

# Reflecting why Gender Matters in Community Forestry Programs

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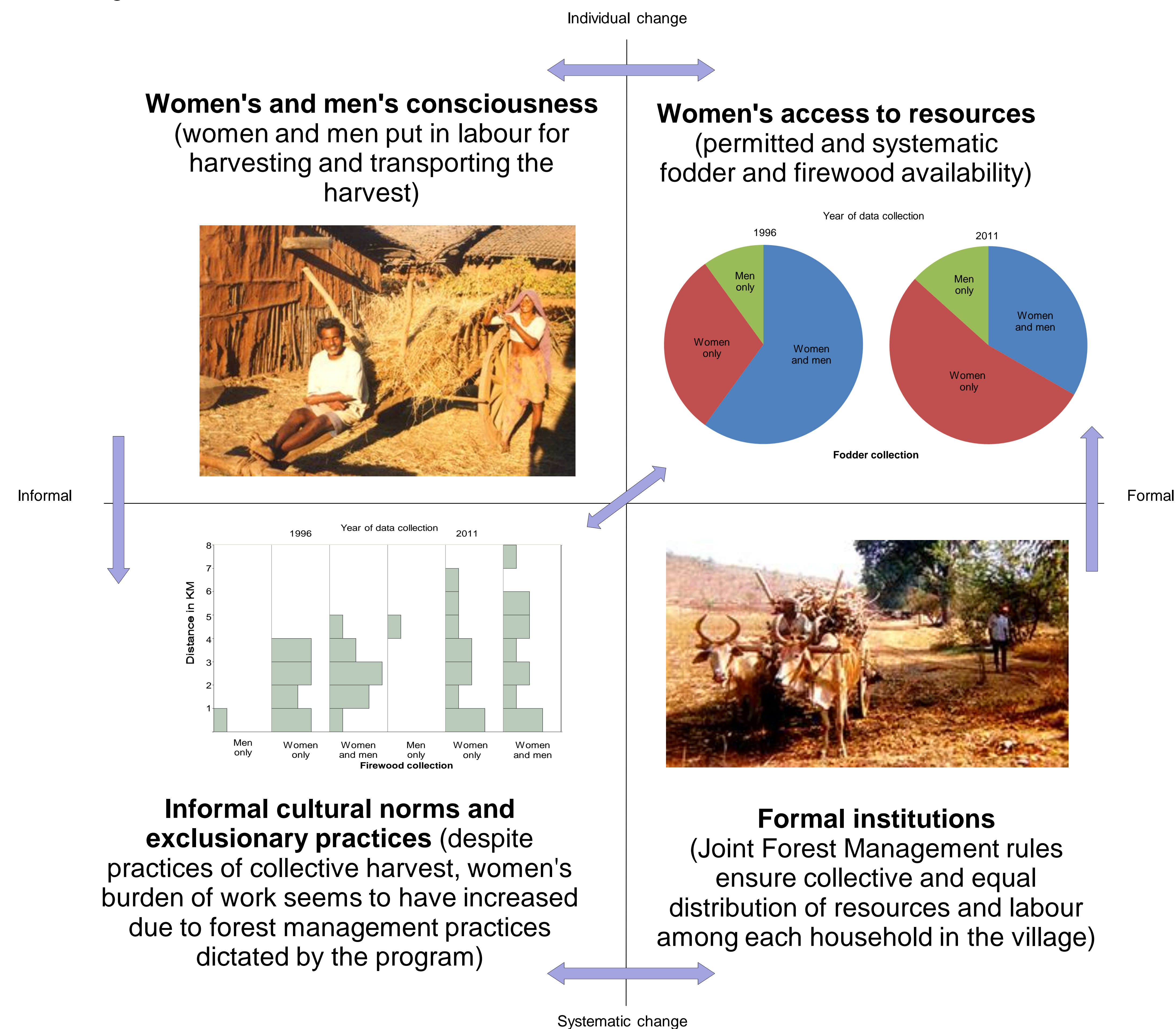
## Introduction

This study looks at the differences in how women and men access and use forest and their perceptions on forest management as it relates to their daily lives and livelihood. This study provides results from two case studies; one in Gujarat, India, the other in British Columbia, Canada.

We examine if there are any gender-related changes in the use of forest over 15 years in the Indian case, using interviews of the same households over two time periods implementing Joint Forest Management, the community forestry program. In the Canadian case, the First Nation had just signed their Community Forestry Agreement and were starting the program in 2008. We examine if there is a difference in the way women and men perceived sustainable forest management.

## The Indian Case

Using the Gender at Work framework (Rao and Kellehar, 2005), we examine how institutional practices in Joint Forest Management have led to changes in cultural gender roles (Klooserman *et al* 2012) by increasing womens' work burden.



## The Canadian Case

Women and men were asked to rank a set of statements from 'Most Agree' to 'Most Disagree'. The statements came from a collection of surveys conducted over 10 years in the community.

While women ranked statements on teaching, and passing on the teaching of forest use highly, these were least ranked by men. Conversely, statements important to men, for example on logging, a need for increasing skills and for specialist resource managers, were ranked lower by women.

## Discussion

Perceptions on the use of forests and managing resources are different for women and men. This is particularly relevant because most individuals directly involved in implementing community forestry programs are men.

In the long run, if community forestry programs are not carefully thought through, there is a danger of putting women at a greater disadvantage and increasing their work burden.

This learning from the Indian case can be applied for structuring gender sensitive community forestry programs in Canada.

## Conclusions

There are differences in women's and men's perceptions in management, and in the use of forest resources.

Community forestry programs tend to affect men and women differently. It is important to take these differences in account in community forestry programs so that neither women nor men are disadvantaged.

Institutional mechanisms do not help in altering gender specific cultural practices without specifically targeting change on control over resources.

## References

- Rao, A. & Kelleher, D. (2005): Is there life after gender mainstreaming?, *Gender & Development*, 13:2, 57-69
- Kloosterman, J., Benning, E., & Fyles, R. (2012): 'Measuring the unmeasurable: gender mainstreaming and cultural change', *Gender & Development*, 20:3, 531-545

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