a more robust civil society presence in these countries, and growth in domestic forest and ecosystem services markets, that will allow REFACOF to better fulfill its objectives, benefit more women and their communities, and potentially expand the network's scope?**

Many Central and West African governments are engaged in tenure decentralization processes, often in parallel with the increased presence of REDD+ and other climate finance mechanisms. This presents a big opportunity for REFACOF to step into a central role for protection of women's rights within a landscape of shifting resource governance.

Tenure is a key determining factor in whether shifting governance will ultimately benefit or disadvantage local communities, and African governments should make it a top priority – and the basis for any decentralization processes in Central and West Africa. REFACOF's strategic vision and mission makes the network well-placed to be a major, influential stakeholder.

Of course, the actual five-year REFACOF strategic plan is subject to evaluation and if needed, can be adjusted to new dynamics, new trends and emerging challenges. REFACOF should adapt to the demand of its national and regional environments and be permanently poised to come to the fore.

9.0 | **What are the major obstacles facing resource-dependent women and their livelihoods in Africa? What new or expanded threats on women's land and forest tenure rights do you predict will become more prominent in the next five to10 years?**

The first threat is from REDD+, if tenure is not secured and social safeguards are not implemented in Africa. Large-scale land grabs have become a significant threat; if tenure is not secured locally, women and men who are dependent on agriculture and forestry – the majority of the population in

much of Africa – will be excluded from political processes and displaced from their lands and livelihoods. The increase in land-grabbing will make women more fragile, poorer, more vulnerable and more prone to become victims of violent conflict than ever before. Finally, lack of access to capital, technology and market is one of the key threats to the economic development of rural communities, particularly women.

The consequences of excluding women when responding to these obstacles are manifold: the continent will see a drastic drop in agricultural production, leading to increasing food insecurity and potential famine throughout the continent. Poverty and displacement will increase, and the continent will see a drastic rise in conflicts over resource ownership and usage.

10.0 | The development of REDD+ for climate change mitigation presents opportunities and dramatic impacts on forest management in Africa as well as implications for decreased tenure security. Is REDD+ an issue you're actively tracking? In its current form, does it present more potential harm than good for women's forest rights? How can REDD+ be further engendered in order to maximize benefits to women, particularly those invested in community-based forest management or smallholder enterprises?

REFACOF should play a strong role in all climate change processes in member countries to ensure women's voices are clearly understood and their interests are secured. REDD+ is one of the major issues that REFACOF is currently tracking. We have to make sure that REDD+ implementation doesn't worsen the situation for women on the ground in Africa, which is why we are advocating for secure tenure rights for women as a prerequisite to REDD+. REFACOF has to inform and train women on the proposed scope and potential limitations of REDD+, particularly of potential negative impacts if social and environmental safeguards are not enforced, and its members must simultaneously advocate governments and the international community to exert pressure for African tenure reforms as a basis for REDD+ project development. If REFACOF is absent and the above actions are not taken, Central and West African women run the risk of further disenfranchisement from climate change mitigation schemes. We must continuously fight for our rights in order to maintain and improve our place and our role.

11.0 | What are the lessons learned from REFACOF's achievements to date that could translate beyond the African context to women and women's organizations with a similar mission in other regions?

In governing REFACOF, I can clearly see how powerful this network has been to local women's organizations that really want to be part of a network. Most women's networks in Africa are dominated by elites who claim to speak on behalf of local communities; here, local women have a voice, and are able to express their views in workshops, trainings, and talking directly to government officials. REFACOF's value lies in its identity as a truly grassroots entity. In addition, REFACOF's unique focus on tenure rights has grounded the network in a common cause and distinguished it from other organizations. We had the foresight to develop a strategic plan in the beginning, which has served us extremely well. Not only has this plan been participatory, with members fully engaged in its development, but it was an effective exercise in helping think through the network's targeted strategy for influence. This can help REFACOF in the future to appeal to donors and avoid losing its way.

Going forward, diversifying REFACOF's governance structure and financial support (with multiple donors) will be essential to its success. Also key for long-term growth is a strategy for membership; existing members must be sure that whoever else is joining REFACOF is aligned with our vision and mission, and can also contribute fully.

