

Dias 1.

Introduction

The incentive to undertake this literary review was the assumption that indigenous men and women relate to and use natural resources in different ways, and that gender therefore is an important aspect of indigenous peoples' natural resource management.

The literary study has shown that these assumptions hold true to a large extent. But it would be premature to say that a review of existing literature on the subject makes it possible to reach a state of the art conclusion as to how gender affects natural resource management among indigenous peoples, and how the ecological, legal, religious and cultural aspects of indigenous peoples' natural resource management affect their gender relations. This is of course partly caused by the limitations of the study undertaken – apart from the limited time available and the cultural heterogeneity of indigenous peoples (according to a recent estimate, there are between 5 and 7000 different indigenous peoples around the world) - the major problem has been that literature dealing with all three subjects is still very limited, or at least not easy to find.

Dias 2.

Literature has been searched in public Danish libraries, on the internet, and in the network organisations – but as can be seen from this one example, you won't get many hits when combining the keywords indigenous peoples, gender and natural resource management.

Dias 3.

Types of literature found:

- Academic literature within the fields of anthropology, ethno-botany, law, NRM, WED / GED
- Policies, strategies, project evaluations

Dias 4.

Women and indigenous peoples seem to share the same position vis-à-vis environmental discourses and paradigms, as they are depicted as being dependent on and therefore also closer to nature in the sense of being more sustainable and spiritual in their dealings with the environment in comparison to men and non-indigenous peoples respectively. Consequently both women and indigenous peoples as groups are often depicted as victims of environmental degradation and at the same time as important actors for ensuring alternative models for sustainable development. Indigenous women can consequently be seen not only as *doubly oppressed* but also as *doubly idealised* natural resource managers. It should therefore be expected that research on natural resource management and NRM projects would have focused especially on indigenous women's role as natural resource managers. On the contrary, it seems as if their position as both women and indigenous has somehow made them “*doubly invisible*” as both groups in general have been- and continue to be - treated as homogenous entities.

At the policy and strategy level there is a growing awareness of the importance of gender when dealing with development, natural resource management and conservation projects with indigenous communities – or at least of the importance of assessing the impact of the intervention on indigenous women (they are usually mentioned together with children and the old). But the scarcity of literature found indicates that the fine words of strategies and policies are still rarely put into practice. A finding that is reflected in the screenings made by the network organisations.

Dias 5.

Indigenous people and natural resource management

With the exception of feminist strands of research, women – and especially indigenous women remain almost invisible in the area of natural resource management research.

In relation to research on indigenous peoples' natural resource management and environmental knowledge, there is a marked tendency to deal with indigenous peoples as either one homogenous group, or refer to specific peoples as the x people, the local dwellers etc.

However research on indigenous peoples' natural resource management has made visible the fact that indigenous people do manage natural resources and that this management is embedded in cultural and spiritual values and knowledge.

Dias 6.

Women and NRM

Feminist research of gender and the environment provide useful tools for analysis, and has served to make visible the importance of women as main food producers and their importance in for example water management and traditional healthcare.

But feminist writings on women and environment do seldom make explicit differences related to ethnicity – which make it difficult to assess if there are any differences, - and have not provided a framework for incorporating alternative concepts of gender that may be found in indigenous cultures. The antagonistic gender discourse dominant among Western feminists is often seen as problematic by indigenous women as it does not accommodate indigenous women's vision of participating in a common struggle together with their men.

Dias 7.

Indigenous gender relations

Ethnographic literature dealing with specific indigenous peoples confirms that indigenous men and women are engaged in different natural resource related activities and have different skills and knowledge of natural resource management - however, there is a marked male bias towards describing indigenous men's skills and knowledge as more refined than that of women – and thus men have been given far more space in the literature. The rather rigid picture of gendered divisions of labour among indigenous peoples has been questioned by ethnographies dealing specifically with indigenous women and gender relations. Their findings indicate that indigenous gender relations are often rather flexible, and that the tasks of the two genders are complementary and interdependent. Indigenous women also seem, at least traditionally, to have had relative autonomy in relation to natural resource management and control over the products of their work.

Dias 8

Topics

Research dealing with all three aspects can be divided into two main categories:

- The role of indigenous women in natural resource management – their importance for enhancing and conserving biodiversity
- Indigenous peoples' gender relations and change: the impact of modernization and natural resource-degradation on indigenous women's status and situation.

Dias 9.

Findings:

Dias 10.

The research on indigenous women's natural resource management and use has first of all shown that indigenous women depend upon a wide range of ecosystems and natural resources in order to provide their families with food, health and income. Ecosystems which often from an outside economical point of view are mainly seen as repositories of timber, fodder or simply as wastelands, represent a major source of nutrients, medicine and marketable products, that are crucial for securing the well being of indigenous women and their families. Wild food plants provide an important nutritional supplement (in terms of minerals, vitamins, fat and protein). Indigenous women have extensive knowledge on collection times and techniques, of managing growth, and of processing and storing wild food plants. Moreover they transfer wild plants to their gardens, where they experiment with them – thereby contributing to the enhancement and conservation of plant biodiversity. The studies also point to the fact that indigenous women's agricultural and extractive activities are often primarily governed by culinary preferences, including preparation, storage and nutritional qualities, and only secondly by criteria such as yield and monetary value.

Dias 11.

