Helpdesk Research Report: Gender in the Pacific Islands
08.08.08

Query: What are the key issues relating to gender in the Pacific Island countries – particularly Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, Nauru, Fiji and Vanuatu? Please include information on key trends and current issues; statistics; relevant government policies; anthropological texts; and high profile messages and statements.

Enquirer: AusAid

Contents

1. Overview

There is a rich literature on gender issues in the Pacific Islands. As it is not possible to address the seven countries identified in the two days allocated for this query, this report largely includes literature which has a broader regional focus. Most of this regional literature identifies certain gender issues which cut across many Pacific Island countries. These include low levels of women's political representation; poor working conditions; violence against women; increased risk of HIV/AIDS and STIs; declining access to customary land rights and low levels of legal literacy about rights to land and property; and culturally-enforced discrimination and inequality of women. Much of the literature highlights that gender roles in the region continue to undergo considerable change – as a result of historical processes of colonisation and more recently, the emergence of the market economy and the accompanying forces of globalisation.

It is important to note that gender issues vary between Pacific Island countries according to their levels of economic development; social and cultural norms; levels of population, migration and emigration; and political climate. For example, some commentators argue that low levels of literacy remain an important issue for women in the region. However, a 2006 World Bank Human Development Report[1] contends that the gender gap in primary enrolment is no longer the leading

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[1] Human Development Sector Unit East Asia and Pacific Region, 2006, 'Opportunities to Improve Social Services: Human Development in the Pacific Islands', World Bank, Washington DC: http://www-

issue it once was. In several Pacific countries, though, the disparity that is emerging is in favour of girls and characterised by the lower participation and achievement of boys. In Tonga, for example, girls are performing better than boys in primary school, and outnumbering them in prestigious government schools. In Samoa, there are more girls than boys at the secondary level.

Most commentators highlight however, that while many Pacific Island countries have committed internationally and regionally to promoting gender equality, considerable disparities remain between them in terms of the extent to which governments have adopted complementary national policies.

This report prioritises more recent literature. Many of the documents included in the 'Key trends and issues' section include information on laws, institutions and policies, and provide statistics and data. However, most analysts concur that the lack of gender-disaggregated data remains a crucial barrier to understanding gender issues in the region.

2. Key trends and issues

General

- Webpage: Development Studies Network, 'Women, Gender and Development in the Pacific – Papers', Australian National University, Canberra
  http://devnet.anu.edu.au/GenderPacific/index.html

This web-based resource includes a collection of 87 papers on women, gender and development. The papers date from between 2000-5 and are clustered under six major headings:

  ➢ Conflict and peacemaking: gender perspectives;
  ➢ Women, legal issues and human rights;
  ➢ Women and governance;
  ➢ Gender, civil society and political participation;
  ➢ Women, status and social change; and
  ➢ Women and gender mainstreaming.

- Book: Ferro, K. And Wolfsberger, M. (eds.), 2003, 'Gender and Power in the Pacific: Women's Strategies in a World of Change', LIT Verlag, Berlin-Hamburg-Münster
  This book is available for purchase from Lit Verlag Books: http://www.lit-verlag.de/isbn/3-8258-6710-2
  A preview is also available:
  http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=496_yxggKHQC&printsec=frontcover&dq=gender+women+pacific+islands&source=gbs_summary_r&cad=0

This book aims to provide an insight into the lives of women in the Pacific Islands, and how they are dealing with shifting gender relations in their changing societies. Two of the chapters are available in the preview. The first is entitled 'In Papua New Guinea We Never Talk About Gender: Traditional Male and Female Roles and Gender Relations in Modern Society' (pp. 21-44). This looks at how gender roles have changed through modernisation and the introduction of new ideas in Papua New Guinea. It is based on an analysis of traditional kinship and marriage practices, and the author points out growing inequalities between the sexes. The author argues that "Those who suffer most from the conflict between tradition and modernity are the women who have lost the base through which they achieved prestige and status in society. Men's roles have changed too but, unlike women, they have been able to transfer their 'status roles' to the public sphere, through paid work and through political engagement" (p. 39). In order to understand the roles of men and women in Papua New Guinea today, the author argues, it is important to extend studies

