

# Preface

Cultures change over time all over the world; however, it is important to see how we adapt to cultural changes while meeting the needs of our society without affecting environmental sustenance. Several experts have emphasized the role of culture in protecting the environment. We mulled over this thought and believed that consolidation of traditional knowledge and its understanding will go a long way in improving the current environmental challenges besides aiding in environmental rehabilitation, conservation and improved resource management. Culture and religion are often interlinked. Also, water and culture are strongly interlinked. Water is a vital source of life and culture determines a person's way of life. Keeping this in perspective, since ancient scriptures often highlight the importance of a harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature, we have attempted to draw lessons from the scriptures of three religions, Islam, Christianity and Hinduism, for water in specific. We plan to extend this framework to other prominent religions like Judaism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Shinto, and also to other natural resources in future years.

There are several studies related to scriptures across religions and their perceptions regarding ecological conservation. However, religious studies and their socio-economic and environmental relevance to society, more specifically to the current policy contexts, are limited. This study attempts to bridge this gap. Given this setting, the focus was to explore how water was conceptualized, conserved and managed in scriptures, and to understand the historical, functional and futuristic perspectives of water resources management to develop policy guidelines.

The book will be useful for historians and research scholars studying water sharing and the place of water in different cultures as well as ecologists and environmental scientists. The chapters provide messages from religious scriptures and their relevance for sustainable water resources management in Islam, Christianity and Hinduism. Legal perspectives are spread across all the scripture-based chapters, followed by a comparative overview across religious scriptures and policy perspectives. We involved scholars from respective religions well versed in the ancient scriptures in writing this book.

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