The following can transcend boundaries, and apply to any context in which women are working to advocate for equality:

a. Women have to act collectively, and should organize to achieve maximum influence. Africa is huge, and communication infrastructure sparse, even between villages.
b. For stability, sustainability and peace, there is a strong need for the entire community to support women.
c. Securing community tenure is central for women's lives, family and household well-being, and economic development in Africa and beyond.
d. Women must directly participate in policy reforms, including REDD and climate-change discussions, to ensure their concerns are addressed.
e. A cross-Africa network of committed women's organizations share important lessons on their success with advocacy in diverse political and geographic forest landscapes and by bringing a collective voice to regional and global forums can have a significant impact on being sure that gender issues are heard and reflected in deliberations and decision-making

Acknowledgements

[i] The African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF). 2009. International Conference on Forest Tenure, Governance and Enterprise : New Opportunities for Livelihoods and Wealth in Central and West Africa : Declaration of African Women. Yaoundé, Cameroon. Available at http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc_1123.pdf.

Interview with
Apsara Chapagain – Chairperson, FECOFUN

July 2012

Background

The Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) is a formal network of Community Based Forest User Groups from all over Nepal.

FECOFUN emerged from the idea that forest users from all parts of the country should be linked in order to strengthen the role of users in policy making processes. Since its inception in July 1995, FECOFUN has grown into a social movement organization with about 8.5 million people represented - all of whom are forest users. To date, more than 11,200 Community Forest User Groups are affiliated with FECOFUN.

The following is the transcript of an interview with Apsara Chapagain, Chairperson of FECOFUN.

1.0 | Since FECOFUN is now 17 years old, it seems like a great time to reflect on its formation. How did the idea to create FECOFUN evolve, and what were your initial motivations behind forming the network?

FECOFUN was established in Kathmandu in June 1995, and is now entering its 18th year. While reflecting on the long journey of FECOFUN and the hard work put forth to initiate the network, I personally feel happy and proud of achievements we have made.

Looking back at the history of forestry as well as of FECOFUN, we find that the beginning of handing over government forest patches to communities was an important milestone. This was done according to the Forest Sector Master Plan of 1988/89 and subsequent Forest Act in 1993 and the 1995 Regulation and Community Forest Guidelines 1995 (and its second amendment in 2008). Initially, it was assumed that the transfer of resource management rights from the state to the community might face many obstacles, but at the same time, it was also realized that Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) needed wider support and capacity to tackle new challenges and protect their rights over resources and pressure the government for more rights. For example more initiative among forest user groups is necessary to share best practices, and mobilize for other community development works such as education, local infrastructure, safe drinking water, health and sanitation. Users groups also started to promote their livelihood through income generating activities. In order to promote, publicize and defend local initiative the CFUGs realized that they needed to be organized at national level and as a result the users established FECOFUN.

Regarding my own involvement in establishing FECOFUN, Jyalachiti CFUG of the then-Ward no. 2 of Tokal Village Development Committee (VDC) in Kavre district comes to my mind. At the beginning, I was an office bearer (joint-secretary) of the local forest user group (FUG) and an active member. I generated and shared ideas regarding the users' rights and problems of the FUG, and drew attention

and obtained support of the various stakeholders. This experience was inspirational and furthered my commitment to benefitting local communities.

In 1992, the Nepal Australian Community Forest Project provided the opportunity for me to participate, manage and facilitate various meetings, trainings and interaction program for local FUGs in the Sindhupalchwak district. I did not think that the drive to safeguard users' right and build their capacity was not achievable through fragmented individual efforts. Rather it needed to be continuous and systematic and should be done under certain institutional structure to scale it up nationwide. Other people with similar beliefs were working to advance community forestry. We joined forces to open FECOFUN with 13 founding members, giving us an opportunity to utilize our skills and experience. I was the founding treasurer.

