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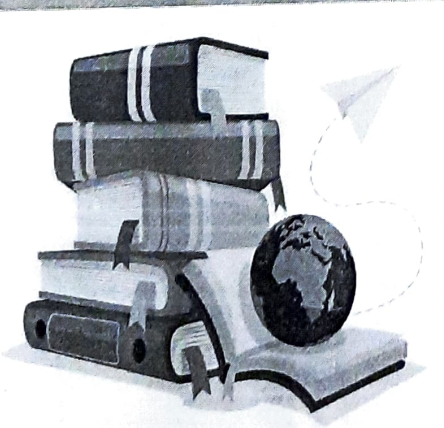
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Empowering women through alternative livelihoods in the coastal areas of the sundrbans, west bengal, india.

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Abstract:

Women comprise over half of the world's population and play an important role for the well-being of their family members and sustainable development of their communities and nations, and also for the maintenance of the Earth's eco-systems, bio-diversity, and natural resources. United Nations Environment Programmers hope that women and their psychological affinity towards the environment will inspire the future of environmental and sustainable development of community towards the better understanding of the importance of gender and integration of gender perspectives across the world. There is a fundamental difference between the attitude of men and that of women-towards Nature and natural resources. Throughout history, men used to look natural resources as commercial entities or income generating tools. While women have tended to see the environment as a resource supporting of their basic needs. As we know very well that, women usually collect the dead branches, dry-leaves as fuel for cooking rather than cutting the trees. Ecological conditions are gradually deteriorating in the Sundarbans, being associated with poverty, unlimited and unplanned settlements leading to the environmental degradation. Production and processing of biomass, agriculture, and forestry and village crafts based on biomass as raw materials are also the biggest sources of employment in the Sundarbans. Since the Sundarbans is an underdevelopment region, women are ceaselessly facing additional barriers to empower themselves due to the viable presence of the issues like- male dominated society, illiteracy, lack of economic independence and conservative social structure with religious obscurantist practices and beliefs. I would discuss alternative livelihoods option of women in the Sundarbans.

Key words: Sundarbans, livelihood, migration, alternative women.



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