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wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/05/17/000310607_20070517100419/Rendered/PDF/397780EAP0P0791Development01PUBLIC1.pdf

on gender to include larger systems of kinship and networks of relationships between social groups. A second chapter 'In Contrast to Diversification: Androcentric Structures of Power in Papua New Guinea' (of which only a limited view is available) looks at violence against women in urban Papua New Guinea, particularly in a context where capital accumulation is growing in importance. The author highlights that statistically, Papua New Guinea has the second highest rate of violence against women in the family worldwide. The chapter highlights the argument which sees "readiness to violence as a consequence of economic changes, which transform societies traditionally based on subsistence and clan structure into one, orienting on capitalist economy. The successful functioning of subsistence economy was based on a strict division and organisation of labour giving each member of society certain rights and responsibilities, which helped holding the clan together… In urban areas, more and more men turn to be the breadwinners of the families, while women are confined to housework. Through a lack of remuneration for reproductive labour, the female sector loses prestige, while the status of the breadwinner (i.e. men) rises." (p.66).

- Keating, A., 2007, 'Gender in the Pacific Island States: Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography', Gender Equality Thematic Group, AusAid, Canberra
  http://www.siyanda.org/static/Keating_pacific.htm?em=0710&tag=CF

This literature review draws on 124 resources to consider how the culture, geography and history of the Pacific Region shape gender relations, roles and norms. The main issues explored in the overview are:

  ➢ Violence against women: This is endemic is many part of the Pacific, and is concentrated around two themes – domestic violence and violence during and following civil conflict situations. Arguably the biggest constraint to addressing violence against women is the prevailing attitude that it is a private issue. This attitude constrains individual women's ability to share their experiences and change their situation.

  ➢ Decision-making at household and political levels: Some studies have found cultural opposition to women in decision-making, often stated openly by prominent men, as the major impediment to women entering formal politics. "The binding constraints to achieving gender equality in decision-making are many and varied. These include an attitude that women are not capable of making decisions, or that it is culturally inappropriate for them to do so. Discrimination against girls in education attainment further restricts their ability to engage with the decision making process. Finally there is a perception within much of the Pacific that women are in fact apolitical." (p. 4) However, many are in fact engaged in national and local politics at the grassroots level.

  ➢ Education: Boys systemically outnumber girls at all levels of education throughout the Pacific. This inequality increases with age. When girls are in school, they attend less; girls drop out earlier than boys. Girls are not encouraged to pursue further education if they complete high school. Instead they are obligated to start work to contribute to the family's income.

  ➢ Land rights: The loss of customary land rights under Western legal systems is a concern for many women in the Pacific. Often under customary law women had equal or different rights with men to land and natural resources. When these rights are stripped away through colonisation many women lose status, bargaining power and a source of economic independence.

  ➢ Health and HIV: Recent studies have found that gender inequality in the Pacific, particularly in PNG, is leading to gender-based sexual violence and young women having no control over their sexuality. This is leaving them extremely vulnerable to HIV infection. Furthermore, women are bearing the burden of caring for people who are ill due to HIV/AIDS.

The report notes how local norms and attitudes often reinforce gender inequalities. For example, in many Pacific Island societies, "culture" is frequently invoked as justification for discrimination and violence against women and girls; there is a prevailing attitude that women are not capable of making decisions, or that it is culturally inappropriate for them to do so. The overview argues that

gender equality can only be achieved when it is addressed at every level of the state and society. Areas for particular attention are: promoting gender equity in educational access and outcomes, ensuring that police respond to gender-based crime, and challenging dominant attitudes about gender roles.

