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Forest Research
Institute (F.R.I.)
Dehra Dun

IUFRO Conference on Gender and Forestry
November 16th till November 19th 2008

Indigenous values and perceptions of sustainable forest management: a gendered approach to Criteria and Indicators

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Key Words: Gender, Indigenous community, Traditional Forest Use, Criteria and indicators, Q Method.

Abstract: In Canada, Criteria and Indicators (C & I) have been predominantly used to assess the sustainability of forest land management and use. Yet, the criteria and indicators themselves often require modification to ensure First Nations (Indigenous people) values and perceptions are fairly included. The on-going empirical research on 'First Nations Perceptions of Sustainable Forest Management' aims to develop a tool to easily modify these inputs by First Nations. It is also important to assess if there are differences in perceptions towards forests and forest management between women and men. With gender disaggregated data, it is possible to assess presence or absence of significant differences and address them in the C & I processes. In this presentation we attempt to gauge these differences.

The data collection is in process. Data is from the Sliammon First Nations, British Columbia, Canada. Stratified random sampling method was used. The categories were based on location (respondents living on the reserve lands and those who are away and staying off reserve); sex (women and men); and age. Q method is used for analysing qualitative aspects especially like values and perceptions. We assess the First Nations perceptions on sustainable forest management using this method.

The outcome of the research will provide a ready tool for use by communities. With this exercise, it is hoped to include a built-in gender component in the construction of the tool. The paper will present the initial outcome of the research and assess whether we can build in a gender component in the construction of the tool.

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