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Primary significance of 'Minor Resource' special reference to women and plant biodiversity

Sushila
Research Scholar, Department of Botany, B.M. University, Rohtak, Haryana, India

Abstract
Women manage the vast majority of the world's horticultural resources, particularly in tropical regions with a high concentration of plant species. They are the go-to people for managing precious plants, both cultivated and wild, in their respective environments. Women's regular work has always necessitated expanding their knowledge. Wild plant collectors, home gardeners, plant domesticators, herbalists, and seed keepers all overwhelmingly tend to be women. In many parts of the globe and among many different cultural groupings, they have informal monopolies on plant breeding and farming. The primary values (use and cultural values) of plant genetic resources are localised and non-monetary, making them mostly invisible to outsiders and easily depreciated. This study explores the ways in which sexism in the scientific community hinders our understanding of the plant kingdom and, by extension, our capacity to influence that realm in accordance with human values.

Keywords: primary significance, 'Minor Resource, plant biodiversity

Introduction
The absence of women, gender relations, and the home domain from biodiversity conservation policies, projects, and recommendations is a result of inherent biases based on gender and the availability of resources. Inadequate or incorrect conclusions are drawn about plant variety, features, applications, people-plant connections in culturally-specific settings, causes of genetic erosion, and possible remedies since the majority of plant biodiversity research is not gender-sensitive. Women are often the primary providers of household goods such as food, medicine, clothing, housing, utensils, and even money in many parts of the world due to the abundance of biological resources. Keeping these opportunities open is critical to women's empowerment and well-being. Because of this, providing incentives to women helps fight against biological decline.
As the author puts it, "in many cultural and economic contexts, local wild and cultivated plant varieties are considered'minor' resources, secondary to major staple crops and forest products; women are also seen as'minor' actors, secondary to men, who are presumed to be the knowledge holders, managers, and preservers of most 'valuable' plant resources, especially to outsiders." 1. The effects are far-reaching, affecting not just the creation of new scientific knowledge but also associated behaviours, policies, and interventions that aim to alter the relationships between individuals and between individuals and their surroundings. Two of the most important goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity—the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from their use—can only be achieved if women's knowledge, use, rights, and needs in regards to local plant biodiversity are taken seriously.

Woman: The housewife
Most plants used by humans are cultivated or collected for their domestic (medical, gastronomic, nutritional, and aesthetic) advantages, as shown by ethnobotanical case studies from all around the globe (e.g. Posey, 1999). Women have an unrecognised closeness to plants due to their role in the home. Gardening, collecting plants, preserving, storing, and preparing plants for use as food, medicine, fuel, or fibre are all part of domestic responsibilities. When it comes to protecting plant variety, kitchens and pantries are often overlooked. Although it's often thought of as a place where people have babies, the house is really rather productive. It takes around one-third of a lifetime to obtain the level of conventional technical knowledge and skills needed for this. Frequent innovation is necessary for adapting to external and internal change.
Culinary customs are deeply ingrained in national identities. used for many purposes, including sustenance, comfort, ritual, medicine, and spirituality. Trading and hospitality, two pillars of many traditional communities, are greatly facilitated by having access to a plentiful food supply. While males may have an impact on what is considered a "decent supper" or "appropriate dish," women are the "gatekeepers" of what is allowed in and out of the house. A mother's passing on of cooking wisdom and techniques to her daughter is vital to the continuation of culturally significant cuisines. The most important reason why humans learn about, choose, utilise, and

maintain plant biodiversity is because of culinary preferences and post-harvest procedures. The underlying reason humans keep a high degree of plant diversification is being lost along with culinary traditions.