- Griffen, V., 2006, 'Gender Relations in Pacific Cultures and their Impact on the Growth and Development of Children', Paper prepared for a seminar on 'Children's Rights and Culture in the Pacific', Fiji, October 30, 2006
http://www.unicef.org/eapro/Gender_Relations_in_Pacific_cultures.pdf

This paper argues that historical processes of colonisation and the current forces of globalisation have brought profound changes to the economic and social systems of the Pacific Islands, including to social relations within the family and community. Section 3 addresses the specific dimension of gender relations that can affect children. These include: socialisation into gender roles; control of female sexuality; different standards for sexual behaviour for boys and girls; and gender relations in marriage and the power of men over women. The author argues: "it is clear that children are not doing well in key institutions such as the family, based on gender relations. Boys as well as girls suffer gender violence. Boys are also socialized into positions of assertion of their rights over women – as their "natural right" and the norm. Superiority of men and inferiority of women are internalized. In many Pacific societies, this was not part of the culture and women had power and respect" (p. 34).

Political representation

- 2006, 'A Woman's Place is in the House – the House of Parliament. Research to Advance Women's Political Representation in Forum Island Countries: A Regional Study Presented in Five Reports', Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Fiji
http://www.forumsec.org/UserFiles/File/Content_1_-_17.pdf

This set of research reports provides an analysis of both social and electoral barriers to women's parliamentary representation. The first regional report aims to understand the opportunities and barriers to increasing the participation of women in political decision-making. The second regional report looks at the electoral systems in the countries of the region and discusses their impact on women's political representation. It also proposes measures to increase women's representation in political decision-making processes and structures in the region, based on international best practices and national specificities. The study includes three country reports on Nauru, Tonga and Tuvalu. The first regional report identifies the following main enabling factors:

- ➢ Pacific Island countries have committed internationally and regionally (and in some cases nationally) to promoting the advancement of women, including in levels of political representation.
- ➢ Most countries of the region have adopted constitutions which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex and four countries have affirmative action provisions which may be used to promote the advancement of women. In addition, a few countries have adopted women's policies which have begun to address the representation of women in decision-making.
- ➢ In many Pacific Island countries women have traditionally been valued as complementary partners to men with specialised knowledge and functions.
- ➢ Many countries have a pool of well educated women who are already leaders in various fields. In addition, women are increasingly active in the formal sector and hold positions of public leadership in many sectors (however, there is no accurate data on this).

The second part of the report focuses on the barriers to the advancement of women and *actual* rights to political representation:

- ➢ Institutional factors, such as unequal access to land, and outdated laws continue to discriminate against women. In addition, national governmental machinery to address the promotion of women continues to be weak in most Pacific Island countries.

> ➢ Contemporary culture in the Pacific tends to be conservative and patriarchal, and favours men politically and administratively.
> ➢ Women are not fully integrated socio-economically. In some Melanesian countries, access to education is still limited for girls. Women's roles in the formal and informal economy are still considered secondary and their access to wealth is limited, which directly impacts on their ability to participate in politics. In addition, domestic violence continues to affect women throughout the region.
> ➢ Women find it difficult to enter the 'world of politics' due to its closed, male-dominated and frequently hostile nature. There are both demand and supply side factors which limit their candidacies and chances for political representation, including the lack of political party support for women candidates and the reluctance of women to run.

Violence against women

- Ali, S., 2006, 'Violence Against the Girl Child in the Pacific Islands Region', United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, New York
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/elim-disc-viol-girlchild/ExpertPapers/EP.14%20%20Ali.pdf

This paper examines the situation of the girl child in 14 Pacific Island States. It begins with an overview of the region in terms of population and socio-cultural traits and trends, and goes on to discuss the status of girls and women, particularly the consequences for violence and discrimination against the girl child. The paper examines several cultural and socio-economic factors which contribute to raising the vulnerability of the girl child to violence. These include gender inequality in socialisation; discriminatory application of "custom", i.e. bride price; early and forced marriage; social acceptance of the corporal punishment for children; a culture of silence around sexual abuse; limited access to reproductive health information; and social change, internal migration and poverty. Following this, the paper examines the consequences of these vulnerability-enhancing factors, which include low self-esteem and psychological damage among girls; higher risk of sexual abuse among girls; and higher rates of commercial sexual exploitation of girls. The final sections of the report outline the constraints to protecting the girl child from abuse and violence, as well as a series of recommended actions.

