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Gender Disparity in Water Policy Decision-Making and Status of Water Supply in Sokoto, North-Western Nigeria

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Abstract: The importance of involving both women and men in the management of water and other related issues has been recognized globally. This paper was aimed to evaluate gender disparity among decision makers in water issues and shortage of water supply in Sokoto. The methodology used was said to rely on internet, phone calls, interviews with Sokoto Ministry of Water Resources staff and as well as the use of questionnaire. From the results obtained it was discovered that gender disparity exist and lack of women education has contributed a lot to this disparity. In which 40% of the female respondents has no any formal education while the same 40% has only attended primary school. But for the male respondents there was 0% in both those with no formal education and primary school. In fact 15.3% of the male respondents have obtained a postgraduate studies. On the shortage of water supply and its quality challenges in Sokoto, was found to be a problem. The responses from the respondents indicated that 92 % of the female agreed its government responsibility to supply water, while 94.7% of the male respondents also concur. But only 42.7% of the female respondents agreed their water was adequate in supply, while 44.7% male respondents also agreed it's adequate. On the participation of the respondents on water policies, 95.3% of the females have never participated in any water policy decision making, while 49.3% males have participated in water policies. In conclusion there is a huge gap in gender disparity among water policy decision makers and water supply is not in adequate supply. Therefore educating girls was found to be lacked behind, in which very few proceed after primary or secondary school level. And they need to be educated so that they can be found in every sector of government especially water, there by involving them in various decision-making to contribute their coater.

Keywords: Decision makers; Disparity; Sokoto; Water supply; Women.

1. Introduction

Water is an abundant natural resource for human life, but is scarce to some while in some areas it's prone to pollution. (PAI, 1999). Life is tied to water, air and food, while food is tied to water. Water is a basic condition for life. We depend upon it for daily use, agriculture and industry. Global water shortage is like to increase especially in developing countries where governments do not provide good water polies (Dellapenna *et al.*, 2013). Sokoto is a city in Northwestern Nigeria, where women education low and water scarcity is one of the major problems facing the inhabitants. This survey was aimed at evaluating the gender disparity in water polies and perception of respondents' base on government efforts for proving adequate water supply in the city.

2. Gender Disparity in Water Policies

Gender based discrimination, is a distinction made on the basis of sex, race, religion, disability, etc. This leads to exclusion of group people and individuals or preference being given to others (The Uganda Gender Policy, 2007). Women are known to use water more than men, but in many cases they are left out in making those committees, teams, associations that deals with water issues or policies (Sever, 2005). Women therefore end up being more dependent on men and most a times implementation of water policies doesn't include women's opinions or their physical presence is not recognise at fundamental level of management. A gender perspective is therefore needed not only on personal roles and relations but also on the wider institutional and policy context (Sever, 2005).

Men and women are different entities but each need the other as far as mankind is concern (Oseni, 2004). Gender equality in public services is essential for both to be represent and contribute their coater in policy-decision making (Welch *et al.*, 2000). Women are often the primary users of water in domestic consumption, subsistence agriculture, health and sanitation. Women are known as care givers in the family, educating children and plan most

of the activities in the households, therefore have a lot to contribute on water policies as daily users than men (Sever, 2005). Many women are not aware of gender issues and in most of cases the policy makers are dominated by men (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2012).

3. Women Education and Water Access

Safe drinking water is necessary for life and also a basic human right especially for achieving gender equality. Providing physically accessible clean water is essential to enable women devote more time to the pursuit of education, income generation and even the construction and management of water (UN Water, 2006).

Provision of an efficient, effective, functional and adequate education for all citizens is necessary (Esere, 2001). Lack of education or poor women education can deny them opportunity and power of occupying significant public offices unlike their male counterparts. This means women may continue to be left behind in the political and economic issues there by remaining marginalized (Agbakwuru, 2000).