Agronomic circumstances account for just a small fraction of crop variation in the Andes, the birthplace of potato diversity (Zimmerer, 1991) [36]. A wide variety of potato and maise species are available to meet a wide variety of cooking methods, from freeze-drying to soup-making to boiling. 50 different types of wild plants are used by the ladies of Tuscany in their famous soups (Pieroni, 1999) [29]. It's possible that as more young Italian women join the profession and spend less time in the kitchen, they may lose their familiarity with the incredible plant resources at their disposal. For example, in Swaziland, Southern Africa, women's reliance on wage labour has led to a shift away from native vegetables and processed wheat products (Malaza, 2003) [23]. Mayan immigrant women in urban Quintana Roo, Mexico, fight to maintain cultural and biological variety by replanting native Yucatan varieties in backyard gardens. Both their cultural heritage and the genetic variety of their crops are protected (Greenberg, 2003) [24].

Studies show that traditional women's knowledge of food processing and storage coincides with scientific understanding, highlighting the complexity and dynamic nature of the post-harvest food chain. Fermenting plants may delay spoiling, increase their nutritional value, and protect them from pests and illnesses during storage and preservation, all tasks traditionally performed by women (Howard, forthcoming). When harvested and preserved properly, native plant foods may be stable, year-round staples (Norton, 1985; Madge, 1994). Ethnobotanical knowledge is essential for food preservation, which in turn is important for family food security and the management and conservation of precious plants. Women's knowledge, skills, and needs in regards to food processing, storage, and preparation are often overlooked in people-plant research and conservation initiatives (Howard, forthcoming).

Woman the gatherer

In rural parts of the undeveloped world, wild plants are essential to human livelihoods, and not only in foraging cultures. Women often do the plant-gathering work. Women provided 79% of the vegetable food in 135 groups with varying subsistence practises (such as agriculture, livestock husbandry, hunting, fishing, and gathering) (Barry & Schlegel, 1982) [4].

There are many uses for the plants found in the wild, including consumption, fertilisation, composting, medicinal purposes, energy production, and even industrial applications. In times of food scarcity or famine, they are there to provide aid. The needs, responsibilities, skills, and interests of men and women in regards to plant collection are distinct from one another. According to studies conducted in Uttar Pradesh, India (Flickinger, 1997), females have a more nuanced understanding of the value of wild plants than do males. Women utilise plants for medicine, tonics, cleansers, fibre, food, and tools, whereas males use them for agriculture (fodder and mulch). Studies show that males tend to gather plants from "men's places" and women from "women's spaces." Field edges, irrigation canals, road shoulders, and fallows are women's spaces whereas males have access to holy groves and highland woodlands. Due to the fact that males are forbidden from participating in this activity, many women in various societies travel great distances to gather plants from so-called "wild" settings like woods and meadows. Without intending to do so, conservation programmes may impact the availability of certain areas (e.g., "natural reserves") in ways that favour or disadvantage certain demographics, particularly women and males.

The amount of available fodder is decreasing worldwide. Women spend more time and effort foraging, and their gathering rights are taken away, as a result of population growth, market development, and environmental degradation. Reliance on store-bought foods increases, while reliance on foraged foods decreases, leading to worse nutrition, fewer food options during times of crisis, more money spent on food, and less attention paid to protecting and using native plant species.

Woman the Gardener

Growing food in one's own backyard is one of the first and most common ways to do so. Most definitions of "home garden" emphasise its proximity to the house, its role as a supplementary food and income source for households, the preponderance of family labour, and its multiple purposes, including those of an aesthetic, social, recreational space and a source of medicinal plants, spices, fodder, building materials, fuel, and more. They should be recognised as the most important cultivar repository since they contain substantially more species variety than cultivated areas. The agroforestry systems used in tropical gardens are among the most complex in the world. Two subdistricts in West Java are home to 240 different plant species, all grown in private gardens (Soemarwoto *et al*., 1976).

It is only recently that people have realised how important home gardens are for maintaining diverse ecosystems (Watson & Eyzaguirre, 2001) [31]. In order to preserve species and variants that would not be profitable in the field, gardens "offer a 'genetic backstop.'"

