

WOMEN AND SUSTAINABILITY: QUIET PIONEERS OF SUSTAINABLE PROGRESS

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Abstract:

In the 21st century, the issue of sustainability has emerged as a crucial global priority. Although policies, technology, and international accords are essential, the impact of women working at the community level is just as important, yet frequently disregarded. Through their daily activities, indigenous knowledge, and involvement in their communities, women make substantial contributions to environmental protection and sustainable progress. This paper examines the role of women in sustainability, outlines the obstacles they encounter, and underscores the importance of empowering women to create a more equitable and sustainable future.

Keywords- Females, Eco-friendliness, Empowerment, Ecology, Progress, Gender Equity

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Introduction:

Sustainability means using resources wisely to satisfy current requirements without hindering future generations from fulfilling their own. In a world that is changing quickly, challenges like climate change, resource exhaustion, and environmental harm have positioned sustainability as a crucial worldwide concern.

Women are essential to promoting sustainability, particularly in developing nations such as India. They are involved in managing household resources, engaging in agriculture, and contributing to community development, creating a strong link to the environment. Their everyday actions embody sustainable practices, even when these efforts go unacknowledged.

Although their contributions are substantial, women's involvement in sustainability is frequently overlooked. This paper seeks to shed light on their contributions and emphasize the significance of empowering women as vital players in the arena of sustainable development.

Goals of the Research:

The primary goals of this research are:

- To explore the idea of sustainability concerning the roles of women.
- To analyze how women contribute to environmental protection and sustainable efforts.
- To recognize the obstacles women encounter when engaging in sustainability efforts.
- To emphasize the significance of empowering women for the attainment of sustainable development.
- To propose strategies for enhancing women's involvement in sustainability.

1. Women as Regular Practitioners of Sustainability

Sustainability goes beyond major environmental initiatives; it is embedded in daily routines. Women, particularly in family settings, engage in sustainable practices through small yet impactful actions. They utilize water, food, and energy wisely, minimizing waste.

For example, actions like repurposing items, saving water, and cutting down on food waste are frequently seen in homes run by women. These practices play a vital role in protecting the environment. In rural communities, women have a closer relationship with natural resources. They fetch water, collect firewood, and take care of household needs with limited supplies. This close engagement with the environment increases their understanding of the significance of conservation and sustainable usage.

2. The Involvement of Women in Farming and Resource Stewardship

Agriculture stands out as a crucial area where women have an important part to play. Across various regions in India, women take an active role in activities like sowing seeds, planting crops, weeding, collecting harvests, and storing produce. They are also involved in managing livestock and contributing to food production. Women often apply traditional wisdom and environmentally friendly practices in their farming endeavors. These approaches support the upkeep of soil quality, encourage biodiversity, and minimize reliance on harmful chemicals. Techniques like saving seeds, rotating crops, and using organic methods are some examples of sustainable practices adopted by women. Their contribution to managing natural resources is equally important. Women engage in efforts like planting trees, conserving water, and safeguarding local habitats. Their participation promotes a harmonious approach to using resources while protecting the environment.

3. Women as Leaders in Environmental Movements

Women have played significant roles not only within their homes and local communities but have also emerged as leaders in environmental initiatives. One prominent illustration is the **Chipko Movement**, where women from rural areas demonstrated against tree felling by embracing trees to protect them from being removed. This initiative emphasized the strong bond between women and the environment. It further revealed that women are capable of spearheading impactful peaceful movements aimed at safeguarding the environment. These instances indicate that women are not merely bystanders but proactive leaders who can shape policies and drive societal transformation.

4. Challenges Faced by Women

Even though women play a crucial role, they encounter multiple obstacles that hinder their involvement in sustainability initiatives:

Insufficient education and awareness: A significant number of women lack access to adequate education, which restricts their understanding and prospects.

Restricted decision-making authority: Women frequently find themselves sidelined from key decisions concerning resource management and development.

Financial reliance: Economic dependence curtails their capacity to act autonomously.

Social and cultural obstacles: Conventional beliefs and gender expectations constrain women's involvement in community affairs.

Significance of Women's Empowerment in Sustainability

It is crucial to empower women in order to reach sustainability. Educated and financially independent women are able to make choices that positively impact not just their families, but also the community and the environment.

When women gain empowerment, it results in enhanced health, improved education for children, decreased poverty, and heightened awareness of environmental issues. Women who have been empowered tend to embrace sustainable behaviors and motivate others to follow suit. A robust link exists between gender equality and sustainable progress. Achieving long-lasting environmental and social objectives is challenging without the empowerment of women.

Approaches to Advancing Women in Sustainability

To enhance the involvement of women in sustainability, the subsequent actions can be taken:

Ensuring everyone has the same opportunities for education and skill enhancement

Fostering women's engagement in leadership roles and decision-making processes

Backing initiatives focused on environmental issues led by women

Raising awareness on sustainable methods

Establishing policies that consider gender perspectives

Conclusion :

Women play a quiet yet vital role in sustainability. Their everyday actions, ancestral wisdom, and involvement in safeguarding the environment position them as crucial players in sustainable growth.

Nevertheless, their contributions frequently remain overlooked because of numerous social and financial obstacles. By uplifting women and granting them equal chances, communities can tap into their complete capabilities. Sustainability transcends being merely an international objective. it represents a collective duty. Acknowledging and aiding women's roles is critical for fostering a more environmentally friendly, equitable, and sustainable future.

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