- Amnesty International, 2004, 'Solomon Islands: Women Confronting Violence', Amnesty International, London
http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA43/001/2004/en/dom-ASA430012004en.pdf

This report highlights that gender-based violence against women and girls was an entrenched feature of the armed conflict in the Solomon Islands between 1998 and 2003. It shows that those responsible were rarely brought to justice. This is because witnesses and victims seldom filed complaints, either because there was no opportunity to do so, or because they feared the men's revenge and their influence among armed groups and police. In addition, male relatives actively discouraged many women from reporting rape to police, or from cooperating with prosecutors. Both men and women are often unaware that domestic criminal law makes rape the most serious offence next to murder, attracting a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. In practice, however, prison sentences for rape are reportedly rarely longer than two to five years. Victims' families have also often preferred more traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms to the legal procedures of police investigation, prosecution and trial in court. However, these mechanisms have been seriously corrupted during the conflict by the use and threat of armed violence, and by excessive financial "compensation" demands. Violence against women in the Solomon Islands has also been exacerbated by widespread and entrenched discrimination against women, which is deeply rooted in both traditional customs and the colonial legacy of a preference towards men. The report also stresses that despite the end of armed conflict, women remain at risk of violence including domestic violence. This report recommends a number of measures to increase women's protection from violence, assist their confidence in and cooperation with the justice system and boost their equality.

Employment and livelihoods

- Novaczek, I., Mitchell, J. and Veitayaki, J. (eds.), 2005, 'Pacific Voices: Equity and Sustainability in Pacific Island Fisheries', Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Fiji
  This book is available for purchase from IPS Publications: http://ipsbooks.usp.ac.fj/
  A preview is available at:
  http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Fahu8DmBumsC&printsec=frontcover&dq=gender+women+security+pacific+islands&lr=&source=gbs_summary_r&cad=0

This book includes a collection of papers which address a range of issues related to the gender dimensions of the development of commercial and subsistence fisheries. The book highlights: "In a seemingly neat division of resource bases and labour, Pacific Islands women exploit inshore waters to provide food for family consumption, while men prosecute deep-sea fisheries to produce commodities for domestic sale and export. Although subsistence fisheries provide food security for many thousands of Pacific Islanders, the labour of women is not reflected in national accounts…However, our region's retention of communal-based resource ownership systems makes the subsistence options a viable alternative for large numbers of people in resource-owning groups…The subsistence sector and the inshore fishery are at risk in the Pacific region, not least because market imperatives hold sway. Moreover, prevailing gender systems in the Pacific work exclude key stakeholders…The interface of economic development and gender systems has, ironically, left women largely responsible for the subsistence sector while withholding the political power to protect this important turf." (p. viii).

- Ram-Bidesi, V., 2008, 'Development of Marine Resources, Fisheries Policies and Women's Rights in the Pacific Islands', SPC Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin #18
  https://www.spc.int/coastfish/news/WIF/WIF18/WIF18_03_Ram.pdf

This paper analyses current and emerging issues relating to fisheries policies and how these may affect women in the fisheries sector in the region. It outlines some initiatives to integrate gender issues and other possible avenues for women's greater involvement. This author highlights that while basic problems such as limited access to resources, and subordination, persist, there are new and more complex problems now facing women (e.g. the globalisation of fishing industry), which require greater scrutiny of fisheries policies at a higher level. These include:

- ➢ The development, and opening to foreign vessels, of domestic tuna industries will increase the risk of sex-related diseases for women. Studies as well as anecdotal information indicate an increase in alcohol- and drugs-related issues, as well as the rise in prostitution where there is increase in sea port activities related to fishing fleets. There is also a correlation between such activities and an increase in sexually transmitted diseases.
- ➢ Market pressures influence the working conditions of women. Women workers remain in "temporary" positions for several years, and as many as 20 years, receiving very little (if any) pay increments. In such rural settings, female workers also have domestic responsibilities to fulfil, which increases their workloads, thus affecting their health and productivity.
- ➢ The increased demand for marine products and greater accessibility to urban markets has led to the desire to increase cash incomes. This diverts fishers' dependence towards more cash-based economic production and therefore reduces their reliance or time available for subsistence activities. While this may improve their economic independence in the short term, it also creates greater risk of losing their self-reliant food production strategies and the traditional knowledge associated with such strategies.
- ➢ In community hierarchical structures, elderly males such as village chiefs or headmen often make crucial decisions on behalf of their people with the view that the decisions are in the best interests of the community at large. However, these decisions may fall short of integrating factors that may affect women's fishing activities or their access to resources. Decision-making regarding coastal tourism