Localized cultivation and production.. (Niez, 1987). Swidden systems include reintroducing useful plant varieties lost due to land clearance and fire into individual gardens (Okigbo, 1985) [27]. To allow for their ongoing evolution, many gardeners choose to preserve their plants in situ rather than in gene banks. It has been noted by a number of writers that farmers often experiment with novel crop varieties in their own backyard gardens. The potato migrated north from South America by gardeners, while the Incan women brought maize seed to the newly conquered land (Niez, 1987). Knowledge may be passed down via the family garden and used

in later years. Maya women in Guatemala's highlands use horticulture as a tool for education. How to care for plants and crops (weeding, harvesting) are all topics covered (Keys, 1999) [20].

Gender roles in gardening the home garden are culturally specific. However, due to the intrinsic connection between gardens and the home, it is often accepted that women are the ones who are responsible for maintaining and growing gardens. Like most women's work, home gardening is seen as secondary or tertiary to the agricultural sector. This view undermines the value of women's work in protecting plant diversity. When it comes to alleviating poverty, nothing is more important than having a garden at home, and this is particularly true for women. As part of efforts to preserve biodiversity, we must rectify the neglect of home gardens and the women who tend to them in the context of development planning and food security.

Herbalist

According to the World Health Organization, almost 80% of people worldwide use plant-based medications. Twenty-five percent to forty percent of today's drugs are derived from plants (Farnsworth *et al*., 1985) [11]. Research into folk medicine and medicinal plants is thriving, although it mostly involves practitioners such as shamans, midwives, and herbalists (McClain, 1989). In most parts of the world, male shamans and medicine men have a privileged position in society, but in Africa and Asia, female priestesses are commonplace. Most herbalists and midwives are women who use plants to cure illness. When it comes to medicine and ethnobotany, women are generally overlooked in favour of shamans and medicine men. Women's 'common' knowledge as laypeople predominates in conventional medical systems (McClain, 1989; Good, 1987). The Quichua women of the Andes in Ecuador have an in-depth knowledge of medicinal plants and can describe the effects of 350 different herb-ailment combinations (Kothari, 2003) [21]. When natural cures don't cut it, it's time to look for help elsewhere. While taking care of their siblings, young girls have experience diagnosing and treating common illnesses, and they pass on this knowledge of herbal treatments to their future offspring (Howard-Borjas, 2002) [18]. Because of differences in the division of labour and social power, male and female perspectives on medicinal plants are distinct. The ethnobotanical study of plants, however, has ignored female healers and home herbalism (Kothari, 2003) [21]. There should be no surprise that environmentalists have this bent.

Women Are the Plant Breeder and Seed Custodian

We need seed keepers and plant breeders to keep agriculture going. Agriculture across the globe is dependent on gene banks and the sale of seeds, which are managed by large multinational corporations and international agencies. Women and small farmers have long held the roles of plant breeders and seed keepers. Food crops are often grown by women in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific. Because of their role as crop cultivators, they investigate the factors that are most relevant to farmers when making a decision, especially those who cultivate in marginal regions and oversee many kinds. The women of Rwanda cultivate 600 different bean types (Sperling & Berkowitz, 1994), whereas the women of Peru's Aguaruna cultivate 60 different manioc kinds in a single hamlet (Boster, 1985) [5]. Crop selection includes both male and female labourers. Women have unique insights and standards, but conventional plant breeders and environmentalists tend to ignore them in favour of their own preferences and data. Women have wider selection criteria than males do because of their utilisation of plant materials.

Rice provides sustenance, while straw may be used for thatching, mat manufacturing, fodder, husks for fire, and leaves for relishes (Jiggins, 1986). Food preparation and storage for the household often fall within the purview of the female gender after the harvest. This is why they test for flavour, nutritional value, and suitability for processing and storage while selecting varietals. Several studies have shown that men take women's opinions into account while making crop choices. The agroecological conditions of the field have no direct bearing on these variables. Thus, scientists tend to overlook them.

Many seed swaps and stores are run by women. Bride price, presents, family responsibilities, and market/barter transactions are all examples of unofficial forms of seed exchange. Women tend to take charge of seed management since they are the ones responsible for making the seed selections while the harvestable product is being processed and stored. Women are seen as the proper seed reservoir in certain cultures, which has been linked to cultural beliefs about the role of women in the seed saving and reproduction processes.'