At the beginning, the general conception of Community Forestry (CF) was that forest meant the firewood, grass, leaves, fodder and house building materials only. Forests were important but there was not much awareness that they should be conserved and utilized and preserved for future generations. Earlier, I myself contributed in destroying forest. As the impact of the CF was increasing locally, other users asked me to join the group. With the good work of the villagers, I also learned the importance of the CF and realized what I could do to make a difference. That is why I joined the community forestry movement.

2.0 | Initially, how did FECOFUN plan on addressing gender inequity in forest governance and legal frameworks? Who were its target beneficiaries, and how were its interventions organized for effectively targeting a policy agenda?

Local level Forest User Groups (FUGs) are FECOFUN and they make its plans. Therefore, it is purely an umbrella organization of the local FUGs. As a woman in an official, decision-making role as treasurer, I was positioned to discuss women's status and promote it. To raise the level of women's representation we started discussing how to address the problems of under-represented groups such as women, poor, dalits, indigenous and others, particularly those in forest fringes who were, dependent on forest for their livelihoods. We opened a discussion to secure 50 percent participation of women in all forest management structures. We wanted to include such a provision in FECOFUN's constitution, but had to work hard to convince FECOFUN colleagues. It took 33 days to get this agenda approved. Some colleagues, both men and women, said that it would not be practical to make compulsory provision for 50 percent of seats to be filled by women at all levels given their limited education and heavy family workload, and suggested a 33 percent quota. I stood firm and even threatened to quit if they did not agree to 50 percent. At the end, this was included in our constitution. The unanimously approved constitution of FECOFUN mandates that there should be at least a woman chairperson or vice-chairperson; and similarly a woman between treasurer and general secretary. Apart from securing decision-making positions, the participation of other disadvantaged groups was ensured. We also agreed that people leading an organization of such scale should not be holding their positions long-term, but instead give opportunity to other potential colleagues to develop their leadership. As a result, we restrict the chairperson to one term.

In order to implement these rules, I have visited all 75 districts of Nepal. The amount of efforts taken to secure 50 percent women's participation at all levels – village, range post, district and centre – was challenging. That we have been able to do this is a big achievement of my personal life as well.

We were not seeking women's participation to increase statistics, but to be active in every process. We also simultaneously engaged in creating awareness that as well as becoming beneficiaries of managing the forest, women were equally responsible for any losses encountered. We encouraged women to take leadership in capacities building activities such as training, workshops, public speaking. Thus, identifying the needs of women and deprived people, giving them policy priority and supporting them has been paying off in leadership skills and capability.

Despite promoting equity in policy and on paper, there continues to be failure of men to give respect to women and give them their trust, and women still feel inferior, which is a barrier to development. The first five years immediately after the establishment of the Federation were most difficult. Not all people believed women could not shoulder leadership, but they delivered their duties effectively and with due integrity. This empowered women members, and they too started to ask for equal rights. Even after guaranteeing that women would either be chairperson or vice-chairperson, and treasurer or general secretary, there were tendencies not to let women to become chairperson and secretary. We had to amend our constitution to ensure implementation of this mandate.

3.0 | As a network of rural, community-based stakeholders, how does FECOFUN facilitate communication both among members and targeted to external audiences?

The Federation members are groups. As mentioned in FECOFUN's constitution, the local federation disseminates information and maintains regular communication with local FUGs. At the central and district levels, the Federation also provide information for local FUGs through the local federations. Policy, legal and advocacy issues concerning users groups are dealt with at the national level. For important information, the Federation uses both means- contacting the local users groups directly and the local level federations. The local groups normally relate to the center through their successive local federations but they sometime contact us directly. We exchange information through direct meeting, telephone, email, letters, press releases, pamphlets, posters, mass meeting, local visits and radio. Similarly we constantly contact government, NGOs and other agencies to discuss contemporary issues and challenges. We also participate in international meetings, forums, conferences, and trainings to share information about our work and institution with international community.

4.0 | What are FECOFUN's core strategic objectives, and how were these determined?

