SDG 5: Achieve Gender-Equality and Empower All Women and Girls

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Forestry’s ’Invisible’ Gendered Infrastructure

**Gender discrimination** – from

- make-up of official bureaucracies & others
- Discriminatory legislation
- Unconscious biases & attitudes

Forestry must take into account relations with other sectors & other parts of people’s lives – for health of the forests & well-being of forest peoples.
Forestry cannot only be about trees...

- Emphasis on timber, woody biomass, or biodiversity hides women’s forest work—often surpasses men’s (State of the World's Forests, 2018).

- NTFPs, agroforestry, plantings at forest edge, marketing & village-based activities crucial to forest management

- Disadvantaged in inst. support (ext. info, tech support)
‘What is the point of protecting the forests when we cannot protect ourselves?’

(Arora-Jonsson 2013: 204).

- Violence against women inhibits women’s forest involvement
- Spiritual, cultural relevance of forests often ignored
- Need to involve women in forest-related decisionmaking
What is Gender?

- A category of analysis
- Study of power relationships based on sex/sexuality & ways in which relationships may be organised & perceived
Caveat

- Gender is not synonymous with women

- Gender is about dynamic relationships

- Gender is always cross-cut by intersecting dimensions of power (class, caste, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.)
Gender-Equal Policies

- Well-intentioned gender programmes can backfire, causing adverse effects on forests & forest peoples, if the efforts are not cognisant of context & power relations.
- Differences among social groups key
- Attend to enforceability of new laws
- Beware of increasing women’s duties.
Need for New Policies, but

- Must allow for hybridity – local w. national (Rao 2007)
- Flexibility (Arora-Jonsson 2013)
- Enable careful analysis of gendered power relations locally

- Blanket statements about poverty or vulnerability of all women or their closeness to the environment often prove counterproductive.