

**A FIELD OF ONE'S OWN:  
GENDER AND LAND RIGHTS IN SOUTH ASIA  
(Cambridge University Press, 1994)**

**Prizes**

- A.Kentish Coomaraswamy Book Prize 1996 (Association for Asian Studies, USA), for the best English-language, non-fiction book on South Asia. *First South Asian to receive the prize.*
- Edgar Graham Book Prize 1996, awarded every two years by the Department of Development Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London) to works of original scholarship on development. *First Asian to receive the prize.*
- The K. H. Batheja Award 1995-96 (Bombay University), given every two years for the best book on Indian Economic Development.

**The Edgar Graham Book Prize 1996 - Citation  
(Excerpt. For full citation see [www.binaagarwal.com](http://www.binaagarwal.com))**

"The judges were unanimous that this book will become a classic landmark work of reference.

Professor Agarwal's book gives a masterly review and analysis of women's property rights in South Asia . It goes into the detailed legal, historical, cultural and other roots of women's access to land [...] It shows how the political and social subordination of women in South Asia is bound up with their lack of property rights in land, and why even where they own land they often lack effective control.

Professor Agarwal's wide ranging and stimulating overview combines an enormous breadth of sources including her own fieldwork, with a clear, broad based and rigorous analytical framework. She does this with clarity, precision and in a most readable style, so that the reader is drawn into a wealth of case study detail and a fascinating breadth of interdisciplinary synthesis without ever losing sight of the issues or of the central argument. The book ends with a clear exposition and analysis of pathways to empowerment through law reform, administrative change and women's groups. It is not only a superb analysis of a major barrier to development but a powerful contribution to overcoming that barrier.

The judges were unanimous in choosing this book for the Edgar Graham prize. Not only is it an outstanding scholarly work, but it has central relevance to applied development. [...] Change in the area of women's land rights in South Asia will affect social and agricultural development for a very large sector of the world's population, a sector that comprises seriously disadvantaged groups. This scholarly book will be a lasting milestone on the way to achieving such change."

**The Judges:**

Prof. Philip Scott, Geography, SOAS, University of London  
Prof. Frances Stewart, IDC Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford  
Prof. John Toyne, Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex  
Prof. B.R. Tomlinson, History, University of Strathclyde  
Prof. Paul Richards, Anthropology, University College London  
Prof. Katherine Homewood, Anthropology, University College London .

### Backcover comments

This is a book of great importance and much originality. Dr. Agarwal has focused on the crucial role of inequality in property rights. Her thorough exploration of this perspective substantially enriches our understanding of causal factors behind the deprivation of women in South Asia - and possibly elsewhere as well. *Amartya Sen, Lamont University Professor, Harvard University*

This book is a truly significant achievement... this authoritative study will be an indispensable source of reference and inspiration for both scholars and reformers.  
*Stanley J. Tambiah, Professor of Anthropology, Harvard University*

This magisterial book raises the discourse on gender to a new level, offering a new perspective on the dialectic between conflict and cooperation in the household, and a persuasive analysis of the relationship between gender consciousness and political resistance. Its comprehensive historical and empirical analysis is graced with the voices of women themselves. *A Field of One's Own* is a major contribution to both economics and gender studies. *Nancy Folbre, Professor of Economics, University of Massachusetts*

### Book reviews - excerpts

... a *tour-de-force* of inter-disciplinarity. It is hard to fault a book which is so sustainedly interesting over 500-odd pages, so theoretically subtle, and of such practical significance -- *Economic Journal* (UK)

This weighty and original book has lessons and implications... for a world much wider than its South Asian setting -- *Times Literary Supplement* (UK)

*A Field of One's Own* is a stunning book. It is the most comprehensive study to date of the implications for women of inequality in command over property -- *Feminist Economics* (USA)

Bina Agarwal's new book is a remarkable achievement by one of India's foremost feminist economists. It is painstakingly researched, rich in insights and sets new standards for comparative studies of South Asia -- *The Journal of Peasant Studies* (UK)

...an intellectual *tour de force*.... [This] conceptually and politically pathbreaking book is rich in information, analysis, and argument. Agarwal displays a mastery over contemporary philosophical and political debates in development thinking, economics and women's studies -- *Land Economics* (USA)

Bina Agarwal's book is a definitive one, the product of great erudition. It will long remain a source book for information on customary and legal land rights and on gender discrimination -- *Health Transition Review* (Australia)

This is a brilliant and exhaustive work... the method is exceptionally rigorous... a must for all serious scholars of gender relations in South Asia -- *Sociological Bulletin* (India)

This pathbreaking work is like an encyclopaedia... a truly monumental work -- *Pioneer* (India)

This book abounds in profoundness and originality. [Agarwal] is very powerful in her arguments, well substantiated with historical and empirical evidence, breaking the barriers of disciplinary rigidities. The book could thus be hailed as an example of a most successful interdisciplinary study -- *Journal of the Indian School of Political Economy* (India)