

Gender Aspects in Water Management



Gendercrossborders.org



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I. Gender Issues

Participatory Approaches in IWM: focus on individuals and social institutions and their interactions with environmental systems.

Not all people are the same; have the same position, c.q. power.

Gender helps to identify the differentiations between men and women, as social groups and individuals.

And encourages to act, in order to prevent and counteract inequality/ and support equality.



Gender

Is a dynamic concept that refers to the different roles, rights and responsibilities of women and men in society.

It identifies the social relations between men and women.

Is generally associated with unequal power and unequal access to choices /options and resources.

There are other important axes of stratification (differentiators), e.g. class, caste, ethnicity, religion, welfare, age.



Gender relations

Gender is socially constructed; gender relations are contextually specific (influenced by historical, religious, cultural, economic, and environmental realities) and subject to change in response to altering circumstances.

Constitute and are constructed by a range of institutions, e.g. family, educational, legal and market systems.

See: Balad of Mira and Olav



Why gender?

No gender-neutrality!

In general women in disadvantaged position: (UN, 2008)

- Of the 1.3 billion people in poverty – 60-70% women
- Women work 2/3 of the world's working hours, mostly in the most vulnerable jobs
- Produce half of the world's food
- Earn 10% of the world income
- Own less than 1% of the world's property.



Women face specific obstacles – that hinder their potential options, e.g. lack of decision-making power, poverty, limited access to / control over resources and services (natural resources, finances, credit, education, training), violence.

On the other hand they have crucial potentials / capabilities (A. Sen, 1999), e.g. knowledge, experience, skills, views.



II. Gender -Water management

- (a) Gender aspects in domestic water use.
- (b) Gender, sanitation and environmental health.
- (c) Gender – water – agriculture.
- (d) Gender – water – environment.
- (e) Gender and fisheries.



(a) Gender in domestic water use.

-Collection and use of water – for drinking, washing/cleaning, cooking: predominantly women's role (+children).

- Important knowledge carriers (water-sources, multiple uses, waterharvesting, recycling, conservation, purification).



- Still more than 1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water: scarcity affects women's lives.
- Women's land rights – determine their rights/decision-making over water sources
- Environmental degradation: impact on women's time and energy, and opportunities.
- Water pricing: out of reach.
- Gender poorly represented in technical, environmental and engineering training.



(b) Gender, sanitation and environmental health

2.5 billion people lack access to sanitary means;
also waste disposal, sewerage > neg. impact on environmental health.

Particularly women/girls lack sanitary facilities: matter of security, privacy, human dignity.

Violence against women/girls
going out in the fields.

Girl children drop out
of schools.

Policy on this issue lacks
behind.

Ecosan as a solution.



(c) Gender- water - agriculture



- Many regions in the world: women most important food producers (subsistence + export), but often not recognized as farmers.
- Irrigation agriculture – major user of water > environmental impacts.
- Women lack access to land and water rights.

- Limited decisionmaking power re. irrigation.
- Irrigation sector has ignored gender differentiated needs.
- Specialist: dr. Margreet Zwarteveen (WUR)



(d) Gender – water - environment

- Women and men play different roles, have different responsibilities and rights re. natural resources and ecosystems use and management.
- Regarding biodiversity use and management: developed profound knowledge and expertise; but not well recognized.
- Women's public participation in decisionmaking re. environment still limited.
- And their environmental vulnerability problematic (e.g. big dams, tsunamis, flooding).

Gender aspects of flooding

Lessons learned from disaster studies:

- Women as recipients of problems (>vulnerability) and less as recipients of solutions.
- Women often less as causers of problems and more as causers of solutions (resilience building/networking).



(e) Women and fisheries

- Women-men: important complementary tasks; women: pre/post-harvest, e.g. netmaking, processing, marketing, but also inland fisheries (rivers, ponds, aquaculture).
- Time-consuming tasks + rudimentary equipment.
- Women's work in the sector far less recognized and valued: lack of decisionmaking, of resources/ means and support, and legal rights.
- Makes them extra vulnerable for depletion of fishing stocks.
- Policies and research focus on male dominated areas of the sector.



