

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROTECTION OF THE 'GARDEN OF EDEN'

The conservation movement has its roots in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Concern had grown that European colonies, particularly in Africa and Asia, were rapidly being destroyed as colonial powers plundered natural resources. Attempts were made to protect wildlife and forests and preserve romanticised images of the Garden of Eden (Grove, 1995; Said, 1978). This was backed by scientific theories that explained the diversity of nature, its worth and its possible extinction (Darwin, 1859).

At the time hunting was a common colonial past time – a symbol of 'manliness' and worthy of 'sportsmanship'. By the end of the nineteenth century hunting had become a white man's preserve:

“not only the symbol of European dominance, but also the determinant of class within that dominance... While none of these hunters doubted their own right of access to extravagant killing, they argued for conservation policies and the need to restrict the access of others, not least that of the natives.” (MacKenzie, 1987:41; 50).

Women, both colonised and colonial, were dominated throughout the period by men, especially white men: it was they who made and enforced the laws and policies in their own interests (McClintock, 1995). Hunting epitomised the severe separation of the male and female worlds. As MacKenzie (1987:50) suggests:

“the medieval tournament ritualised warfare and killing and facilitated the emergence of the fittest, who would be hailed as heroes by both the crowd and the ladies in whose honour the tournament was held. The element of sexual selection implied in the tournament was not lost on an age increasingly obsessed with social Darwinism and notions of eugenics.”

Popular journals like *Boys Own Paper* were full of hunting stories and extraordinary graphic descriptions of taxidermy. Explorers such as William Smith warned his readers of the perils of travelling as a white man in Africa for, on that disorderly continent, women:

“if they meet a Man they immediately strip his lower parts and throw themselves upon him.” (Smith, 1745:221 in McClintock, 1995:23).

As hunter turned conservationist, conservation policy and implementation in the colonies was, in turn, led by men. Parallel to this, one finds the natural sciences evolving in the colonial powers dominated by those such as Rene Descartes, for whom:

“the expansion of male knowledge amounted to a violent property arrangement that made men masters and professors of nature” (Descartes, 1968:78 in McClintock, 1995).

1.3 WOMEN, GENDER, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Defenders of women's rights have likened such impressions of male domination over nature to male domination over women. A succession of movements from *women in development* (WID) in the early 1970s (Boserup, 1970) through to *ecofeminism* (Shiva, 1988;

Merchant, 1982, 1992; Cox, 1992; Mies and Shiva, 1993) and *women, environment and development* in the 1980-90s (Dankelman and Davidson, 1988; Rodda, 1991; Sontheimer, 1991; Braidotti *et al*, 1997) have applied pressures on implementing organisations to include women in developmental and environmental concerns.

However, the literature and consequent policies based on these frameworks have not been particularly helpful in integrating women. In fact they may have encouraged further marginalisation of women's issues, with such strongly feminist perspectives being viewed as too political, too sensitive and too radical to address. Notions of women's 'special' relationship with nature (Braidotti *et al*, 1997; Shiva, 1989; Merchant, 1982, 1992) contribute little to establishing suitable points of intervention and support at a practical level. They are insufficient in explaining the variety of interests, motivations and power relations in which women find themselves in regard to managing natural resources and the environment.

A shift to gender, environment and development frameworks (GAD or GED) has opened up more constructive opportunities for a better understanding of the relationships between women, men and the environment as well as ways to integrate such an understanding into policy and practice (Jackson, 1993). These approaches argue for a more informed gender analysis of social relations and the recognition that men and women have different positions within the household and control over resources (Kabeer, 1994; Jewitt and Kumar, 1999). They take a more confrontational approach: the rationale being that through empowerment women can achieve equality and equity with men in society (Moser, 1993).

1.4 'ENGENDERING' EDEN

Today, as conservation increasingly moves to more community-based initiatives and those 'integrated' with the development of the local communities, an emphasis is also being placed on the achievement of more equitable, particularly gender equitable, conservation. However there is inexperience and a lack of knowledge concerning how to achieve this, particularly within the conservation context. Furthermore, conservation organisations, due to their technocratic and natural science-based roots, have struggled with such an integration of social issues.

