

Women and Land Rights; Struggles and Negotiation with References to Sumi Community

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Abstract : When we talk about development from a global perspective, the most important voice which often remains unheard is the voices of the weak, marginalized and the vulnerable population at the periphery including women. This unwritten custom not only exists in the society but has become an accepted norm that violates women's rights to land and resource ownership both at the natal and marital house. Considered as temporary resident in the parental house, women are taught at the very onset of their childhood to compromise their food, space, time, and education for the male members. After marriage, they become a permanent resident in the marital household with no control over resources, economy, politic, religious ideology and sexual or reproductive rights. In this way, they become immediate victim of socio-environmental crisis at the hands of men who misuse their position and power to control, manipulate, and exploit the 'weaker sex' to their advantage.

Irony to their pitiable condition, they emerged as 'harbinger' of environmental sustainability due to their inherent knowledge, caring nature, and close proximity with the given environment. Build upon anthropological fieldwork, case study, interview guide, narratives, and informal group discussion, the present paper attempts to explore the voices of women; their struggles and negotiation with the men-folk in sustaining livelihood rights and resources. uitable for application in Indian context.

Key words : Women, Patriarchy, Land Rights, Sumi Community