Abstract

This paper analyses the consequences of responsibilization for women in natural resource management in Southern Tanzania. Participatory forest management (PFM) and Participatory Land Use Planning in Southern Tanzania provide a case study to interrogate how responsibilization impacts on the existing social order in a given community. As the study findings show, participatory initiatives have not fully reached rural women who are still under-represented and insufficiently equipped to participate in public decision-making, which maintains women's marginalization.

In Tanzania there has been progress in community rights for forest management. Following the Forest Policy (1998) and Forest Act (2002), Tanzanian villages can establish Village Land Forest Reserves and manage and utilize natural resources for the benefit of the community. The success of decentralized forest governance depends on the interplay between power, authority and social relations. This is determined by the capacity of communities to participate and by the government's responsiveness to the people's voice.

Based on our case study, women do not have equal opportunities to raise their voice like men, and women are marginalized in the decisions made about forest management and in the distribution of benefits from the natural resources with which their communities are endowed. This has policy implications in the sense that processes and structures of decentralized forest governance seem unable to address the needs of women.