Action Health Incorporated (2011) has studied the education of Nigerian women in 2008, in which he found that North-western Nigeria is left behind. About 74.2% of these women have no any formal education, which is the highest in Nigeria. All other regions have lower percent compared to Northwest where Sokoto is located. The South-south has least in number of women without any educational qualification which was 6.0, but southwest have the highest educated women in Nigeria (Table1).

Table-1. Percentage of Nigerian Women by Level of Education Base on Zone in 2008

Level of Education	North Central	North East	North West	South East	South South	South West	TOTAL
No education	35.5	68.1	74.2	6.3	6.0	12.0	35.8
Some primary	8.3	6.9	3.8	8.1	7.6	4.3	6.1
Completed primary	16.8	8.5	8.1	15.3	17.7	16.7	13.6
Some secondary	18.5	9.3	6.1	28.8	30.4	21.3	18.1
Secondary Completed	12.9	5.0	5.3	28.6	26.1	29.6	17.5
More than secondary	8.0	2.2	2.5	13.0	12.2	16.2	8.9

After: Action Health Incorporated (2011).

4. Water Supply in Sokoto

Sokoto metropolis like any other metropolitan in Nigeria, lack adequate water supply, due to all these inadequacies of water supply, on May 29th 2013 Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto (UDUS) has been closed indefinitely as a result of protest that occurred on Monday night by Student. The authorities of the school ordered the immediate and indefinite closure of the university on Tuesday following demonstrations staged on the night of May 28th 2013 by Students at the University's permanent Campus in Dundaye. The students were protesting against lack of water and electricity at the institution. Hundreds of enraged students demanded that the management of the University has to do something about it or face widespread destruction of buildings and other assets of the institution. Residents in Sokoto metropolis have a hard time getting water for domestic use and depend only on water vendors popularly called 'Mairuwa'. The water scarcity according to investigation, is connected to the continuous power outage or epileptic supply in May 2013, it has caused untold hardship on the residents, said those who spoke with LEADERSHIP on condition of anonymity (Leadership, 2013).

Because of the use of unsafe water for drinking, cooking, and washing and the use of unclean facilities, there is a relatively high prevalence of preventable diseases such as cholera, typhoid, diarrhea, and malaria, among others, most households, schools and clinics in Sokoto lack adequate water supply (USAID, 2011).

5. Scarcity of Water and its Consequences

Rise in demand for food; consequently rise the need for water supply at homes and industries, while to sustain rural and urban needs for water has led to rise in scarcity in many regions of the globe. Many rivers now run dry before reaching other tributaries for certain periods of the year. Many countries now pumped groundwater more than that could be replenished, there by depleting aquifers (Postel, 2000). Increasingly, governments, corporations and communities are concerned about the future availability and sustainability of water supplies (World Water Assessment Programme, 2009).

There is abundant freshwater resource in Nigeria, but yet government at different levels could not supply enough to its citizens need, where many rural and some areas in the cities faces challenges in obtaining this vital resource (Krebs, 2010).

There are many problems associated to unclean water, these include; cholera, typhoid fever, diarrhoea, dysentery etc. Water shortage remained serious challenge for any concerned citizen despite the resources abundance on this most populated black nation. Many children in this country miss School, perform poor, or even dropout at the end due to time spent in fetching water to their families, especially in the rural areas (Akintola, 2011).

A lot of children's death due to water problems occur in Nigeria, which are under five, based on UNICEF record (Uwejamomere, 2011). These children continue to suffer disproportionately from diarrhoea diseases, due to unsafe

water. More than 2 million children under age 5 die every year from diarrhoea and pneumonia related illnesses (Akintola, 2011).

6. Methodology

The study area is located in 13°05'N 05°15'E, Sokoto has a total area of 25,973 Km² (10,028 Sq mi). It's ranked as 16th of 36 (among the 36 states in the country). Population is 4,392,391 Million (according to 1991 Census), with a density of 170/Km² (CGIDD, 2008). Sokoto has an average temperature of 28.3 °C (82.9 °F). It's one of the hottest cities in Nigeria (Jibril, 2004).

