

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (21384) - “IF THEY HAD TO WAIT FOR THE MEN, THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE WATER AT ALL”: GENDER, OCCUPATIONS, AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN WEST KALIMANTAN, INDONESIA

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Background and objectives

Understanding the differences in environmental perceptions and behaviours of sociodemographic groups with contrasting priorities and decision-making power may be crucial to improve sustainability and equity of environmental policy. However, to date few studies have explored those differences between gender groups, and fewer yet have done so in the Global South, despite conservation efforts being most prominent there.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

This study explored the case of a rural rainforest community in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, to examine perceptions of environmental issues and differences in those between men and women of the community. Through the combination of focus groups and a survey (N = 300), people's perceptions were compared statistically and put into a detailed qualitative context.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

The findings show how the intense combination of climate change and outside pressures can make people struggle to cope with the occurring changes in a sustainable way. Lack of rain, deforestation, and salinization of freshwater sources affected community members' health, wellbeing, and livelihoods. In turn, their adaptation attempts were limited by the governmental restrictions and a palm-oil company claiming part of the forest.

The environmental changes were noticed by both men and women but perceived differently due to distinct gender roles and occupations. Men were more attentive to the loss of forest and fish, while women more acutely perceived the lack of rain and freshwater. Simultaneously, men and women shared the feelings of extreme uncertainty and lack of control over their livelihoods and children's future.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

People-centred research is important for understanding the on-ground constraints communities face, often not recognized in the official policy designs in Indonesia. This case-study gives an insight into people's lived experiences and should be used to better adapt relevant conservation interventions and management practices. Attention to differences in men's and women's experiences would allow to better involve both into potential solutions.

Palavras-chave : climate change, gender, Indonesia