

IJETRM

International Journal of Engineering Technology Research & Management

Published By:

<https://www.ijetrm.com/>

WATER SCARCITY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELLBEING OF WOMEN IN BO, KISSY TOWN SECTION

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ABSTRACT

The world's population is growing in an unprecedented manner, making it difficult for water to satisfy this growing population. Factories, industries and domestic homes are all dependent on the water available amidst growing concerns of water pollution, oil spillage by factories and human activities geared towards damaging the eco- systems. Climatic conditions are a major contributor for the water scarcity in the world as a whole

Water is useful for both domestic and industrial use. It plays a vital role in the everyday lives of people in the world. According to findings, water occupies the largest portion of land mass on earth, which overemphasized its relevance to not just humans, but plants and animals. This study takes into account the usefulness of water to the existence of humans especially at household levels, amongst women and girls. Studies have shown that, girls in the home deal with water more than boys in a ratio of 7/3. This study examines how the supply of water becomes a challenge to the wellbeing of women.

The study implored the mixed research methods to solicit valid data from the respondents. The study also utilized the descriptive research methods to create a mental picture of the nature of how water supply becomes a challenge for not only girl children, but every household. The findings from the study show that; water is a very important substance for the people in the study area and the world over. The study shows that girls in secondary school suffer the most in getting water. Often times these girls are in secondary schools and the early stages of their education. This makes them susceptible to calamities of water related dangers when it strikes

Keywords:

water scarcity, impact, socio-economic, wellbeing, Girl child, Bo

INTRODUCTION

Water by definition is a tasteless, odorless substance occupying the largest portion of the land mass for human consumption and domestic use. Water scarcity on the other hand is the shortage of the amount of water needed for domestic and industrial use. (Researcher's opinion 2025) When the demand for quality water is needed but the supply chain is inefficient, it leads to water scarcity. Water comes from various fresh water sources which constitutes 2.5% of 1.4 billion cubic kilometers of water covering the earth. (World health organization) they estimated that, about 20 liters of water is needed per day for every dwelling house and this number increases day by day as a result of human activities. Thus when a household is able to access 20 liters of water, required for home use, there is access to water supply even though difficult to achieve considering the growing number of the world's population. However, in the world over, about 2.2 billion people still lack safely managed drinking water, 4.2 billion people are without safely

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managed sanitation as a result of poor water supply management systems, while 3 billion lack basic hand washing facilities at home. Despite the progress made in water and sanitation access between 2000 and 2017, only about 27% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) had access to safely managed water, and 18% had access to safely managed sanitation services as in 2017. (M. Benavides *et al.* 2018)

(Prüss-Üstün *et al.*, (2008) posited that, the non-availability of water poses existential threats leading to sickness like cholera, diarrhea and dehydration, therefore the need for the world over

to come together in handy, to savage the much talked about issues of water scarcity in the country cannot be overemphasized.

Access to safe drinking water and availability is a fundamental human right; however, the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report that more than 785 million people do not have access to safe drinking water (United Nations Children's Fund and World Health Organization, 2019).

The scale of challenge is large and becoming more complex. Population and economic growth are pushing the limits of the world's finite water resources. In some cases, water scarcity is already constraining economic growth. Despite the importance of water for development, in a recent sample (2016) of 37 countries from Africa, 82% of governments indicated that financing was insufficient to reach national targets for drinking water. The uncertainties brought about by political economy and climate change only add to this sector's already considerable challenges. Not surprisingly, world leaders now rank water as one of their top critical issues priorities in their development agenda

Africa appears blessed with abundant water resources: large rivers include the Congo, Nile, Zambezi and Niger and Lake Victoria which is the world's second largest. Despite this advantage, on their side, Africa again posed to be the second driest continent in the world after Australia and millions of Africans still suffer from water shortages throughout the year. Shortages are often due to problems of uneven distributions, One example of the disparity in water availability lies in the Congo basin where 30% of the continent's water drains in inhabited by only 10% of Africa's population (worldwide fund 1986) about 14 countries in Africa are already experiencing water stress, whilst 11 other countries are expected to join them by 2025 at which time nearly 50% of Africa's predicted population of 1.45 billion people in sub Saharan countries lack access to a supply of safe water.

The municipality of Bo keeps expanding on a daily basis, thus water serves to be of great importance, for this reason past and present governments have strived to ensuring water is at the doorstep of every indigene of Bo. Despite the efforts to improve water supply in the city of Bo, there has been no immense contribution on the part of the local government to play a complimentary role in improving water related issues in the city of Bo. Even though some areas are lucky to have access to water supply through swamps and water wells, there are yet challenges to access safe drinking water for the public in Bo, especially during the dries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As important as water is to the survival of the world, women, girls and everyone, need effective water supply to function. Therefore, a moment without water supply becomes a major concern to the wellbeing of women and girls because, they are more likely to interface with it. In addition, in a study conducted in (2014), 145 countries concluded that Health-related diarrheal deaths accounted for 1.5% of the total disease burden, 58% of all diarrheal diseases, and 9% of all deaths for children younger than 5 years old (Liu *et al.*, (2012);