Data was collected from a structured questionnaire used and verbal interview. Random sampling technique was conducted on respondents, while two local governments of the metropolis were used. From each of these two local governments 75 females and males (to avoid gender bias) respondents were selected. A total of 300 respondents were selected and with the help of research assistants all the respondents returned and gave complete responses on the questionnaire.

7. Result and Discussion

Water shortage is an issue of concern worldwide (Hoekstra *et al.*, 2012) the present study provides the status of water supply and gender inequality in water related policies. From the result obtained it has indicated that the major source of water in Sokoto is tap water with 66.7 % female and 52% according to male (Table 2). Female respondents believed it's the responsibility of the government to supply water by 92 % among them and 94.7% of the male respondents agreed also (Table 5). But the Adequacy in supply of water in Sokoto remain poor as 42.7% of the female respondents consider it is adequate while remaining 57.3% among them said it is not adequate (Table 3). Gbadegesin and Olorunfemi (2009) reported an increase in service coverage for water supply nationwide should be provided to meet the level of socioeconomic demand of the nation. Sokoto as one of the Nigerian cities therefore need to comply with the above fact. United Nations (2000) on its number 8 MDGs stated that they want to ensure environmental sustainability globally. Therefore the present findings are going contrary to this MDGs goal. The drive for poverty reduction in Nigeria recognizes water supply and sanitation as an important component (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). If Federal Government of Nigeria can make such a comment then we wonder why Sokoto state government cannot accomplish such drive made by the government of the federation. Inadequate water supply for family use may affect either directly or indirectly women's access to education, employment and as well as their health (WSSCC, 2006). At the same time level education signifies ones participation in government, the present research has revealed that 26.7% of the female respondents has no formal education with 26.7% and 16.7% (Table 7) that has completed their primary and secondary schools respectively. This result is actually in line with the findings of Action Health Incorporated (2011) that studied education of Nigerian women in 2008, which reported that Northwestern Nigeria is left behind with 74.2% (Table 1) of women that has no any formal education, infact the highest in Nigeria. On the other hand 0% was recorded for both those with no formal education and primary certificates among the male respondents (Table 7).

The present research also obtained only 9.3% of graduates among the female respondents while 23.3% and 15.3 % are considered graduates and post graduates among male respondents respectively.

A summary of recent developments around gender equality in African politics shows that gender equality is indeed on the agenda of African leadership and that great strides are being made to implement a gender parity policy. However, two aspects were noted. Firstly, the breakthroughs were fairly recent (the first being at the African Union Summit in Durban in 2002 when the 50% gender parity policy was proposed by President Mbeki of South Africa). Secondly, gender parity, while important, does not equate to gender equality (Rust, 2007). The present findings does not adopt Mr Mbeki's proposal as reported by Rust (2007) which revealed that only 4.7% (Table 6) female respondents participated in water policy decision making. While 49.3% (almost 50%) of the male respondents participated in water policy decision makings, this showed clearly the gender disparity exist in the study area.

One of the MDGs was the empowerment of women and availability of water for appropriate quality and quantity to all citizens (UNDP, 2006a). It is predicted that Sub-Saharan Africa will be the only region in the world likely to miss the MDG targets on both safe water and basic sanitation (Johnson, 2005). Sokoto is part of sub Saharan Africa, therefore from the above author's predictions the findings are in line, because the figures in Table 3, 4, 6 and 7 has really revealed that Sokoto cannot meet up with the deadline, which has expired in 2015.

