

(129)

Examination of Mainstreaming Age, Gender and Diversities for Effectiveness of Sustainable Forestry Management; Case Study of Sri Lanka Community Forestry Programme

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Abstract

Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) is a dynamic and evolving concept, which aims to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations. The CFM generally focuses on community mobilising, improving livelihoods opportunities, and forestry management activities. The forestry management activities consist of forest protection (managing of forest offences and forest fire), forest rehabilitation (nursery management, establishment of enrichment planting, buffer zones and FWLs), and management activities (management of NTFPs, and CBOs). The objective of the study was to examine how factors of age, gender and diversity (AGD) are strategically important in Forestry activities. A mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods were practiced, data were gathered through a structured key informant interviews and focus group discussions, purposely developed two tools; community relationship mapping tool and community importance and influence mapping tool (two sub-tools) were used and tested, and desk review was done with records and reports of the Sri Lanka Community Forestry Programme (SLCFP) which was implemented during 2012-2015. The study revealed that shearing of benefits of forest, irrespective of AGD, with the communities is an effective strategy to improve the sharing of responsibilities of forest conservation. The study identified that community do have different relationship with forest resources that are liked with age, gendered values and roles, and socioeconomic and political needs of people. While the forest community value importance and influence of different AGD groups based on the forest activities, those AGD groups themselves, especially of the women, too have their own assessment of importance and power of influence of women in forestry activities, which determine the engagement of all in forestry management. In CFP, the community does not only limits to the locals living around the forest alone, but also includes the culture of those inhabitants. Diversity is the sum of total of the differences which makes individuals as to who they are, and the collective abilities that they possess to contribute towards the common goals. Age, gender and diversity mainstreaming in CFP is a strategic and coherent approach for the management of CFP's most valued assets: the community, who individually and collectively contribute towards the achievement of the CFP's goals.

Keywords: Sustainable forestry management, Forestry activities, Improving effectiveness, Age, Gender diversities, Importance and power of influence of women