Women and Genetic Resources

All throughout the globe, people are talking about the need of protecting and profiting from plants' intellectual property. The majority of people believe that native farmers and forest dwellers should be the ones to own and profit from whatever genetic material they create. The fact that indigenous peoples' conceptions of intellectual property are rooted in factors such as place of residence, family ties, sexual orientation, and ethnicity have been largely disregarded by international systems of rights and discourses (Box 3). These natural processes help to protect the variety of plant life. Even the most prestigious scholars agree that more work needs to be done to learn about 'indigenous' rights regimes (Cleveland & Murray, 1997; Mgbeoji, 2002; see also Howard, 2003).

Indigenous peoples' legal claims to plants (and to the rights of women) can be quickly violated. Women make up the bulk of agrobiodiversity creators and valuable plant identifiers, including gardeners, gatherers, herbalists, and plant breeders. However, because of gender bias, they are the last to have their rights acknowledged and to reap the benefits of related development or compensation schemes. It is incorrect to assume that women will benefit

from "indigenous groups" or "farmers" rights or compensation. Considering how to uphold women's rights is crucial if we want compensation methods to help the resource provider and inspire conservation.

Gender Bias in Anthropology And Related Science

Ethnobotany investigates the relationships between people and plants. Ethnobotanical studies often assume that one person's plant knowledge can be generalised to a whole community. Most ethnobotanists fail to recognise the gendered nature of plant knowledge and practise across the world. We made three mistakes: The lack of investigation of women's botanical expertise. In the field of ethnobotany, it is common practise to assume that males (and particularly older men) best represent or have greater understanding of the ethnobotany of a certain culture. Ignoring the expertise of women. Leaving out women, many of whom know more about plants than men do, diminishes both biological diversity and its potential applications. using questionable resources to determine the identity of a plant, its caretaker, its characteristics, its function, or its name. Many studies have shown that women are better at seeing these patterns. In particular, plants in their natural habitats (e.g. Zimmerer, 1991) [36]. An eminent ethnobotanist once said that "most ethnobotanical publications on female health were by foreign guys interpreting local men and native women" (Duke & Vasquez, 1994). It's not easy to identify whether one of the first two errors has been committed. There is no way to tell whether women were included in the interviews due to the use of terms like "farmers," "dwellers," "experts," "tribe names," etc. Research involving women is seldom sex-disaggregated because of this. Let's pretend women play a crucial role in protecting plant variety. The research should next look at how factors like the spread of modern kinds, the increasing commodification of plant resources, the decline in access to common land, and changing dietary preferences could impact their genetic viability. Changes in gender dynamics have an impact on women's drive and leadership styles.

Gender, Biodiversity Loss and Conservation

Can women's needs, interests, knowledge, and motivations to protect plant biodiversity be taken into account in conservation and development projects? First, due to male out-migration, women now make about 80-90% of farm heads in Guangxi region in southwest China (Song & Jiggins, 2003). Women have traditionally been in charge of making decisions about which crops to plant and how to keep track of their seeds, but this role has been ignored by the government. Song took action based on her research by launching a plant breeding and varietal selection initiative with women farmers in Guangxi State. Trials on the improvement of the maise are grown and tended to by village-based farmer technicians, the majority of whom are women, and by public sector agricultural extension employees at local extension stations.

Over time, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of breeders, extensionists, and farmers converge, making each group stronger. Seventy percent to eighty percent of those involved in collaborative activities are female; women professionals have assured male colleagues that they should "listen to and learn from the women farmers" (Song & Jiggins, 2003).

Collaboration in maize varietal selection and breeding has given women farmers access to more resources at the research station, which has a positive impact on biodiversity conservation by increasing the number of materials available to farmer breeders and the number of parental lines used by formal breeders (Song & Jiggins, 2003). It is accepted that the research cannot change the causes that contribute to the feminization of agriculture, but the authors conclude that "the lessons taught provide hope that women farmers' experience, talents, and demands will be more recognised as agricultural modernisation proceeds" (Song & Jiggins, 2003).

