

GENDER MAINSTREAMING STRATEGY OF NERCORMP
FOR
SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS
(CCA)

BY:

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The North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCORMP) is a project jointly funded by the North Eastern Council, Government of India and International Fund for Agricultural Development. The project's objective is to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable groups in a sustainable manner through improved management of their resource base in a way that contributes to preservation and restoration of the environment.

NERCORMP is facilitating the promotion and conservation of approximately 10 to 20 hectares of community land in each of its 460 project villages spread over six districts of northeast India. Such Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) are managed and regulated by the NaRMGs (Natural Resource Management Groups) constituted in each village for planning and implementation of Natural Resource Management, Livelihood and Income Generation related activities. The gender equitable structure and mode of functioning of the NaRMG enables women to apply their skills, knowledge, and traditional practices for more sustainable forest practices.

Decades of research as well as the NERCORMP experience has shown that in addition to playing important roles in forest use, women and men appreciate forests in very different ways. Rather than exploiting resources (timber, game and mineral wealth), women have long recognised the value of more sustainable activities, such as gathering edible fruits, vegetables, roots, medicinal plants etc. for supporting their families and ensuring food security of their communities..

Therefore, to further mainstream gender in the management of CCAs, NERCORMP has developed a strategy whereby the women members of the NaRMGs would list out the NTFPs (Non Timber Forest Produces) that they would extract from the CCAs for consumption and for sale and for each of them specify the time when they can be collected, specify the traditional rules for their usage including 'dos and don'ts' as well as specify the minimum market rate at which they could be sold and use of the sale proceeds. The women would also lay down the traditional and spiritual beliefs pertaining to the CCAs and frame certain rules and regulations for adhering to them. It would also be the responsibility of these women to define the roles and responsibilities that women and the youth would have to take upon their shoulders for management of the CCA during the seasonal out-migration of men for wage labour and identify the support that should be provided to the latter for carrying out the same. For example, in Amsai-I village of Karbi Anglong district the community has agreed that harvesting of NTFPs will be done as per the rules framed by women. The women have been given more responsibility for deciding the collection time and quantity that can be harvested at a particular time. Chonchola R Marak, 44 years, mother of 6 children, from Jebalgre village of West Garo Hills district has expressed that “ *the new method of management of CCAs has not only given more knowledge to the women about conservation of the forests but has also empowered them with more decision making powers related to plantation of trees etc.*”

Photographs:



Women on the way for collecting NTFPs in Phangdiloin village, West Khasi Hills district, Meghalaya



Women folk carrying loads of firewood in Phangdiloin village, West Khasi Hills district, Meghalaya



Chonchola with her NTFPs during NERCORMP NEAT Fest (2014) in Tura, West Garo hills district



Mrs. Meneka Timungpi of Amsai-1 village selling the NTFPS in the market, Umsuai cluster, Karbi Anglong,, Assam.



Mrs. Kardom Beypi and Mrs. Rajoni Tokbipi, Umpanai 3 Village, selling the NTFPs in the market, Umpanai cluster, Karbi Anglong,, Assam.



Mrs. Mirmala Timungpi and Tharina Ingtipi of Birsingki village, , selling the NTFPs in the market, Ulukunchi Cluster, Karbi Anglong,, Assam.