

# ALU - WOMEN'S STUDIES BULLETIN



VOLUME –23, ISSUE-23

June- 2018



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## Editorial desk

*Advancing gender equality may be one of the best ways of saving the environment, and countering the dangers of overcrowding and other adversities associated with population pressure. The voice of women is critically important for the world's future – not just for women's future.” -Amartya Sen*

Women play a critical role in managing natural resources on family and community levels and are most affected by environmental degradation. In communities around the world, women manage water, sources for fuel, and food, as well as both forests and agricultural terrain. Women produce 60 to 80 percent of food in developing countries, while inheritance laws and local customs often prevent them from owning or leasing land and securing loans or insurance. The lack of equitable land rights remains a major obstacle to women's empowerment and poverty alleviation. From the high level to the grassroots, the 1992 UN Earth Summit, India's Chipko movement and Kenya's Green Belt Movement all highlighted the role of women's voices and perspectives in sustainable development. Across the regions and cultures of the world, women play critical roles in relation to their natural environment. Women's role in society is multifaceted, not only in the duties that help nourish domestic social life, but in the public sphere as well. As fisherwomen, farmers, and so many other local scale producers linked to the environment, they contribute to the livelihood of their families and communities, developing a production dynamic, and their participation in the production chain. The United Nation has highlighted in innumerable documents on women's role in managing natural resources, as well as key player in local, regional, and global initiatives. One of the UN documents with this vision is Agenda 21; it claims women's importance in

sustainable development, suggesting governments to go further in implementing strategies that envisage their crucial role in the sociopolitical dimension of environmental matters.

Thus, women have a fundamental role in the enterprise of preserving natural resources.

### **QUOTABLE QUOTES**

*Those who contemplate the beauty of the Earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts-* **Rachel Carson**

*When women get together, they're a pretty tough force to push back -***Erin Brockovich**

*It is simple, really. Human health and the health of ecosystems are inseparable-* **Gro Harlem Brundtland**

*I believe we want a world that is pro-poor, pro-development, and pro-environment-***Bina Agarwal**

*Another world is not only possible, she's on the way and, on a quiet day, if you listen very carefully you can hear her breathe-***Arundhati Roy**

*The need of quiet, the need of air, the need of exercise, the sight of sky and of things growing seem human needs, common to all-***Octavia Hill**

*It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference. My little thing is planting trees-***Wangari Maathai**

*We are either going to have a future where women lead the way to make peace with the Earth or we are not going to have a human future at all-***Vandana Shiva**

### **WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS**

Women's role in environmental movements differ from the developed to the developing countries. In the developed countries, the issues that women are raising are largely related to pollution and the urban context, while in the developing countries the issues are linked to livelihood concerns in rural areas.

### **PROMINENT WOMEN ENVIRONMENTALIST**

#### **JANE GOODALL**

Jane Goodall is most well-known for her love of chimpanzees and her extensive years of field research on the species. In July 1960, she traveled from England to Tanzania and set out to discover the secrets of the chimpanzee species. Her unconventional approach to her research transformed



relationships between humans and animals. In 1977, Jane founded the Jane Goodall Institute, which continues her research all over the world. She also established Jane Goodall's Roots

and Shoots to empower youth of all ages to mobilize their peers and pursue their passion. Currently, Jane travels the world speaking about environmental concerns while encouraging young people to get active about the future of the planet.

### **SYLVIA EARLE**

Sylvia Earle pioneered the movement for ocean exploration. Earle has spent more than 6,000 hours underwater and was the first underwater explorer to make use of SCUBA gear. After winning the 2009 TED Prize, Earle launched Mission Blue, an organization working to establish marine-protected areas. Earle's continuous research is leading to a deeper understanding of the world's oceans and how they should be protected.



### **WANGARI MAATHAI**



Wangari Maathai worked tirelessly for both land conservation and women's rights. She was the founder of the Green Belt movement, which focused on environmental conservation and women's rights, in her native country of Kenya. In addition to being honored by many world leaders for her efforts, she was awarded

the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for her approach to sustainable development, democracy and peace.

### **RACHEL CARSON**



Rachel Carson wrote the now-famous *Silent Spring*, an expose on the misinformation spread by the chemical industry and the use of synthetic pesticides, specifically DDT. This book spurred the environmental revolution. The overall theme of the book is the commanding- and overwhelmingly negative- effect that humans have

on the natural world. Carson's lasting legacy led to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States under the Nixon administration and started the conversation regarding the human impact on the environment.

## VANDANA SHIVA



Vandana Shiva is an Indian environmentalist who has spent much of her life in defense of biodiversity. In 1991, she founded Navdanya, a research institute that aims to protect the diversity and integrity of native seeds while also promoting fair trade practices. Her research institute is dedicated to address the most significant

environmental and social justice issues of the current era.

## SATOU CEESAY



Satou Ceesay, “Queen of Recycling,” is a Gambian activist who started the recycling movement called One Plastic Bag in the Gambia. Ceesay works to educate citizens about recycling and reducing the amount of waste that is created. She founded a project that creates plastic yarn and forms bags out of

the upcycled waste. Not only has her project dramatically reduced the amount of waste in her village, but it is also employing hundreds of West African women and providing them with monthly revenue.

