

Women and the Environment: Agents of Conservation and Sustainability

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ABSTRACT

Women Symbolize The term "Prakriti" refers to "Nature" in Indian ideology. She plants the seeds of her creativity and watches them grow. Sakti, the life force of the system, is symbolised by her. It is true that Indian women's standing has declined dramatically since the Vedic era. A growing number of international conventions and treaties have acknowledged women's crucial role in protecting the environment. But when it comes to bettering women's situations, most governments and society have been sluggish to move. Additionally, the connection between women and the environment has been disregarded. Despite the fact that they are underappreciated, women have always been the ones who tend to the necessities of life, including water, food, fuel, fodder, and habitat. Along with this environmental degradation, it makes women's issues much worse in a manner that men's problems aren't. Reversing the trend of the harmful effect of current developmental paradigms and re-establishing the symbiosis between communities, women, and natural resources is the task.

Keyword: Women, Environment, Sustainable development, Conservation.

Introduction

Women Symbolize The term "Prakriti" refers to "Nature" in Indian ideology. She plants the seeds of her creativity and watches them grow. Sakti, the life force of the system, is symbolised by her. It is true that Indian women's standing has declined dramatically since the Vedic era. But the expansion of education and social changes in the twentieth century led to a reawakening and a consistent upswing. In light of this background, the site's purpose is to highlight, via data and observations, the role that contemporary women play in promoting sustainable development. On the other side, it examines how environmental issues affect women. To promote women's rights and the advancement of their cause, this is not the place for you.¹

Meaning of Environment

The term "environment" is most often used to describe the "natural" setting, which includes all of the items, both living and non-living, that are in close proximity to an organism or community of organisms. Everything in an organism's immediate physical and/or mental surroundings that could influence its maturation is considered part of its environment. All the things that an organism encounters, both living and nonliving, are part of its environment. Light, temperature, water, and atmospheric gases are examples of abiotic variables that interact with all of the living things in the area. Many creatures have the capacity to adapt to changes in their environment since these changes typically occur over time.

¹ <http://www.womenenvironment.org/detail.php?pageId=45>

Environmental stress occurs when an organism is exposed to situations that are outside its tolerance range, which is not the same for every species.²

Women and environmental conservation

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A gender perspective examines the fundamental systems that sustain the disparities between men and women. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without this strategy, as women play an essential role in the management of natural resources. However, gender concerns have not been integrated into natural resource policy, despite some acknowledgement of women's achievements and initiatives aimed at women.

Important consequences for biodiversity, desertification, and water management arise from women's interactions with natural resources. Gender considerations have been included in international accords like the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity, but these plans of action have not been implemented yet.

An article published by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) highlights the vital role that women play in environmental protection and management, and suggests methods that environmental policy might include gender concerns for the betterment of women and the planet.

The report describes how:³

- In many countries women are at the forefront of campaigns to conserve natural resources: examples include India's Chipko movement to protect forests and a scheme in Brazil to combat desertification.
- The situation of women is characterized by lack of ownership and control over land and resources, and limited access to education and services.
- Rural women contribute by providing food, fuel, medicinal remedies and necessary raw materials, but their traditional knowledge is being threatened by biodiversity loss and biopiracy (by pharmaceutical companies seeking to control use of medicinal plants).
- Severe environmental degradation, particularly in drylands, puts extra burdens on women, who are often left behind to run households when men migrate.
- Water is central to household and income-generating activities for women, but water shortage, pollution and other problems with access (land tenure, affordability) mean that gender issues are crucial to all projects and policies concerning water resources.

Despite the fact that they are underappreciated, women have always been the ones who tend to the necessities of life, including water, food, fuel, fodder, and habitat. Along with this environmental degradation, it makes women's issues much worse in a manner that men's problems aren't. Reversing the

² <http://ecological-problems.blogspot.in/2008/08/environment-definition-and-meaning.html>

³ <http://www.eldis.org/id21ext/s4aUNEP1g1.html>

trend of the harmful effect of current developmental paradigms and re-establishing the symbiosis between communities, women, and natural resources is the task.

Historically, women have played a crucial role in protecting biodiversity. Selection of seeds, multiplication, and conservation are all tasks that they continue to do to this day. It is well-known that rural and tribal women have a long history of practicing agro-biodiversity conservation on their farms. There are just not enough crops to support the present food security arrangements. Including the many different types of food plants and spices that tribal and rural households still keep alive is crucial for expanding the foundation of food security. In order to achieve this goal, biotechnological processes may be used to teach women how to revive the on-farm conservation practices of previous generations. As part of their education, they should learn how to compile bio-diversity inventories and make decisions on things like whether or not to grant breeding firms or universities permission to use their genetic material.