Our main objectives are to: support FUGs, promote and conserve community forests, help in lobbying and advocacy to gain local community rights over natural resources, make users self-reliance, help them to improve their livelihoods, support poverty alleviation activities, advocate for the FUG's rights and interests, publicize good practices of forest user groups, and take initiatives to promote groups that are lagging behind. FECOFUN organizes various gatherings and meetings to discuss and decide strategic objectives, including a council meeting in every two years and general assembly in every 4 years. The representation in these meetings is inclusive and democratic. Committee meetings can and do change or adopt new strategies. The national working committee meeting takes place once in every three months to discuss important issues and makes decisions to address them.

5.0 | **What is the significance of organizing for women engaged in community forestry under an umbrella network? In other words, why a federation?**

In Nepal, women engage the most in conserving and using forests as well as in agriculture. Economic benefits are provided through livelihood activities. In Nepal, women are regarded as very hard working. Unfortunately, this is not well recognised when it comes to making key decisions, distributing benefits, or allocating forest products. There was, and to some extent still is, a tendency to ignore women's participation. We were of the view that until women were given opportunity to participate and build capacity and become leader, they will leave confines of their house or their submission to men. FECOFUN felt this should change and made binding clauses in the constitution and encouraged women to participate actively and honestly.

Nowadays, men often leave home to study or look for jobs in the city or abroad. Women are left behind in villages, with a greater role in local forest management. We also considered the issues of income generation, livelihoods, social development, skill development, leadership. This made women a priority and helped FECOFUN remain united.

6.0 | **FECOFUN's strategic plan states its adherence to the objectives and goals of "gender equality and women's autonomy." How does FECOFUN differentiate between these goals? Do you take a holistic approach to gender development that includes male stakeholders, and how is this approach communicated on the ground?**

First it is important to understand that, for FECOFUN, gender equality does not only mean equal participation and opportunity. Gender equality entails equal rights to women, men, dalits, ethnic minorities, and disadvantaged communities and ensuring social justice. Each category of people is different; for example amongst the 'poor' some will have food available only for three months, others food for six months, and FECOFUN needs to understand the local situation and address it. The 50 percent leadership in all groups and levels provided an opportunity for women to develop their leadership capacity in FECOFUN and be active deciders.

Gender equality and women autonomy are different. I understand gender equality as a first stage towards women's autonomy, but it means participation and distribution of rights equally amongst all groups of people, in order to be self dependent--participation is an opportunity. Through this, women can move towards independence, and thereby increase skills, capacity and their level of confidence. Therefore, participation is an essential pre condition for all who are lagging behind because of social injustice to advance. FECOFUN understands that giving opportunity will help develop women's capacity. In FECOFUN's early years, few women spoke out in the meetings and assemblies; now, women are equally active as men.

In gender development, the role of men is equally crucial. In many FUGs, men are the ones who insist on women's greater participation and their capacity building. We have to give opportunities to whomever is disadvantaged on their terms. In our community there are people with different interests and need and opportunities should be tailored to each interest group. We have to mainstream such practice in all villages in rural areas. FECOFUN has been playing significant role throughout the country at different levels.

7.0 | **Do you foresee any strategic opportunities, such as a trend towards decentralized statutory tenure in Nepal, and a more robust civil society presence and growth in domestic forest and ecosystem services markets, that will allow FECOFUN to better fulfill its objectives, benefit more women and their communities, and potentially expand the network's scope?**

There are many options to strengthen the status of women and multiple structures. In FECOFUN, most forest user groups strive for equal participation of men and women by its inclusion in the constitution, bylaws and forest management plans. During the second revision of community forestry development guidelines, FECOFUN strongly lobbied for an equal number of members in the executive committee, and currently in more than 18,000 forest user groups 50 percent of their executive committee members are women. There is a special provision for the poor to receive 35 percent of the group income for their needs. In most FUGs, management and disbursement of funds by women member has significantly increased.

The 50 percent provision is also included in the constitution of other civil society organizations and federations in other sectors such as drinking water, irrigation, electricity water and energy, the national confederation of natural resources and the Himalayan Grassroots Women's' Natural Resource Management Organization (HIMAWANTI). Interestingly, political parties and their subunits now also encourage women's participation in decision making. FECOFUN is helping in this process by example.

