



Synthesising gender in Asia-Pacific Water Forum's work: Preparing for WWF5

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Water is a gender issue

- Gender is NOT about women only – relative power
- Both men & women are productive agents in the farms
- Both women & men have multiple & visible roles at home as domestic water collectors, and educators & managers of household health and hygiene
- Poor and women bear the burdens of low quality and inadequate (or excessive) waters
- Millennium Development Goals – recognise access to water for women is crucial for overall development
- Women have a low level of representation in decision-making about water

Need to connect APWF, WW5 & GWA's priorities & themes

Gender & Water in the AP region

- Urban & rural poor women use water for numerous productive purposes from agriculture to dairying, from fishing to small-scale micro-enterprises (home-based, kitchen gardens) – make these uses visible
- Women's water needs & productive roles are overlooked - particularly where access to irrigation water – women generally do not own land & not recognised as 'farmers': macro—level policy issue
- Poor rights of women to water, still, women pay for water: beyond monetary value – willingness to pay for water
- The role of women acknowledged as 'interested and involved users', but water policies are usually gender-blind. Need to integrate gender
 - overlook contextual factors that enable or constrain participation at different levels (culture, place, power)
 - reinforce the false gendered dichotomy between water for productive/domestic use & roles
 - treat all women as in the same group
 - consider 'household' as a unit & overlooks gender differences therein

Theme A: Men & Women's Capacity Building

- APWF recognises the challenge is on the 'software' not in the hardware. And solutions may be context-specific.
 - The challenge is to build women's capacity as well as gendered understanding within general capacity-building – essential to meet the MDGs
 - Improved water supply & sanitation protects the poor & especially women from socially & physically degrading circumstances.
- WWF5 theme 2: Advancing Human Development & the MDGs. 2.1 (Ensuring Water, Sanitation & Hygiene for All), 2.3 (Water & Food for Ending Poverty). Menstrual health & hygiene – examples of efforts in S Asia

Theme B: Water-Related Disaster Management

- 4.5 billion people are affected: floods & droughts. Women are more affected (household responsibilities, men migrate, poor physical mobility, post-disaster safety & security – rape in relief camps)
 - Need Gender Disaggregated Data
 - More research that can inform policy
 - Gender orientation of mitigation or mgmnt plans
- Climate change: Theme 1 of WWF5 – adaptation, migration/land-use changes (eg: *char*lands in lower Bengal), managing disasters (eg: clean & safe drinking water, can women voice their needs?)s

Theme C: Water for Development and Ecosystems

- WWF5 theme 3: Managing & Protecting Water Resources to Meet Human & Environmental Needs
- Women's participation in water committees – need to ensure it does not add work burden
- Women's knowledges about the environment – use them, enhance them
- Preservation of natural ecosystems – surface, groundwater and rainwater with womens

'Regionalisation' of GWA

- Review & updating of Training Material
- GWSI in AIT, Bangkok
- Regional ToT in Bangla – group formation, translation of training material
- Cross-sectoral activities
- SE Asian regional meeting in Bangkok
- Asia-Pacific plan
- Gender Water Network at the ANU - Visit by Chairperson to ANU, collaboration with AusAid
- Gender Disaggregated Data (GDD)