projects exemplifies such attitudes. Village decision-making is often a male dominated process in Fiji where men gather over a *kava* bowl to discuss community development activities, such as whether to allow resort or infrastructure development and the level of compensation and/or royalties. In the process, women are not adequately consulted or the informal nature of their fisheries gets inadequately assessed in terms of determining the impact that a new development may have on them.

The paper concludes with suggestions such as involving women in higher levels of decision-making on fisheries issues, and a regional and international action plan to reduce the negative impacts of the global fish trade.

- Demmke, P. T., 2006, 'Gender Issues in the Pacific Islands Tuna Industry', Forum Fisheries Agency/ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat/ Secretariat of the Pacific Community http://www.ffa.int/system/files/Report+Gender+Issues+in+Pacific+Is+Tuna+Industries.pdf

This report argues that in order to promote gender equality in the tuna industry, the roles that men and women play as stakeholders in the industry, as well as members of the general community, should be identified. It highlights recent studies which show that men and women are both involved in all aspects of the tuna industry, with most women found in the processing (small scale and commercial) and marketing for the domestic market. Most men are found in the capture and commercial marketing areas. The positive impacts of the industry are common to both men and women. However, the negative impacts are often directly felt by women. These include the increase in a woman's workload and domestic responsibilities, poor working conditions in processing factories, the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, and alcohol and drug abuse. For support, women rely largely on NGO groups, youth groups, health groups, and the Church. More support is required from both the government and the tuna industry. Socio-cultural beliefs, family obligations, lack of skills and experience, lack of direct access to credit and finance, transport restrictions, and poor market facilities restrict women from participating or participating equally in the industry. Any opportunities for women, the authors argue, will therefore need to take into consideration these constraints. The report also aims to provide statistics on the roles of men and women in the tuna industry. However, it notes that there is limited sex disaggregated data quantifying the numbers of men and women in each area. This data can be found in the harvesting and processing areas and is usually produced as part of a one-off study.

Education

- Jha, J. and Kelleher, F., 2006, 'Boys' Underachievement in Education: An Exploration in Selected Commonwealth Countries', Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver http://www.col.org/colweb/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/docs/BoysUnderachievement web.pdf

This report highlights that many Commonwealth countries have made tremendous progress in girls' education in the last one to three decades. As a result, gender disparities are narrowing in many parts of the world. At the same time, a new phenomenon has emerged in certain countries where gender disparities in education are turning in favour of girls, and therefore against boys, both in terms of participation and performance. This is particularly evident in countries that have achieved universal access and have high participation rates for both girls and boys, at least at the primary stage of schooling. The report includes Samoa as a case study. Tables 14 and 15 on page 107, show that girls and boys are almost equal in terms of participation at the primary stage of schooling. However, in secondary education, participation rates have consistently been higher for girls, with the gap widening over time. Participation rates for girls remain low, generally less than 50 per cent during the period 1995-2004, but the rates for boys are even lower. In other words, boys have lower participation rates within a scenario of low overall participation at the secondary level.

Health

- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2005, 'Gender and HIV/AIDS in the Asia Pacific Region', UNESCAP, Bangkok
http://www.unescap.org/esid/gad/Publication/DiscussionPapers/18/DiscussionPaper18.pdf

This report highlights that the contributing factors to the spreading epidemic in certain Pacific Island countries include stigma attached to being tested as well as to being HIV positive, and high rates of rape and violence against women, especially domestic violence. Additional factors include high prevalence of STIs, low condom use, frequency of multiple sex partners, high rates of commercial sex work or transactional sex, and weak health systems which lack the ability to provide safe blood supplies, treat STIs and prevent mother to child transmission of the virus. In many Pacific Islands countries, public health services remain under-funded and inadequate to meet the health needs of the population. Many countries in the Pacific lack important medicines to treat AIDS related health problems. Fiji for example, reported 142 HIV cases by the end of 2003, but only had adequate funding for ARV (anti-retroviral) drugs for 40 people. Pacific Island communities also face unique obstacles in preventing HIV/AIDS because of issues specific to labour migration and the seafaring business, resulting in high levels of interregional and intraregional mobility. In Kiribati, a phenomenon called "te korekorea" has been acknowledged. This term refers to the increasing incidences of young female sex workers in Kiribati associated with foreign fishing vessels, many of whom originate in the Republic of Korea.

