Challenging the assumptions of western science

Western conservation philosophies do not necessarily translate to the local community. In some indigenous communities, the idea of excluding people from conservation areas is unacceptable, as ecosystems and social systems are often intertwined. Efforts are being made to develop more appropriate methods, such as sui generis systems, that are sensitive to the local culture. This also applies to the notion that people must be excluded if land is to be preserved. In indigenous communities, the idea of excluding people from conservation areas is unacceptable, as ecosystems and social systems are often intertwined. Efforts are being made to develop more appropriate methods, such as sui generis systems, that are sensitive to the local culture. This also applies to the notion that people must be excluded if land is to be preserved.

Protecting indigenous knowledge from inappropriate use

Indigenous knowledge is vulnerable to inappropriate use by outsiders from commercial perspectives. In many cases, it is obtained without consultation with indigenous communities or any effort to explore how it may be used. Today, many communities are calling for the protection of their knowledge from inappropriate use, as intellectual property is ill-adapted to indigenous knowledge and the needs of indigenous communities, especially in an era of globalization. Efforts are being made to develop more appropriate methods, such as sui generis systems, that are sensitive to the local culture. This also applies to the notion that people must be excluded if land is to be preserved.

Revitalizing knowledge transmission within indigenous communities

While education programmes provide important roots for human development, they may also promote the linear transmission of indigenous knowledge. With formal education, children spend much time learning passively in classrooms and rarely engage in hands-on learning in the real world. This practice can lead to a disconnection from indigenous knowledge and the needs of indigenous communities, especially in an era of globalization. Efforts are being made to develop more appropriate methods, such as sui generis systems, that are sensitive to the local culture. This also applies to the notion that people must be excluded if land is to be preserved.
Strong roots for sustainable development

Local and indigenous knowledge refers to the understandings, skills and practices developed by societies with long histories of interacting with their natural surroundings. For rural and indigenous peoples, local knowledge encompasses language, systems of classification, resource use practices, social interactions, rituals and spirituality. These unique ways of knowing are important components of the world’s cultural diversity and are essential to locally-appropriate sustainable development.

Continuity & change: the dynamism of traditional knowledge

Local and indigenous knowledge is frequently represented as fixed bodies of information that passed down intact from generation to generation. But such a view misconstrues the continuous, adaptive, shifting nature of knowledge. In reality, local knowledge systems are ever-changing, reviewed, and expanded. Each generation reinterprets the knowledge of their ancestors to confront the emerging challenges of their time.

Gender & knowledge: the complimentary ways of knowing

Women and men possess extensive bodies of knowledge and skills. However, women have their own areas of expertise and their own mode of knowledge transmission. Their knowledge is vital for sustaining community livelihoods, social well-being and the environment.

Synergies: between scientific & indigenous knowledge

Indigenous knowledge may advance scientific understanding, providing new directions and perspectives that supplant their current limits. It is particularly evident in sectors where the local and indigenous peoples have recognized as essential partners in environmental management.

Terms such as ‘tradition’ and ‘heritage’ evoke constancy, immutability and inflexibility. In reality, local knowledge is always in flux. It is passed down intact from generation to generation. Local and indigenous peoples have their own areas of expertise, and their understandings, skills and philosophies are shaped by the natural environment and the local context.

Synergies between scientific & indigenous knowledge

The recognition that local and indigenous peoples have their own ecological understanding, conservation practices and resource management is important. Indigenous peoples have their own knowledge, knowledge systems, institutions, values and constituencies. Indigenous knowledge is crucial to environmental management.

However, differences between scientific and indigenous knowledge remain a barrier to meaningful collaboration. Research shows that scientific and indigenous knowledge are not independent systems. They are interdependent and can be complementary. Indigenous knowledge is essential for environmental management, but it must be integrated with scientific knowledge.

Local and indigenous knowledge is widely recognized as essential to environmental management. It provides a foundation for locally-appropriate sustainable development.

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