As a result of gender roles in the workplace, women have historically been in charge of resource mobilisation and management in the following ways: It is often believed that women should be the ones who gather water, feed, and fuel. These essentials are becoming more difficult to get as the climate deteriorates. A woman's efficiency and inputs are diminished due to the time she spends collecting fuel, feed, and water, in addition to attending to domestic duties, agricultural labour, and animal care. If men had to bring drinking water, the 230,000 villages would not have remained without supply of drinking water after many years of planned growth, according to Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, a former member of the planning Commission. varied regions of the nation have varied workloads. In the hill regions, people spend a lot more time on these tasks than in the more developed state of Kerala, where land reforms have made it easier to get fuel. The non-monetized biomass subsistence economy of the home, including firewood, cow dung, agricultural wastes, organic manure, etc., has traditionally been handled by women. When it comes to earning money, males are more likely to ruin nature, even if it means their own families have a harder time gathering fuel and food (for example, selling herbs and wood). As a result, women are more involved than males in making operational decisions on family farms, and they work as unpaid workers. Male migration has risen due to population pressure, which puts more strain on women. So, it's not only housework that women are expected to do; they are also expected to labour in the fields. A devastating domino effect occurs. Depleting soil resources and negatively impacting the life of local people and the environment, the time necessary for fuel and fodder collection is increasing, firewood is becoming scarce, and cow dung, which was formerly scattered on the fields, is now utilised in the kitchen.

A growing number of Indian women are also taking up positions of power in politics, the public sector, business, and other fields. Science is just one field where women are making significant strides. The majority of scientific degree graduates are employed in the field of pure science, with a small percentage going into medicine and engineering. Among working women scientists and technologists, roughly two thirds are teachers. But little more than 3% of that number is really doing the studies. However, the global landscape is shifting in this regard. In emerging nations, female education levels are on the rise. The encouraging trend of increasing numbers of women scientists in India is worth noting. The Indian government is making strides towards a sustainable and ecologically friendly way of living, but there are many obstacles to overcome. But when it comes to preserving and protecting the environment, women in India are the unsung heroes. Because of their varied life experiences, American women have contributed a fresh viewpoint to the environmental discussion. The lives of low-income

women are not linear; rather, they see problems from several angles. There is no misunderstanding in their minds about the compatibility of economy and ecology. Their daily lives depend on healthy soil, water, and plants, all of which they have learnt to take excellent care of through experience. Degradation of the environment affects both the biosphere and the social sphere.

Everywhere in the nation, there is a pressing need to bolster educational and vocational training for women in a variety of fields, with an emphasis on entrepreneurship, communication, creativity, innovation, quality control, inventory, and production management, all while keeping in mind the inherent capabilities of women in management. In order to do this, we must empower women to unleash their full potential and assume their proper role as equal participants in every arena.⁴

Women and Environment Protection Conservation and Sustainable Development⁵

In their many roles, women contribute significantly to the preservation of biological variety on a global scale. Not only have they acknowledged the importance of protecting biodiversity, but they have also taken steps to restore and reinvent it. The green belt initiative in Kenya was started by Wangari Maathai and included eighty thousand women in tree planting. The ladies of Penam were not trailing behind. In Sarawak, they engage in logging blockades for weeks. Margarita De Botero has raised awareness about the need of protecting biodiversity via green university initiatives in Columbia. Land conservation is important to Norma Kassi, a G'wichin woman and former Yukon assembly member. Canoe Lake, Saskatchewan's Cree women also participated in the longest-running barricade in Canada against clear-cut logging, which lasted for months. Labradorian Innu women have been touring Canada to rally support for their fight to end military surveillance flights over their homeland, which endanger a number of species, including the biggest caribou herd on Earth.

at terms of protecting, preserving, promoting, and enhancing the environment and preventing pollution, Indian women were consistently at the forefront. When compared to humans, they have shown more affection and sacrificed more for the sake of protecting the environment. Indian women have become crusaders against environmental pollution due to their tremendous desire, passion, and commitment towards a cleaner environment.

In 1731 A.D., Amrita Bai of Khejaralli hamlet in Jodhpur Distt. of Rajasthan gave her life to safeguard the trees in her village, marking the beginning of Indian women's active involvement with environmental conservation. What we now call the "Chipko Movement" had its start with her. She took refuge among the woods, but she was later chopped down by the then-Maharashtra since she had hugged them. As her three kids and husband eventually came forward, 363 people were slain, but the trees remained uncut due to the fierce opposition of the townspeople.

