



SDG 5: Achieve Gender-Equality and Empower All Women and Girls

SEEMA ARORA-JONSSON*, SHRUTI AGARWAL, CAROL J. PIERCE
COLFER, STEPHANIE KEENE, PRIYA KURIAN, ANNE M. LARSON

Forestry's 'Invisible' Gendered Infrastructure

Gender discrimination – from

- ▶ make-up of official bureaucracies & others
- ▶ Discriminatory legislation
- ▶ Unconscious biases & attitudes

Forestry must take into account relations with *other sectors & other parts of people's lives* – for health of the forests & well-being of forest peoples.

Forestry cannot only be about trees...

- ▶ Emphasis on timber, woody biomass, or biodiversity hides women's forest work--often surpasses men's (*State of the World's Forests*, 2018).
- NTFPs, agroforestry, plantings at forest edge, marketing & village-based activities crucial to forest management
- Disadvantaged in inst. support (ext. info, tech support)



‘What is the point of protecting the forests when we cannot protect ourselves?’

(Arora-Jonsson 2013: 204).

- ▶ Violence against women inhibits women’s forest involvement
- ▶ Spiritual, cultural relevance of forests often ignored
- ▶ Need to involve women in forest-related decisionmaking



What is Gender?

- ▶ A category of analysis
- ▶ Study of power relationships based on sex/sexuality & ways in which relationships may be organised & perceived



Caveat

- ▶ Gender is not synonymous with women
- ▶ Gender is about dynamic relationships
- ▶ Gender is always cross-cut by intersecting dimensions of power (class, caste, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.)



Gender-Equal Policies

- ▶ Well-intentioned gender programmes can backfire, causing adverse effects on forests & forest peoples, if the efforts are not cognisant of context & power relations.
- ▶ Differences among social groups key
- ▶ Attend to enforceability of new laws
- ▶ Beware of increasing women's duties.



Need for New Policies, **but**

- ▶ Must allow for hybridity – local w. national (Rao 2007)
 - ▶ Flexibility (Arora-Jonsson 2013)
 - ▶ Enable careful analysis of gendered power relations locally
-
- ▶ Blanket statements about poverty or vulnerability of all women or their closeness to the environment often prove counterproductive.