Table-2. Respondents Source of Water

Source	Female	(%)	Male	(%)
Tap	100	(66.7)	78	(52)
Borehole	31	(20.7)	58	(38.7)
Well	15	(10)	0	(0)
River	4	(2.6)	14	(9.3)

Table-3. Adequacy, Cleanness and Safety of Drinking Water

Source	Female	(%)	Male	(%)
Adequate	64	(42.7)	67	(44.7)
Cleanness	133	(88.7)	127	(84.7)
Safe	116	(77.3)	119	(79.3)

Table-4. Period Spent Lacking Water

Duration	Female	(%)	Male	(%)
< 5days	40	(26.6)	42	(28)
5 days	25	(16.7)	22	(14.7)
>5days	72	(48)	59	(39.3)
Never	13	(8.7)	27	(18)

Table-5. Responsibility of Supplying Water

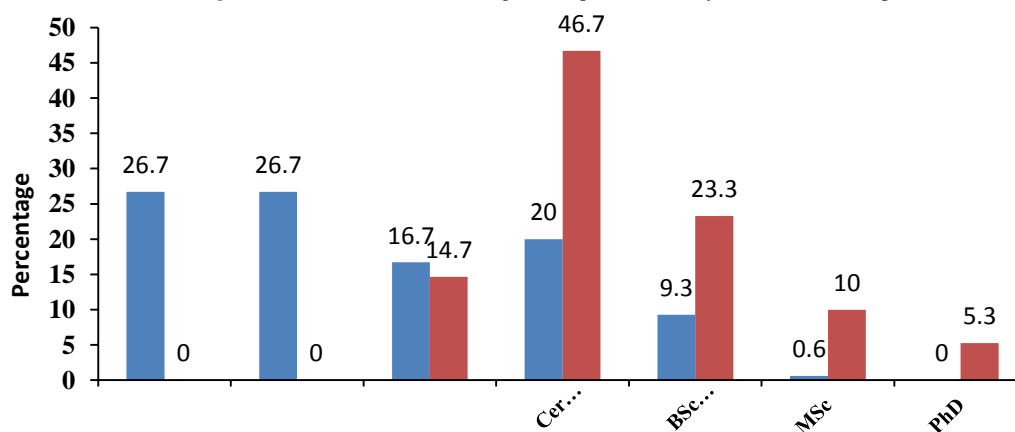
Organisation	Female	(%)	Male	(%)
Government	138	(92)	142	(94.7)
Private	12	(8)	8	(5.3)
Commercial	0	(0)	0	(0)

Table-6. Participation in Water Policy-Decision Making

Response	Female	(%)	Male	(%)
Yes	7	(4.7)	74	(49.3)
No	143	(95.3)	76	(50.7)

Table-7. Level of Educational

Qualification	Female	(%)	Male	(%)
None	40	(26.7)	0	(0)
Primary	40	(26.7)	0	(0)
Secondary	25	(16.7)	22	(14.7)
Certificate/Diploma/NCE	30	(20)	70	(46.7)
BSc/HND	14	(9.3)	35	(23.3)
MSc	1	(0.6)	15	(10)
PhD	0	(0)	8	(5.3)

Figure-1. Level of Education among the Respondece Surveyed in Sokoto Metropolis

8. Conclusion

There is huge gap between male and female policy decision makers in Sokoto and previous governments of Sokoto State Northwestern Nigeria has really try in connecting most of part of the city with tap water, but adequate supply of this vital resource to the populace remain inadequate. This research has also identified that people are aware that its government duty to supply water, which is actually their right. And gender disparity that exists among the water policy decision makers in Sokoto is as a result of lack of education suffered by the female counter part.

9. Recommendations

The government as in any other country is expected to try by all means to meet of with the MGDs. However the following objectives are recommended in Sokoto. The following should be done by state government;

1. Ensure equality for women under the law

2. Invest in women and girls education and 3. Consider gender differences in water policies
While the local governments should do the following;
4. Provide boreholes and hand-dug wells
5. The boreholes and hand-dug wells should be equipped with hand pumps
6. Mechanized boreholes using wind and electric power from solar should be established.

And lastly rain water harvesting methods should be emphasized to every individual.

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