In a second point, Chilean Mapuche women are key figures in protecting plant variety (Aguilar, 2001). Araucana woods in southern Chile are home to a wide variety of flora, including many aromatic and medicinal plants harvested by Mapuche women for use by shamans (Machi) and in cooking. The contemporary Mapuche have abandoned their traditional food and cooking methods in favour of those of the modern world. Les Toques Blanches chefs are committed to serving authentic, regionally-sourced Indigenous cuisine in their fine dining establishments around Chile. These cooks reached out to a green activist in an effort to preserve the national cuisine.

Women in Araucana who cultivate native seeds get help from CET. Fifteen local ladies, both urban and rural, shared their family recipes with the kitchen staff. Women in Mapuche society are responsible for all aspects of food production. Each village has a "seed curator" whose job it is to gather and care for the local seed stock. Women are the keepers of wild species in the home garden. The chefs have faith that the peasant women would store and distribute food if they generate enough interest. Gourmets and aspiring businesswomen are expected to welcome such a free market. Unknown.

This demonstrates that non-natives concerned with biodiversity conservation may do so without undermining indigenous customs, women's roles, or wellbeing, all while protecting the world's most precious natural resources. The development of markets for plant biodiversity may be useful in this regard. As the value of farmland and other plant-based resources rises in tandem with the growth of the market, males increasingly exert power over females. Moreover, without local oversight, it might lead to excessive resource extraction (see, e.g. Price, 2003; Wooten, 2003). Economic incentives did not create or maintain these culturally and environmentally rich ethnoecosystems. Because they are hard to convert into cash, market forces tend to drive their price down. Profiting from them might lead to their abandonment or destruction.

Conclusions

According to the CBD, the lives and cultures of those who play a pivotal role in protecting biodiversity across the globe are at stake. Therefore, it is essential for human survival that biological variety be protected. Instead, 'human wellbeing' is defined by factors of a biophysical and cultural nature. Those that assist create and maintain the world's biological variety should reap the rewards of its preservation. In order to protect biodiversity and guarantee its continuous development in the wild, conservation efforts should prioritise maintaining local cultural and agro ecological (ethnoecological) systems. The implication that "poor" indigenous farmers and rural forest dwellers should be isolated in culture-nature reserves and expected to protect biodiversity on behalf of humanity and the animal world is absurd. Meanwhile, the rest of the world benefits from their research and development in areas as diverse as genetics and the arts. The forces responsible for the decline of biological diversity and the decline of human civilizations must be combated.

The goal of CBD is to provide a "fair and equitable distribution of benefits" from biological diversity (CBD, 1992). The importance of women and gender relations in local biodiversity management, as well as gender disparities and prejudice in local, regional, national, and international systems that establish norms and legislation around biodiversity conservation, must be recognised before this issue can be resolved. Women and gender relations are seldom included in the many books and reports written on the preservation of biodiversity. "much more needs to be done" to improve women's involvement, even when it is recognised, as in the Convention on Biodiversity (UNEP, 2000). To accurately calculate the costs and benefits of biodiversity loss and protection, it is necessary to account for women's responsibilities and demands. The costs of genetic degradation and the benefits of conservation will be understated if women's values and uses are ignored. As history has shown, economists, planners, and scientists often fail to account for the costs and advantages associated with women's work since it is often unpaid, domestic, and 'invisible.' It is not optional to use methods that take into account the needs of both sexes when calculating the costs and benefits of protecting biodiversity and determining how that decision will affect the distribution of resources and people's quality of life.

Food security, health, poverty, agriculture, commerce, and technological development are just some of the many areas that benefit greatly from well-functioning gender relations in plant biodiversity management. Secretary of the Convention Hamdallah Zedan has lately emphasised the need for its implementation in all spheres of society (personal communication 2002). Some connections between development policy and practise were discussed, and their significance was analysed, in this article (see also Howard, 2003).

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