## MAY BOEVE

May Boeve is co-founder of the website, 350.org, an organization dedicated to working against climate change by connecting leaders across the world. The aim of the organization is to reduce the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to a point where global warming will not be as dangerous as



predicted. Her organization is going straight to the source: the fossil fuel industry. By limiting the power of the industry itself, they hope to then confront the government about limiting carbon dioxide emissions.

## MARINA SILVA



Marina Silva is a warrior for the Amazon Rainforest in Brazil. Silva was a colleague of Chico Mendes, who was assassinated for defending the rainforest in 1988. She and Mendes led demonstrations in the 1980s to protect the rainforest from government control. After

Mendes' assassination, Silva became a politician and fought for environmental protection, sustainable development, and social justice. Deforestation decreased by 59% from 2004 to 2007, during her political career.

*The underlying connection between all of these awe-inspiring women is that they believed in their cause. Thus, through the bulletin we request all on line and offline readers, never to underestimate the power you have as a citizen to create change within your community. Be fearless, be courageous, be passionate. Stand on the shoulders of all of the powerful women that came before us.*

## INTERNATIONAL TREATIES ON GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT

- African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Algiers, 1968
- Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Paris 1972
- Agreement Concerning the Protection of Water of the Mediterranean Shores, Monaco, 1976
- Agreement on the Joint Regulations on Fauna and Flora- Enugu, 1977
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982
- Benelux Convention on Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection Bruxelles, 1982
- World Charter for Nature (1982)
- International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1983
- ASEAN Agreement on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources- Kuala Lumpur 1985
- Convention for the Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region- Nairobi, 1985
- Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region (SPREP Convention) Noumea, 1986
- Fourth ACP-EEC Convention- Lome, 1989
- Convention on Biodiversity, 1992
- Agenda 21 UN Conference on Environment and Development June 1992
- International Convention to Combat Desertification Paris, 1994
- UN Fourth Conference on Women 1995
- Land Mine Treaty 1997
- Convention on Access to Information Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental matter – Aarhus, 1998

## **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES THAT DEALT WITH WOMEN'S ISSUES**

- World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi 1985
- The World Summit for Children, held in New York in 1990 • The International Conference on Nutrition, held in Rome 1992
- The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna 1993
- The International Year of the World's Indigenous People 1993
- International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo 1994
- The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados 1994
- The International Year of the Family 1994
- World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen 1995
- Habitat II- Istanbul 1996

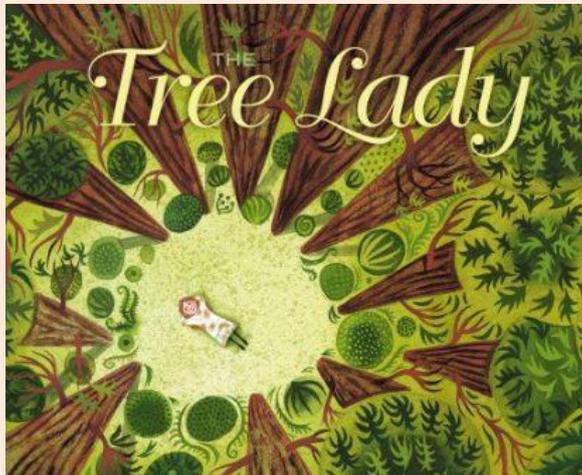
## **SOME MAJOR POLICIES AND PROGRAMS ON ENVIRONMENT AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN ARE BRIEFLY OUTLINED BELOW.**

- Water harvesting programs across India see more women participants working in partnership with the state and NGOs. Water has gender dimensions. Women and men derive different benefits from its availability, use and management. Women were active participants in the Sukhomajri village in Shivalik range of the Himalaya in Haryana that earned nation-wide acclaim for the way in which they had utilised their forests and water to their benefit. When women are involved in water management decisions the community benefits. Gujarat Water Policy (2002) too mentions that women are the most interested users of rural water supply, domestic urban water consumption, in health and sanitation issues as well as agricultural production and sees a crucial role for grassroots women in local water management.
- Renewable energy policies in rural areas address women in households with biogas plants and solar cookers / panels. Poor women benefits from clean and green cooking energy.
- National Forest Policy 1988 and Joint Forest Management (JFM) program of the 1990s mandated that should women comprise 33% of the membership of the Vana Samarakshana Samitis. This inclusion of women to a large extent made success of the program in different states. The logic behind its creation was that the problem of deforestation could be better handled if the state Forest Departments worked out joint management agreements with local communities to reforest degraded forest

## **RELEVANT LEGAL PROVISION ON ENVIRONMENT**

India is one of the few countries of the world that have made a specific reference in the constitution of the need for environmental protection, control and preservation.

- The constitution (42nd Amendment) Act of 1976 has made it a Fundamental duty to protect and improve the natural environment.
- Article 51 (a) provides that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life and have compassion for living creatures.
- Article 21 of Constitution guarantee the right to life; a life of dignity, to be lived in a proper environment, free from danger of disease and infection.



### *Shoulder the Movements of Women Environmentalist in Protecting the Environment*

In addition to Indian Constitutional aspect, certain special legislations are also available in India for Environmental protection such as:

- The Air (Prevention and control of pollution) Act 1981
- The Water (Prevention and control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
- The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The India Forest Act, 1927.
- The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and the comprehensive legislation.
- Environmental protection Act, 1986.

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