In 1972, Bachni Devi and Gaura Devi of Uttar Pradesh restarted this campaign that Amrita Bai launched in 1731 A.D. They stopped the contractors from felling trees by seizing their axes. Forests provide us with soil, water, and air, the three necessities of life, according to their tagline. In order to save the ecosystem, the local women were mobilised to engage in civil disobedience in response to the danger of deforestation. They were well aware that the forest was important to their survival, wealth, and overall well-being. Bahuguna (1975), Bhatt and Kumar (1982), Jain (1983), and

⁴ <http://www.articlesbase.com/environment-articles/role-of-women-in-conservation-of-environment-2585979.html>

⁵ Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Mishra and Tripathi (1978) are among the critics who have characterised the Chipko movement as a women's movement.

It is worth remembering the women of India who have battled for environmental preservation via the courts, such as Krishna Devi of Rajasthan, Kinkari Devi of Sirmour District, and Mrs. Sarla Tripathi of Indore.

Maneka Gandhi, a politician and environmentalist, and Medha Patekar, a social worker and environmentalist, are today's torchbearers, continuing the fight for environmental conservation. But today's environmental protection crisis is too big for a few of women to tackle alone. The whole community of women must be involved on a worldwide scale. Every woman, regardless of her socioeconomic status or geographic location, must actively participate today, and no woman should ever undervalue her significance.⁶

An Indian environmentalist named Saalumara Thimmakka is well-known for her efforts planting and caring for 284 banyan trees along a four-kilometer roadway in the state of Karnataka. The Indian National Citizen's Award was bestowed to her in recognition of her contributions. Near Thimmakka's village, there were many of fichu trees, which are banana trees. Grafting young trees onto these specimens was initiated by Thimakka and her husband. In the first year, ten young trees were transplanted and then planted over a 4-kilometer stretch close to the nearby settlement of Kudoor. In the second year, fifteen seedlings were planted, and in the third year, twenty. To plant these plants, she dipped into her own little funds. The pair would go four km with four pails of water to water the seedlings. Additionally, prickly plants were used to around them, keeping the animals from grazing on them. Most of the seedlings were planted during the monsoon season to ensure that there would be enough rainwater for their growth. The seedlings had always taken root by the time the next monsoons arrived. An evaluation of the 284 trees planted has placed their monetary worth at around 1.5 million rupees. In recent times, the government of Karnataka has assumed responsibility for the care of these trees.

Thimmakka has received several accolades and recognition for her work: "Friend of Trees" Indira Priyadarshini received the Vrikshamitra Award in 1997. Attestation from the Karnataka State Government's Women and Child Welfare Department The Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Wood Science and Technology has bestowed an appreciation certificate onto you. The spouse of Thimmakka passed away in 1991. These days, Thimmakka is invited to a lot of tree-planting events across India. Among her many community service projects is a rainwater storage tank that she built for her village's yearly fair. A trust has been established to fulfil her aim of building a hospital in her community.⁷

Conclusion

Several of these were passed down to us from the colonial government. First and foremost, there is the legal and social environment, which makes it difficult to implement many solutions that exist in less formal countries. We aren't starting from scratch. Our reformers have exercised caution as they should have. Serious issues that compromise stability and the likelihood of advancement are very much possible outcomes of a shock therapy. When change happens at a glacial pace, the quality of the reforms might be so diminished that they fail. Above all else, this is the reformer's conundrum.

⁶ <http://www.womenenvironment.org/detail.php?pageId=230>

⁷ <http://mail.bloommailer.com/contentDescription.aspx?submod=SSM2011312326480&ContentId=CD20113124251921&modid=SM200983112195437>

Before I wrap up, I don't want you to think I'm a negative person. When all hope seems lost, India always manages to pull through, in my opinion. In a book written over thirty-odd years ago, two American economists predicted that India will be thrown to the world's trash heap due to a lack of food. The Green Revolution, which brought scientific knowledge and technological advancements to Indian farming, also occurred around this period. The new methods were not approved by many economists. Either it wouldn't function or it would lead to more inequality, which was their biggest concern. The Indian farmers showed the naysayers that they were incorrect. In instance, the agricultural revolution of the 1960s and 1970s shown, with the right approach, that India's farmers had enormous untapped potential.

Just as aerodynamics has shown that bumblebees can't fly, the Indian economy may soar to new heights despite the reformers' persistent pessimism. First and foremost, I want to warn the incoming class of economics majors at this illustrious university to avoid falling prey to the accountants' curse. We shouldn't discount any potential for growth just because it doesn't make a tidy profit. The pecuniary return test is necessary, that is true. Even more important, however, is the idea of grandeur.⁸

⁸ <http://www.womenenvironment.org/detail.php?pageld=230>