An additional important aspect is that very high rates of violence against women, rape and sexual assault are thought to have caused significant increases in the incidence of HIV/AIDS, as well as other STI infections in Papua New Guinea (PNG). According to the UNDP's 2001 Papua New Guinea Common Country Assessment, 17 percent of the sex workers in PNG capital Port Moresby were found to be HIV positive. When these findings are supplemented with information from a study in Port Moresby, indicating that 60 percent of married men engaged in commercial sexual activities, the possible reasons behind the spreading epidemic become more evident. The report argues that, in addition to migration and extreme poverty, inequality between the sexes and high levels of sexual violence against women need to be addressed.

Security

- Dinnen, S and Thompson, E., 2004, 'Gender and Small Arms Violence in Papua New Guinea', State Society and Governance in Melanesia Discussion Paper, Australian National University, Canberra
http://dspace.anu.edu.au:8080/bitstream/1885/42642/1/04_08_dp_dinnenthompson.pdf

This article argues that evidence from media, anecdotal, and other unpublished sources suggests that violence resulting from small arms and light weapons in PNG is distinctly gendered. A series of studies carried out in the 1980s found that on average, two-thirds of wives have been hit by their husbands. The frequency and severity of violence is greater in the urban environment. Considerable variation exists across the country, with figures of close to 100 per cent in some highland villages. In rural areas, perceived causes of domestic violence were listed as sexual jealousy, the wife's failure to fulfil her duties, and dislike of the spouse. In urban areas, the main perceived causes were alcohol, sexual jealousy, and money problems. An underlying cause is the widespread acceptance of domestic violence, particularly wife-beating, as a part of normal life. Other underlying causes of domestic violence relate to the stress caused by rapid socio-economic change; lack of communication between husbands and wives; and the high background level of violence and aggression in many of the traditional cultures, as reinforced by the media, tribal fighting, and civil war. Growing poverty was an important aspect of the 'stress caused by rapid socio-economic change' factor. Armed conflict and emergency situations increase women's risk of rape and sexual assault. The report argues that Papua New Guinea's formal criminal justice system has been increasingly overwhelmed by the growth of violent crime and tribal conflict. It remains an urban-based system and has a limited presence in many parts of the country. For the 85 per cent of the PNG population who live in rural areas, crimes and

disputes are more likely to be dealt with informally. In light of limited government capacity, a number of local communities have taken steps to address the growing problem of guns and violence in their areas. Women's and church groups have been particularly active in the area of peacemaking and conflict resolution.

- Johnson, H., 2007, 'Migration, Gender and Security Issues in the Pacific: Complicating Conflict Discourse', Global Change, Peace and Security, Vol. 19, Issue 3, pp. 243-258
  This article is available for purchase from Informaworld:
  http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a782968161~db=all~jumptype=rss

This article explores the intersections between migrants (international, internal and settler-descendent), gender, and human security. It focuses on Fiji, Bougainville and New Caledonia as distinctive Pacific contexts in which to analyse how colonial and contemporary migration flows have contributed to the destabilisation of local communities. It also aims to describe women's contributions to peace-building and human security in Fiji and Bougainville. The example of the Fiji Women Peace and Security Coordinating Committee shows how indigenous women are working with contemporary settler-descendents of colonial migrants as committed peace-builders. In Bougainville continuous conflict is linked to the stresses generated by contemporary migration, as people move within Papua New Guinea and others move from the Solomon Islands and elsewhere to obtain value from resource extraction enterprises, thus creating ongoing tensions with and within indigenous communities. Yet collectives such as the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom group have effectively worked to build peace in their island's communities.