Women and girls are hugely affected by inadequate water access because they are largely responsible for household chores related to water. When water sources are not readily accessible, the daily routine household chores are halted. Women and girls are responsible for collecting water in 4 out of 5 households worldwide, especially in Sierra Leone where certain chores are labeled by the gender of the person. For instance, fetching water is solely of the job of women and girls. This is as a result of the nature of jobs they do at household levels; bathing the kids

(United Nations Children's Fund, World Health Organization, 2019). Compared to men, women experience many negative hygiene related health outcomes, some of which have been disaggregated (2014)

Women and girls account for a higher number of deaths due to diseases and higher disability adjusted life years caused by improper hygiene (Prüss-Ustün *et al.*, 2019). Polluted water supply mostly as a result of human activities contaminates water, this results to women suffering from complications during and after pregnancy. Most health

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related issues like kwashiorkor, marasmus, cholera and diarrhea. Contaminated drinking water and water carriage increase perinatal health issues, negatively affect menstrual health, and increase the incidence of reproductive tract infections in women (Ademas et al., 2020)

Several studies that have explored the impact of drinking water on women and their wellbeing, the key attention has been on water fetching, and sanitation. In the dries, women and kids work long distances to get water in the process, fall into unimaginable problems. This puts them at a much higher risk of being physically assaulted, abused, or harassed; (Kayser et al., 2021).

Women often suffer the social-educational and economic ramifications associated with finding and accessing safe drinking water (Stevenson et al., 2012, United Nations Children's Fund, 2016). According to UNICEF, one in five girls of primary-school age is not in school, compared to one in six boys (United Nations, 2007). Young girls are often taken out of school to help manage the household while young boys are allowed to continue their education (House et al., 2012; UNICEF and WHO, 2019). Additionally, reported school absences increase when girls are menstruating due to inadequate water and hygienic facilities and the awareness

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized the mixed research methods. The rationale for this is to cover data reliability of the study. Considering how important water supply is to the wellbeing of women and the country as a whole, it leads this article to utilize the response of a sample unit of 120 households the sampling technique is the constant skip. It's a sampling technique where the Researcher maps out the total number of households in the study environment and later selects the households in odd numbers. This design ensures a reasonable number of respondents are contacted to get it firsthand.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The impact of water scarcity on women

The result for water supply scarcity on the wellbeing of women was investigate, and the data below is an analysis of the result according to what the issues are

The result above shows the impact of water scarcity on the socio-economic wellbeing of women. Out of the total number of the respondents, 50(40%) responded that whenever there is water scarcity, it negatively impacts women who at domestic levels interacts more with water. Those who do business with water feel pains trying to access water for their domestic engagements. Also, 14 (11%) of the respondents said the scarcity of water leads to girls dropping out of school, when this happens, its negatively impact their future and the country at large. This according to the study shows that, water scarcity does not only affect people women of greater ages, but young girls who are sent to fetch water far distances. They often time encounter dangers from people who look for opportunities to use them as prey. Moreover, 28(22%) of the targeted respondents commented that, during the process of accessing water from long distances exposes them to road accidents. This is because they have to leave very early in the morning to access water to avoid congestion which delays their time to school. This makes them leave earlier to access water on time, yet it exposes them to dangers like road accidents, falling off jumping one place to the other thereby causing bodily harm on themselves and others. Going forward 27(21%) confirmed the impact of water scarcity adversely affect the day to day running of women and everyone in the study area and the country at large

However, the study targeted water scarcity and its implication on the socio-economic wellbeing of women in the study area, the results from the findings also looks at issues like the sources of water supply, which created a case to understand the fact that there is need if not urgent to addressing water scarcity in the city of Bo

The data in the table above shows the sources of water in the study area. 79(65.83%) had water wells (boreholes in their area, 33(27.5%) had access to tap/pump water as their means of water supply. 4(3.33%) get theirs from swamp water and 1(0.83%) from streams. However, 3(2.51%) ascertained that they obtain water from rain and through buying from SALWACO. This accounts for those into construction who require huge quantity of water to expedite their construction projects. From the result above, boreholes appear to be the most means of water supply within the study environment. This implies that, those living on hills will face huge challenge to get water supply. The case

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is even worse during the dries.

CONCLUSION

From the results discussed above, one could clearly see that water supply facilities pose a lot of problems for the girl children in the study environment. During the dries, the people of kissy town and beyond had to cover distances or sometimes pay to SALWACO for water, yet the supply of water continues to pose a lot of threats for children who according to the findings interact with water more compared to their male counterparts. Therefore, if the issue of water is to be addressed, much attention needs to be paid to the water supply management bodies like SALWACO to improve its condition

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results discussed and analyzed, it is evident that much is need to be done to address water supply issues in the study area. Thus from the results, firstly, the Councils in the District and City should take the lead for the expansion of water supply channels/networks in an affordable manner where the least person can access and get water supply on a cost recovery

Another prominent recommendation is for the authorities to take the lead to install public taps that could be manned and controlled by members of that community. This also gives access to persons who cannot afford the cost of owning one

Finally, in order to permanently address water scarcity in the study area, construction companies, and factories should be compelled to expand their water supply system to their immediate communities to cushion the effect of water scarcity especially in the dries. When this is done, the community should be ready to take ownership of the opportunity when it struck

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