

Water and Social Responsibilities

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Abstract

Water is unanimously acknowledged as a symbol of life as it is the most vital for maintaining an environment and ecosystem contributing to support all forms of life. It plays an important role in fulfilling basic human need for life and health but also in socio-economic development. 18% of the world's population lack access to safe drinking water. By 2025, it is estimated that two thirds of the world's population will live in areas facing moderate to severe water stress. Transforming the social culture so that it is educated by the principles of equality, equity, and sustainability - especially inclusiveness, transparency and accountability - is critical to changing the culture of water management and also it will change accountability of women only for water management.

Keywords: *water, women, society*

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INTRODUCTION

Water is unanimously acknowledged as a symbol of life as it is most vital for maintaining an environment and ecosystem contributing to support all forms of life. It plays an important role not only in fulfilling basic human need for life and health but in socio-economic development also. 18% of the world's population lack access to safe drinking water. By 2025, it is estimated that two-thirds of the world's population will live in areas facing moderate to severe water stress [1]. In the water sector, women labor to provide water for household needs. Women draw water for household use, transport it home and store it until it is used for cooking, cleaning and washing [2]. Transforming the social culture so that it is educated by the principles of equality, equity, and sustainability – especially inclusiveness, transparency and accountability – is critical to changing the culture of water management and also it will change accountability of women only for water management. An estimated 200 million hours are spent each day globally collecting water. Surveys from 45 developing countries show that women and children bear the primary responsibility for water collection in

the vast majority (76%) of households [3]. The roots of the crisis in water can be traced to poverty, inequality and unequal power relationships. Every day, millions of women and young girls collect water for their families – a ritual that reinforces gender inequality in employment and education [4]. Integration of women at all levels of water projects is necessary in order to give them a voice for without this, the projects would not achieve their full potential [5]. Women are increasingly being seen as active agents of change and the dynamic promoters of social transformations that can alter the life of all members in society [6]. Adequate domestic water supply is an entry point to sustainable development. However, limited access associated with poor water supply, hygiene and sanitation is widening the poverty gap, gender inequalities and the prevalence of waterborne diseases [7]. Gender equality in water service provision, which is aimed at improving access to water, can only be possible if women are empowered in the decision-making process. This is particularly in aspects like household water supply; provision, use, technology, construction, problems, management and maintenance.

Special emphasis should be laid upon the active involvement of women by giving priority to their needs and ideas in planning, implementation and management of water projects in these communities. Women are the providers and managers of water in the households; it was also evident that in most instances though they could be involved in the provision, construction and the management of water sources, they lacked the capacity and ability to influence decisions on the type of technology used in supply construction and maintenance of water sources. As a result, they have been negatively affected throughout the water chain. It is critical to further investigate the technology used in water supply and treatment and the extent to which it meets the needs of women. Major emphasis should be on analysis of the water quality aspects of “water store.” The development and implementation of domestic water supply projects should be based on community needs and participation of all groups including women who serve as water providers. Community members should elect an active water user and sanitation committee whose role should be to mobilize and coordinate the communities on planning, management and maintenance of the sources. The beneficiary community should be willing to own, operate, manage and actively participate in government- and/or NGO-initiated projects on water supply and sanitation. Such programs should include leadership training, system operation and maintenance that should be aimed at empowering women in water service provision and management in the communities. Water has become the most commercial product of the twenty-first century. The stress on multiple water resources is a result of rising population and changing lifestyles. In the densely populated cities in India, a pothole filled with water from a leaking pipe becomes the only source of water for some. For women in India’s rural areas, getting a bucket of drinking water is a daily struggle in which most cases women walk an average of 2.5 km to reach a source of water that is often contaminated with high levels of fluoride or is too saline to drink [8]. Around the world, women are coming together to address their own needs for water and sanitation. Their strength and courage transforms communities. With the support of water.org and its local partners, women

organize their communities to support a well and take out small loans for household water connections and toilets. They support one another and share responsibility. These efforts make an impact, taking us one step closer to ending the global water crisis [9].

- Local partners
- Community ownership
- Appropriate technology
- Addressing sanitation and hygiene
- Measuring and monitoring success
- The water credit initiative

Water Credit is first program of its kind that puts microfinance tools to work in the water and sanitation sector. By connecting microfinance institutions (MFIs) to communities in developing countries in need of clean water and toilets, small loans are then made to individuals and households. As loans are repaid, they can be redeployed to additional people in need of safe water, reducing the need for subsidies, which can then be freed up to help those who need it most [10].

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