Anthropological dimensions

- Marksbury, R. A., 1994, 'The Business of Marriage: Transformations in Oceanic Matrimony', University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh
  This book is available for purchase from Amazon.com:
  http://www.amazon.com/Business-Marriage-Transformations-Matrimony-Monograph/dp/082293762X/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1218111835&sr=1-5
  Note: I have not been able to review this book. The summary below is adapted from the publisher's abstract.

This collection of essays examines the transformation of indigenous marriage patterns among South Pacific peoples in response to modernising forces such as colonial governments, urbanisation, the establishment of a cash economy, compulsory education and the changing roles of women. The essays explore societies in Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia. The field-work includes a study of bride-wealth inflation in the highlands of Papua New Guinea – where contact with the Western world is quite recent – to marrying for resident visas in urban Fiji. Although it is unlikely that a standardised form of marriage will emerge in Oceania, this book presents data to suggest that the institution of marriage across the vast Pacific, with its myriad peoples and cultures, is becoming less and less disparate. In each of the societies presented in this work, the Pacific Islanders themselves realise that their respective traditional marriage patterns have changed in recent years and that the changes were brought about by events over which they had little or no control.

Further details are available from a book review (Knauft, B., 1995, 'Review', American Ethnologist, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 1034-1034, available from JSTOR: http://www.jstor.org/pss/646441): "Evidence documents loosening collective or corporate male control over individuals' marriage choices. But increased autonomy is buffeted by inflationary bridewealth and heightened demands for cash or commodities on all sides. Men's and women's competing marital expectations are galvanized by men's dominant control over cash and marital financing – and by men's reciprocal opportunity to deplete finances through drink, gambling or womanizing. Men's predominance in wage work often reduces women's effective marital influence and the perceived value of their domestic production. Cash demands of inflated bridewealth simultaneously shame younger men and reduce the authority of wageless elders. Women emerge as sandwiched between pressure to attract wealth through marriage, disparagement for being too flirtatious or promiscuous, and the stress of relocating to town –

either under a husbandly thumb or without support. Village life, by contrast, entails either relative poverty or a double load of uncertainty and labor for women to maintain children, garden, and kin obligations while absentee husbands pursue monetary success."

- Rose, S., 2006, 'Women's Whispers: Indigenous Women's Participation in De-colonising Oceania', Paper presented to the Social Change in the 21st Century Conference, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, October 27, 2006
http://www.humanities.qut.edu.au/research/socialchange/docs/conf_papers2006/Rose_FIN.pdf

This article argues that while indigenous women played an important role in the struggle for independence against former colonial powers, it is predominantly masculine histories of decolonisation that dominate the literature. The author maintains that the distinct colonial and decolonising experience of indigenous women as well as their contribution to pre-independence civil society, non-government organisations, education, cooperatives, trade, arts and theatre plus local government and the bureaucracy needs to be visible and recognised in order to develop a greater understanding of current socio-political dynamics in Oceania. The main argument of the paper is that the decision-making processes of women in the private, domestic sphere, as opposed to men's public participation in the politics of independence, was an effective avenue of political expression.

3. Policies and institutions

- *The Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality: A Regional Charter*
http://www.thecommonwealth.org/shared_asp_files/uploadedfiles/%7B54321397-C978-46A8-A2A7-972FF13860D5%7D_Pacific-Outcomes.pdf

The Pacific Platform for Action was the product of wide consultations at regional and sub-regional levels, and was approved at the 6th Regional Conference of Pacific Women and the Ministerial Conference on Women and Sustainable Development, both held in Noumea in 1994. This is a revised version of the 1994 Platform for Action which identified 13 critical areas for gender advancement. This version re-clusters the thirteen critical areas of concern under four strategic themes across which poverty eradication will be a focus: mechanisms to promote advancement of women; women's legal and human rights; women's access to services; and the economic empowerment of women.

