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## **Fluid Bonds: Views on Gender and Water** edited by Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt

### *About the book*

This book recognizes the centrality of gender as an organizing principle in the ways water is envisioned, used and managed every day at different locations and in different contexts. Gender intersects with other factors such as race, ethnicity, and economic, social and geographical locations. Consequently, the connections between gender and water are contingent and heterogeneous, multifaceted and changing. As water itself is fluid, so are the social constructs of it, shaping women and men's lives. *Fluid Bonds* makes gender visible in the various ways water is dealt with, and questions how these ways affect gender and how gender affects views on water. Through a rich offering of case studies, it identifies the multiple and changing relationships between the two, and notes some commonalities whilst gendering the use and management of water.

Development experts perceive the connections between gender and water as mainly related to poverty, raising questions of unequal access to resources, and poor sanitation leading to ill-health of women and children. This 'othering' becomes a constant feature, leading to a perception that the 'problems' have been sorted out in gender-wise North. The gendered realities of poverty and water are such that no one can possibly deny them; the case studies included in *Fluid Bonds* illustrate various issues: of rights, of access, of health and sanitation, of women's invisibility in farming and fishing, of women facing the impact of policies, of being excluded from the sustainability agenda, of being 'given' solution from above, and also of women's agency in dealing with water-related issues. However, the streams of hydrofeminisms coming together in *Fluid Bonds* also create a common terrain for the scholars from the North and the South to begin a reappraisal of water as an essential and gendered substance.

*Fluid Bonds* brings together a group of experts representing a wide range of methodological approaches, backgrounds and understandings on gender and water. The twenty-two chapters point to the need of greater rights of women in determining how water is used by communities, show how women's roles remain hidden, how their priorities are neglected, and how discourses about gender roles and rights determine women's participation in water management. Collectively, the contributors consider the problematic fluidity and indefinite categories of gender and water, tracing the bonds as well as drawing out some differences, focusing on the gendered nature of water in life, of which women and men, at all times, constitute a part. The book will be of immediate interest to academics, development planners, administrators, educators, activists and water experts (see over for contents).

### *About the Editor and the Contributors*

Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt is research fellow, Resource Management in Asia Pacific Program, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, at The Australian National University.

The **contributors** are well-known academics, environmentalists and activists from Australia and the Asia Pacific region, South Asia and South East Asia, South Africa, Europe and the United States.




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## Contents

Preface and acknowledgements.....	8
Contributors.....	13
Introduction: Reflections on Gender and Water <i>Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt</i> .....	22
<b>Part 1: Global Discourses on Gender and Water</b> .....	<b>51</b>
Chapter 1 Rights, Meanings and Discourses: Gender Dimensions of Water Rights in Diverging Regimes of Representation in the Andes <i>Margreet Zwarteveen and Rutgerd Boelens</i> .....	51
Chapter 2 Economic Globalisation, Sustainability, Gender and Water <i>Julie Davidson and Elaine Stratford</i> .....	72
Chapter 3 Changing Country, Telling Stories: Research Ethics, Methods and Empowerment in Working with Aboriginal Women <i>Richard Howitt and Sandra Suchet-Pearson</i> .....	87
Chapter 4 Applying a Gender Lens to the Global Political Economy of the Right to Water <i>Deb Foskey</i> .....	100
Chapter 5 Re-Sourcing the Sacredness of Water <i>Diana James</i> .....	117
<b>Part 2: Gendered Waters in Times and Places</b> .....	<b>137</b>
Chapter 6 Gender, Water Rights and Irrigation in Nepal <i>Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann</i> .....	137
Chapter 7 Fishing for Power? Women in the Fishing Industry in Australia <i>Jane Dowling</i> .....	161
Chapter 8 A Gender and Poverty Approach in Practice in Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Projects in Nepal <i>Michelle Moffatt and Umesh Pandey</i> .....	175
Chapter 9 Women and Water: Perceptions and Priorities in Rural India <i>Anil C. Shah</i> .....	193
Chapter 10 Women, Men and Water in Australian Backyards <i>Lesley Head and Pat Muir</i> .....	203
Chapter 11 Risks, Responses and Rights: Gender Dimensions of Water Excess and Water Scarcity in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam <i>Fiona Miller</i> .....	222
<b>Part 3: Gendered Cultures and Economies of Water</b> .....	<b>247</b>
Chapter 12 Gender and Participation in a Water Supply and Sanitation Project: Mekong Delta, Vietnam <i>Barbara Earth and Tran Tuan Anh</i> .....	247
Chapter 13 Gender Implications of Water Management in Australian Agriculture <i>Margaret Alston</i> .....	262
Chapter 14 Poverty and Gendered Livelihoods: Making Water Work <i>Bhawana Upadhyay</i> .....	274
Chapter 15 Access to Water and Sanitation and the Willingness to Pay for Projects in Rural India <i>Priyodorshi Banerjee and S Chandrasekhar</i> .....	286
<b>Part 4 Representations and Agency of Women in Water</b> .....	<b>296</b>
Chapter 16 Gender, Race and Rivers: Women and Water in Northwestern NSW <i>Heather Goodall</i> .....	296
Chapter 17 Stella Mendoza: A 'Water warrior' in the Imperial Valley, California <i>Namika Raby</i> .....	312
Chapter 18 Silent Partners: The Fluid Relationship between Women and Dammed Rivers in the Snowy Region of Australia <i>Robin Tennant-Wood</i> .....	324
Chapter 19 Gender and Agricultural Productivity: Implications for the Revitalization of Smallholder Irrigation Schemes Program in Sekhukhune District, South Africa <i>Barbara van Koppen, Tshepo Khumbane, Mama de Lange and Ndileka Mohapi</i> .....	341
Chapter 20 In the Running for Water Authority <i>Annie Bolitho</i> .....	356
Chapter 21 Gendered Waters, Poisoned Wells: Political Ecology of the Arsenic Crisis in Bangladesh <i>Farhana Sultana</i> .....	366
Chapter 21 <i>Nadi o Nari: Representing the River and Women of the Rural Communities in the Bengal Delta</i> <i>Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt</i> .....	392
References.....	411

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