Why gender in water management?

- (a) Improves effectiveness, efficiency and the likelihood of sustainability.
- (b) Due to their distinct engagement with natural environment: more emphasis on environmental sustainability.
- (c) Social and economic analysis of water management is incomplete without gender analysis.



- (d) Differences and inequalities: influence how individuals respond to changes in WRM/ influence collective responses to WRM / organization in different ways.
- (e) Concern for gender equality and equity and empowerment: without specific attention to gender issues, projects, initiatives and policies can reinforce inequalities and even increase gender disparities/reinforce existing inequalities.



International Commitments

- Follow-up International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990) →
- Delhi 1991: call to increase women's decision-making and management of water resources.
- Dublin Statement (1992; signed by more than 100 GOs): women play central role in provision, management and safeguarding water resources.
- Rio Declaration (1992) – principle 20: recognition vital role women in NRM + Agenda 21, Ch. 24: women as major group in environment + Ch. 18: role women in WM.



- Beijing Platform for Action (1995), section K: on Women in Environment.
- Millennium Development Goals: 1 (poverty), 3 (gender equality), 7 (environmental sustainability).
- Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (WSSD, 2002), para 25: need for gender sensitivity.
- General Assembly Resolution 58/217 (2003): International Decade for Action ‘Water for Life’ - ensure women’s participation and involvement.
- General Comment 15, Jan.2003,
UN Cie ESCRs: Water as a Human Right.



III. Strategies

Gender Mainstreaming (GM) in water management.

GM = strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral part of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, societal, economic and environmental spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.



Gender mainstreaming involves

- Understanding gender-differentiated systems for access to resources, labour, water uses, water rights, and distribution of benefits and production.
- Apply gender analysis: looks at relations between women and men and how these are negotiated.
- Use of sex-disaggregated data.
- Time-budget studies to understand division of labour (paid/unpaid)
- Identification different obstacles and resources



- Gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation.
- Use gender-specific indicators.
- Gender responsive budgeting.
- Involvement women: participatory approaches.
- Understanding gender dimensions in different institutions that facilitate or that hinder gender equality.
- Confirming or rejecting assumptions in each specific context: contextualize.



IV. Case studies



- A.1 Bangladesh: Gender mainstreaming in community based flood risk management
- A.2 Jordan: Rural women securing household water through installation of water cisterns in Rakin village.

- B1. Guatemala: Meeting women's and men's water needs in watershed management.
- B2 Indonesia: The impact of women's participation in the Aqua-Danone Advocacy Programme.

- C. Senegal: Role of women in community management of fish resources.

- D. South Asia: addressing water and poverty at the grassroots: area water partnerships and women and water networks.

- E1 Cameroon: "One hand doe snot tie a bundle": women's participation transforms water management. Nkouondja
- E2 India: Mainstreaming gender in participatory irrigation managment.: The case of AKRSP

Source: GWA/UNDP Gender and IWRM Resource Guide.
(2006). www.genderandwater.org/page/2419

Assignments

- Study literature: Women and the Environment. UNEP 2004. particularly: Chapter II. Women, Environment and Sustainable Development (pp.11-29) - www.unep.org/PDF/Women/ChapterTwo.pdf
Chapter V. Women and water management: an integrated approach (pp.60-83) www.unep.org/PDF/Women/ChapterFive.pdf
 - Group A/B/C/D/E Case studies:
 - (1) Summarize actual situation.
 - (2) Why and how does gender play a role in the case(s)?
 - (3) What strategies have been used?
 - (4) Any lessons for IWM?
 - (5) Do you see similar issues arising in your own country/countries?
- Today 9 November 2011, 15:30 pm (room 00.137): presentation (max.10 minutes per group).

More information

- Gender-climate change network: [http:// gendercc.net](http://gendercc.net)
- Gender and Water Alliance www.genderandwater.org
- Women's Environment and Development Organization www.wedo.org
- Women in Europe for a Common Future www.wecf.eu
- IUCN's gender and environment website www.genderandenvironment.org



Photo: ATM Zakir Hossain