4. Laws and regulations

- Jivan, V. and Forster, C., 2007, 'Translating CEDAW Into Law: CEDAW Legislative Compliance in Nine Pacific Island Countries', UNDP Pacific Centre and UNIFEM Pacific Regional Office, Suva, Fiji
http://regionalcentrepacific.undp.org.fj/Files/CEDAW_web.pdf
Note: This is a large file. A compressed version is available at:
http://www.siyanda.org/docs/UNIFEM_CEDAW_pacific.pdf

This report presents the results of a desk review conducted to assess if, how, and the degree to which the national laws of nine Pacific countries; Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu comply with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The national constitutions and laws of the nine countries were evaluated against the set of indicators developed by the authors in collaboration with UNIFEM. The results showed a varying level of compliance in the nine countries and from article to article. In each of the nine countries, in some areas, there is significant compliance with CEDAW, in others some progress has been achieved, whilst in others non-compliance remains a considerable issue and significant legislative change is required. For instance, as far as domestic violence is concerned, although CEDAW identifies domestic violence as a form of discrimination that inhibits women's

ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men, none of the nine countries examined have incorporated domestic violence offences into their criminal laws. On the other hand, in compliance with CEDAW, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu have adopted a rigorous approach to the exploitation of girls under 18 and women who have been forced into sex work without their consent and trafficked to other national and international locations. The individual results for the countries include:

> ➢ Fiji has achieved full compliance with 49 out of 113 indicators, partially complied with 26 and had no compliance with 38;
> ➢ Kiribati has achieved full compliance with 26 indicators, partial compliance with 29 indicators and no compliance in relation to the remaining 58 indicators;
> ➢ PNG fully complied with 28 indicators, partially complied with 32 and had no compliance with 53;
> ➢ Samoa fully complied with 40 indicators, partially complied with 23 and had no compliance with 49;
> ➢ Solomon Islands fully complied with 23 indicators, partially complied with 33 and had no compliance with 57; and
> ➢ Vanuatu fully complied with 34 indicators, partially complied with 27 and had no compliance with 52.

5. Further resources

- Webpage: 'Gender and Development', Japan International Agency
  http://www.jica.go.jp/english/global/gend/back/profiles.html

This website provides gender profiles for:

> ➢ Fiji (1998): http://www.jica.go.jp/english/global/gend/back/pdf/e98fij.pdf
> ➢ Papua New Guinea (2002): http://www.jica.go.jp/english/global/gend/back/pdf/e02png.pdf
> ➢ Samoa (2005): http://www.jica.go.jp/english/global/gend/back/pdf/e05sam.pdf
> ➢ Vanuatu (2007): http://www.jica.go.jp/english/global/gend/back/profiles.html

6. Messages and statements

- 'Time for Pacific Island Countries and Territories to Take Responsibility for Gender Equality', Secretariat of the Pacific Community, March 6, 2008
  http://www.spc.int/corp/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=205&Itemid=1

- 'Statement on Women, Peace and Security: Statement by HE Mr Robert G Aisi, Ambassador/Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea at the Security Council, on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Group', October 26, 2006
  http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Media-and-publications/Media/MFAT-speeches/2006/0-26-October-2006.php

- 'Women poorly represented in Pacific: MP', Australian Associated Press, June 6, 2006
  http://www.theage.com.au/news/World/Women-poorly-represented-in-Pacific-MP/2006/06/06/1149359719395.html

- 'Be more visible in international women's rights meetings, Pacific governments urged',
  http://www.spc.int/Women/women_CSW51_info2.html#Title

- 'Statement by the Pacific Islands Forum at the APEC Second Ministerial Meeting on Women', Guadalajara, Mexico, September 28-20, 2002

http://66.102.9.104/search?q=cache:kk5u7OAEAtMJ:www.apec.org/apec/documents_reports/ministerial_meeting_on_women/2002.MedialibDownload.v1.html%3Furl%3D/etc/medialib/apec_media_library/downloads/ministerial/sectoral/mmw/2002.Par.0068.File.v1.1+gender+pacific+islands&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=5&gl=uk

7. Additional information

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Websites visited

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Eldis, Siyanda, Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations, UNESCAP, UNDP Pacific Centre, Women in Fisheries, Te Puna web directory, Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Bridge, Development Studies Network, Oceania Newsletter, UNIFEM, Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance, Pacific Islands Governance Portal

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