The '*Engendering*' *Eden* research programme aimed to fill some of the gaps on gender, women and ICDPs¹. It aimed to achieve a better understanding of the linkages between gender issues and ICDPs and indicate ways forward to achieve a more equitable and 'successful' conservation and development process. The central objective was to provide an assessment of the role of gender for enhancing the social and environmental sustainability of ICDPs, and to develop a more empirical understanding of how gender shapes the ways local people participate, invest in and benefit from them.

The programme focussed on six sets of key questions:

1. What gender differences/inequities exist in local communities involved in ICDPs? What other social divisions are important in relation to natural resource use and its conservation?

¹ A distinction is made between ICDPs (integrated conservation and development projects) and CBNRM (community based natural resource management). ICDPs are viewed to be project-oriented and more conservation focussed – usually linking local development with the conservation of a National Park or other protected area. CBNRM is more of a movement or process of increasing community 'ownership' over and use of natural resources in a sustainable manner and which contributes to their development. This includes resources that exist outside protected areas and thus is less geographically defined. Enabling legislation must exist for CBNRM to work. This research project focussed on ICDPs though important lessons were learnt from CBNRM.

2. How do these differences/inequities affect the way men and women participate in, contribute to, and benefit from ICDPs?
3. To what extent, and how, are these gender differences being addressed and accounted for in the planning, implementation and evaluation of ICDPs?
4. Where gender issues/inequities have been addressed, which methods have been successful and which have not? To what degree are other social divisions important? What lessons can be learnt?
5. Where gender issues/inequities have *not* been addressed, what are the implications for project 'success'? What lessons can be learnt?
6. How successful is the ICDP model in addressing gender inequities in relation to poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation? Should changes or adjustments be made to achieve more successful links between conservation and a more *equitable* development of local communities? How can the ICDP process be more effectively guided and achieved?

The research was carried out between 2000 and 2002. Two regional studies were made: Africa, and South and South-East Asia. A number of ICDPs were visited and gender assessments carried out. The results are published in two volumes: *'Engendering' Eden, Volume II: Women, Gender and ICDPs in Africa: Lessons Learnt and Experiences Shared* and *'Engendering' Eden, Volume III: Women, Gender and ICDPs in South and South-East Asia: Lessons Learnt and Experiences Shared*. The overall experiences and lessons learnt from these two regional studies are synthesised and analysed in this summary document.

1.5 ICDPS: AN INTRODUCTION

There is no strict formula for what constitutes an ICDP. Activities can range widely. However, Hughes and Flintan (2001), in a review of the ICDP literature, found that the following features are common:

- Biodiversity conservation is the primary goal.
- There is a recognised need to address the social and economic requirements of communities who might otherwise threaten biodiversity, and the natural resource base in general.
- The core objective is to improve relationships between state-managed protected areas and their neighbours or inhabitants.
- ICDPs do not necessarily seek to devolve control or ownership of protected area resources to local communities, or to address this issue on the periphery of the parks.
- ICDPs usually receive (and often rely on) funding from external sources, such as bilateral or multilateral donors and international conservation organisations.
- The majority of ICDPs are externally motivated and are initiated by conservation organisations and/or development agencies (even if implemented by governmental bodies).
- They are generally linked to a protected area: more often than not, a National Park.

Three assumptions underpin the objectives of all ICDPs today. These are:

- Diversified local livelihood options will reduce human pressure on biodiversity, leading to its improved conservation.
- Local people and their livelihood practices, rather than 'external factors' comprise the most important threat to biodiversity resources of the area in question.
- ICDPs offer sustainable alternatives to traditional protectionist approaches to protected area management.

Recently there has been a move away from ICDPs based on inflexible management plans, towards approaches which place more emphasis on 'learning whilst doing' and 'adaptive management'. Increasingly, the importance of social equity issues (including gender) is being realised.

A key factor in the long-term success of ICDPs is establishing linkages between the conservation of resources and the development of local communities. This needs to be achieved firstly at the project level and secondly, but perhaps more importantly, by the local communities themselves. If they can understand and believe that their long-term security and development is dependent upon more sustainable resource use and the protection of the environment, then a key step in ICDP success will have been taken. The next step would be when communities' actions reflect, and are based upon, such an understanding and belief.