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Gender and Green Governance

The Political Economy of Women's Presence Within and Beyond Community Forestry

Bina Agarwal

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Bina Agarwal is Professor of Development Economics and Environment at the University of Manchester. Prior to this she was Director and Professor of Economics, Institute of Economic Growth, University of Delhi, India

"Gender and Green Governance will rightly be acknowledged as a classic not just in environmental studies, but in studies of development, governance, public action and public service delivery more broadly ... It is a rigorous, engaged and deeply serious exploration of the conditions under which the greater involvement of women in forest management committees improves the quality of environmental (or green) governance ... it is a landmark text." - **Stuart Corbridge, The Journal of Development Studies**

"[A] tour de force ... rigorous, insightful and broad-ranging ... The book is innovative at more levels than one can list." - **Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Indian Express**

"An impressive study of women and community forestry in India and Nepal." - **Nancy Folbre, The New York Times**

"Path-breaking...an immense contribution not only to ecological economics but also to political science, rural sociology, and energy studies...a landmark contribution with depth and insight." - **Joan Martinez-Alier, Economic and Political Weekly**

"An immense, novel contribution to the literature and a milestone in the ongoing debate on forest governance, gender, rural energy and political economy...exceptional." - **Kanchana Wickramasinghe, South Asia Economic Journal**

"A timely reminder of the need for broad-based "Green Governance" which is inclusive of women. While focused on the forestry sector, the book very convincingly establishes the principle of community participation in management, conservation and sustainable use of dwindling natural resources." - **Khawar Mumtaz, The Friday Times**

"Bina Agarwal has crafted a book of central importance in today's world. Both women and their connections with forests have been under-represented in the field, in academic research, and in policy. With analytical rigour and originality, Agarwal bridges these major gaps in our understanding of the difference women can make, when they are actively involved in forest governance." - **Elinor Ostrom, Nobel Laureate in Economics 2009**

"Beautifully written and soundly argued, this book makes an outstanding contribution to the fields of both environmental economics and governance. Drawing on over a decade of fieldwork in India and Nepal, and eschewing easy generalizations, Bina Agarwal offers a richly layered and insightful treatment of the effects of women's presence in local bodies governing village forests." - **Jean-Philippe Platteau, University of Namur and co-author of Halting Degradation of Natural Resources**

"A nuanced analysis that demonstrates the value of mixed-methods approaches ... an important book." - **Ruth Meinzein-Dick, Feminist Economics**

"Cutting across areas of economics, environmental studies, political economy, gender studies, local green governance and public policy, this book needs to be read by all...this is a book for the people." - **Manju Chellani, Indian Journal of Gender Studies**

ABOUT THE BOOK

Economists studying environmental collective action and green governance have paid little attention to gender. Research on gender and green governance in other disciplines has focused mainly on women's near absence from forestry institutions. This interdisciplinary book turns that focus on its head to ask: what if women were present in these institutions? What difference would that make?

Would women's inclusion in forest governance - undeniably important for equity - also affect decisions on forest use and outcomes for conservation and subsistence? Are women's interests in forests different from men's? Would women's presence lead to better forests and more equitable access? Does it matter which class of women governs? And how large a presence of women would make an impact? Answers to these questions can prove foundational for effective environmental governance. Yet they have hardly been empirically investigated.

In an analysis that is conceptually sophisticated and statistically rigorous, using primary data on community forestry institutions in India and Nepal, this book is the first major study to comprehensively address these wide-ranging issues. It traces women's history of exclusion from public institutions, the factors which constrain their effective participation, and how those constraints can be overcome. It outlines how strategic partnerships between forestry and other civil society institutions could strengthen rural women's bargaining power with community and government. And it examines the complexities of eliciting government accountability in addressing poor rural women's needs, such as for clean domestic fuel and access to the commons.

Located in the interface of environmental studies, political economy and gender analysis, the volume makes significant original contributions to current debates on gender and governance, forest conservation, clean energy policy, critical mass and social inclusion. Traversing uncharted territory with rare analytical rigor, this lucidly written book will be of interest to scholars and students as well as policy makers and practitioners.

Part 1: The Potential of Presence

- 1: Presence and Representation
- 2: Gendered Interests and the Environment
- 3: From Absence to Negotiated Presence

Part 2: The Impact of Presence

- 4: Fieldsites and Field Profile
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- 6: Rules and Rulemakers
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- 10: Connecting with Civil Society: Weaving a Web of Strategic Alliances
- 11: Engaging with Government: Extending the Web