Indigenous women's knowledge and skills related to natural resource management provide them with the status of autonomous producers, enable them to care for their families' wellbeing, and give them the means to participate in social relationships of sharing, exchanging, and transmittance of knowledge and products. Restrictions on the use of natural resources enforced in the name of conservation, - privatisation of land, - the introduction of formal schooling, modern healthcare and hybrid seeds among other traits of 'modernity' have, however, tended to undermine indigenous women's access to and control over natural resources and the value of much of their traditional knowledge - and thereby the basis of their traditional autonomy and ability to sustain a family.

This of course also applies to indigenous men, but in general indigenous women are disadvantaged in relation to:

- Land reforms – the title deed of land is usually given to the male head of household (whether he is actually the head of household or not).
- In relation to extension services and agricultural credits – which are usually directed to men and given to the male head of household and owner of the land.
- In relation to the establishment of community-based natural resource management projects – as women are often not included in planning and decision-making.
- And in relation to the cash-economy: indigenous men are seemingly more likely to find paid work in the field of extraction of natural resources, as project staff , migrant workers etc.

Gendered changes in relation to the access to and control over resources tend to disrupt the traditional interdependence and cooperation between indigenous men and women, and indigenous women often find themselves depending on their husbands' cash income and burdened with an increased domestic workload and also often domestic violence. (For indigenous peoples of the Nordic and arctic region it seems that the picture is somewhat reversed –with indigenous women being better educated and more mobile than indigenous men).

Dias 12.

The changing nature of indigenous peoples' gender relations is an important finding so far as the low involvement of indigenous women in community-based projects perhaps stems from a certain sensibility towards interfering with indigenous gender relations on the side of outside planners, who may fear to intervene in the culture of indigenous peoples and their right to self-determination. It

shows that gender relations are not unchangeable; they are continually constructed and contested. A common statement made by indigenous women is that their present subordinate position in society is largely the products of outside interventions – which have tended to be gender blind – but as can be seen - definitely not without gendered consequences.

Dias 13.

Research weaknesses

- Many descriptions but lack of analysis and recommendations for intervention
- Much literature on IP and NRM remains gender blind
- Much literature on NRM and gender remains ethnicity blind
- Lack of a genuine gender approach – women are still the only gender
- Tendency to reproduce stereotypes and rigid dichotomies

Politicized field = a tendency to reproduce stereotypes of both IP and women. Much feminist research for instance takes for granted that women's work is more dependent on natural resources than men's, and that as a consequence women are more vulnerable to environmental degradation. This differences in men's and women's conditions are however often treated as facts that need no verification apart from general references to statistics in line with 'poor people are more prone to environmental degradation and pollution than rich people, women are statistically poorer than men, consequently women are more prone to environmental degradation and pollution than men'.

While such reasoning may prove statistically true, it certainly does not consider the male indigenous hunter, fisherman, pastoralist, farmer or herbalist who to an equal extent with indigenous women depends on abundant and healthy natural resources. The discussions we have had at the seminar indicate that indigenous women are really more concerned about the long term sustainability of natural resources – but it is still – research wise- more of a hypothesis than a proven fact when it

comes to indigenous peoples, who are otherwise generally stereotyped as being ‘natural conservationists’.

- The gendered division of labour is often described as rather rigid, and men and women’s tasks, responsibilities, needs and priorities are still commonly framed as productive/reproductive. The extent to which indigenous men and women work together, and the extent to which their work depend upon each other is often overlooked. Targeting indigenous men and women as separate groups contains the risk of marginalising the knowledge and interest of the other gender.

The common statement about the different priorities of indigenous men and women regarding cash-oriented and subsistence-oriented production does not take into consideration that many indigenous women are involved in income-generating activities. The problem may rather be that they have less control over the means of production and the outcome of their work, and therefore not the incentive or possibilities to engage in the cash-economy to the same extent as men.

Dias 14.

Extraction of findings from project evaluations in terms of constraints and recommendations.

Dias 15.

Constraints

Some of the reasons why gender-strategies do not give the intended results found in the few project evaluations I have come by are:

- Gender strategies are not followed up with workable guidelines – not really understood.
- Project staff lack training and/or dedication

- Local resistance from men and authorities make it difficult to ensure equal participation of men and women.
- The fact that indigenous women are often monolinguals and illiterate makes it more difficult to include them.
- Women are already over burdened by daily tasks and have limited time for participation.

It seems that one general problem is that gender is considered by local project staff as difficult and time-consuming, especially as women's importance as natural resource managers and food producers is not fully recognized. Other evaluations point out, that even when women are included in projects, still the question of gender is left out, with the result that women are given an extra workload of protecting natural resources (for example in reforestation or as forest guards) without their unequal control over resources and decision-making being targeted.

Dias 16.

Recommendations:

- The concept of gender should be clearly defined, agreed upon by all stakeholders and made operational
- All project staff should be trained in gender analysis
- A context specific gender assessment should be undertaken before planning of the project
- Both men and women should be engaged in all stages of the project cycle.
- One person should be made responsible for the implementation of the gender strategy. This person should be truly dedicated and have authority.
- Participation does not equal consent! Many examples of women being included to meet requirement but without being taken seriously. But legal and/or donor requirements about

equal participation of both men and women provide a starting point as it gives women a platform for gaining visibility.

- In order for women to take advantage of this platform they should be empowered through training– and by making women's roles – their traditional skills and knowledge – visible.
- The issue of equal rights for men and women can be a useful entry point for raising gender awareness when working with indigenous peoples, as they are often already used to the discourse on indigenous peoples rights.

Dias 17.

Gaps in the literature:

- General lack of research dealing with the interplay of all three subject
- General lack of written evaluations of 'success-stories' and guidelines based on experience