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Environmental Policy and Gender Issues

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Abstract: Over past ten years or so, the relationship between gender and environment has become more explicit and apparent. Gender behavior is influenced and also influences other social context variables, such as ethnicity and culture. Gender and environment are important cross-cutting concerns which should not be studied in isolation from each other. The interests and needs related to nature can be very different and even conflicting. The conceptual development of the present state of natural resource management is schematic, simplified. The gender analysis has revealed that men and women make different use of the natural resources and, therefore, have different problems, needs and interests. These problems and needs must be researched and solved by those directly affected.

In many parts of the world women remain the de facto managers of natural resources, however their voices and resource management choices go largely unheeded. Frequently women's "voices" and their interests are silenced in public forums and when decisions are made on natural resources and their management. This tendency prevents complete comprehension of natural resources, their conservation and rational management. There is a strong trend among those who work with conservation to recognize the importance of community participation in achieving lasting conservation. They acknowledge the diversity that exists in the communities between stakeholders or interested parties at different levels and definitions of "community". Gender is central to achieving this approach of community-based conservation.

A question automatically arises that why do we bother about including a gender perspective in conservation of biodiversity and the search for rational forms of natural resource management? And answer to that is gender differentiates the relationships that people establish with natural resources and eco-systems, regarding knowledge, use, access, control and impact on natural resources, and attitudes with relation to resources and conservation.

At the end the paper would conclude laying emphasis on the need of having more research over the gender issues in natural resources management. There is imperative need of having more and more discussions and deliberations over the need of gender issues in management of natural resources.

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