It is very difficult to find FUGs with all women literate, though most women have basic literacy. In such cases, FECOFUN is supporting non-formal education programs. In many cases, community learning and action centers are established scheduling discussions of topical issues involving both men and women at local level. Such centers remained instrumental in exploring ways to develop local capacity and solving FUG problems.

FECOFUN has a stated gender policy: equal participation of both men and women in every structure at all levels. Priority has been given to all disadvantaged groups when hiring staff. FECOFUN discusses gender equity with government and non government organizations and raised this issue at the National Planning Commission for national policies.

8.0 | **What are the major obstacles facing resource-dependent women and their livelihoods in Nepal? What new or expanded threats on women's land and forest tenure rights do you predict will become more prominent in the next 5-10 years?**

Bottlenecks for empowering women include: inability to implement programs they have designed, undue influence of men in making key decisions, household chores, limited access to finance or financial management skills, undervaluing of women's work, no land and property ownership, limited organizational experience, and limited documentation of their own children's citizenship.

These require constant and collective work on three levels

1. Policy level: by developing policies, regulation, law and guidelines and by revising them periodically in favor of women and disadvantaged groups

2. Implementation level: by changing attitude of people, which is also not an easy task as it takes lots of time and efforts to change the perception of people about gender roles

3. Establishing rights: This is very challenging but possible and may generate conflict. If we can manage land, water and forest properly we can have sustainable development. For this, we need to establish ownership of women over those resources. It is important to give leadership to those who raised the agenda. Support from every stakeholder is necessary to establish resource rights and empower women. In this process, the government is an obstacle--many high level policy people are not convinced about handing over rights and ownership to local communities. Therefore there is a need of continued advocacy

9.0 | The development of REDD+ for climate change mitigation presents opportunities and dramatic impacts on forest management in Nepal as well as implications for decreased tenure security. Is REDD+ an issue you're actively tracking? In its current form, does it present more potential harm than good for women's forest rights? How can REDD+ be further engendered in order to maximize benefits to women, particularly those invested in community-based forest management or smallholder enterprises?

Like other least-developed countries, Nepal is struggling with the effect of REDD+ and climate change at all levels. The poor, women, dalits and disadvantaged communities remain vulnerable and most affected by climate change. It is still not clear whether or not REDD+ can provide benefits to the forest user groups and local people, but there is a feeling that decisions made by rich countries hardly account for the concerns of poor people from poor countries. Due to this lingering doubt and suspicion that there might be some hidden agenda behind REDD+, FUGs in Nepal are not fully convinced about possible benefits of REDD+ schemes. However, as a pilot, FECOFUN is working to create public awareness that REDD+ schemes, if implemented with rights and incentives, could help local communities contribute to sustainable forest management.

10.0 | What are the lessons learned from FECOFUN's achievements to date that could translate beyond the Nepali context to women and women's organizations with a similar mission in other regions?

A few of FECOFUNs learning points are:

1. Women's participation can increase significantly with supportive policies, laws and guidelines. For example, FECOFUN increased women's participation within its organization in its bylaws and constitution.

2. Membership organizations like FECOFUN should always take care of constituencies and their concerns connecting all levels.

3. Federation members need to understand the rationale and concept behind community based management of natural resources, especially forest management.

4. Widespread belief in community rights over natural resources will increase as people directly participate collectively in managing such resources. For example, in FECOFUN, members of

forest user groups have great motivation in managing forests as they have seen improvement in forest condition and their livelihoods.

5. Advocacy work to ensure rights of community over natural resources needs strong lobbying groups, mobilizing social workers, volunteers, forest professionals, and supporting civil society groups and their networks.

6. In addition to civil society groups, recognition and support from donors, international organization and government is also necessary.

7. Practice of extending mutual cooperation amongst women groups, dalits and other disadvantaged communities could strengthen bonding relations and help establish networks of such groups.

8. A strength of the federation model is that people bring a positive attitude towards volunteerism. We should always encourage such attitude for survival of networks like FECOFUN.

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