



IMPLICATIONS OF WATER CRISIS ON GENDERS AND POLICY IN KUWADZANA HIGH DENSITY SUBURB IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE

BY

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Abstract

The issues of water shortages in Harare's density suburb had caused a big challenge to both women and girls who are the main users of water in most households. This paper looks at the implications of water crisis on genders and policy in Kuwadzana high-density suburb in Harare, Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the duties of girls in water supply at various levels was looked at. The study used qualitative methodology. Unstructured interviews were utilized to collect information from key sources (Harare Water and Occupants Relationship) as well as women and girls living in Kuwadzana high-density suburb. focus group discussions (FGDs) was used so as to gather rich information acquired from interviews. It rises out of the research, that water management are overwhelmed by men than women. Thus, unfortunate women keep being more powerless, and that they are the ones with the most vulnerable voice in decision-making. It is being aggravated by low representation of women in local governance and structures that make decisions in water management. It is suggested that water management bodies/institutions ought to devise systems and mechanisms that encourage women to be involved in decision-making at both local and national level respectively.

Keywords: Water shortages, water supply management, gender parity, public participation, good governance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing global water crisis has become a challenge to particularly poor girls and women living in developing nations. Bigas (2012) states that one billion people on earth are without reliable supplies of water, and greater than 2 billion lack fundamental sanitation". consistent with Nayar (2013) argues that con to international investment in water of over \$15 billion, 1.1 billion people are without clean water, 2.6 billion humans lack adequate sanitation, and 1.8 million citizenry die yearly from water-related sicknesses. This has been accelerated by global climate change currently across the world. Thus, consistent with Singh and Singh (2015) that weather-induced situations are not gender neutral responsible for supplying water for families.

In most developing nations in Africa, countries face increasing water scarcity. consistent with Besada and Werner (2014) nearly 51% of the people in Sub-Saharan countries lack access to safe water. this is often against efforts by African countries to 50% of the population who do not have access to portable water and sanitation by using 2015 a SDG that most countries failed to meet. aside from that, is vital to note that women in Africa are still marginalized as in terms of

management of water is concerned. it's long been identified that "...the exclusion of girls from the decision-making of water deliver and sanitation projects in developing international locations is a major impediment to the development in their well-being (World Bank 2015). Despite this observation, women are still not involved in water supply management, hence our argument that there's need to seriously rethink women's involvement in water management internationally.

The non-involvement of girls in decision-making has had a significant blow on them, particularly at grassroots level. Considering this, various global and conventions were held pointed toward tending to the orientation disparity among people in various viewpoints including deciding. The SADC Gender Protocol of 2008 as an example, was pointed toward accomplishing 50/50 people in deciding by 2015. near mostly in 2015, there's no significant change that has occurred in Zimbabwe. this is often notwithstanding the way that, women and girls are in many cases the essential users, suppliers, and managers of portable water in their families and are the guardians of family cleanliness. if water escape ar not available at home, women and girls are those compelled to travel long distances over numerous hours to meet their



families' water needs (Water and Disinfection Program, 2010).

Zimbabwe, within the same way as other African nations, is a patriarchal society and efforts are being made to empower women through gender mainstreaming in the public sector. In any case, Zimbabwe is so far lingering behind in accomplishing gender parity hence the need to look at the implications of water issues on gender and policy. Harare the capital city of Zimbabwe was born in 'social sin', confronted by many problems including health, transport, political violence, vendors et al., but one problem or felt difficulty which seeks to be perpetuating is that of water in terms of both quantity and quality. Plans by racists mayors failed and therefore the same applies to plans by regionalist and tribalists who took charge in the post-independence era. Harare Metropolitan Province depends on municipal water for both domestic and industrial use like washing and drinking and Kuwadzana High-density suburb is no exemption. Zimbabwe has been experiencing water shortage problems in urban areas for the past years under the management of Urban Councils and Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA). The Zimbabwean constitution clearly provisions in its Declaration of Rights that everybody has a right to safe and potable water. This right has been undermined because the residence of Harare Metropolitan Province is witnessing the shortage of water.

2. Conceptual Framework

This study was guided by governance and gender concepts and the meaning of governance is elusive and equivocal, Hyden and Court (2002) defined governance as the formation and stewardship of formal and informal rules that regulate the public realm, the arena in which state, as well as economic and societal actors, interact to make decisions. On other note, Rogers and Hall (2003) argue that "governance relates to the broad social system of governing, which includes, but not restricted to, the narrower perspective of government as the main decision-making political entity". These two definitions show different conceptualizations of governance. Rogers and Hall (2003) posit that the concept of governance encompasses laws, regulations, and institutions but also relates to government policies and actions, domestic activities, and networks of influence, including international market forces, the private sector, and the civil society. Emanating from this, governance can be classified as good or poor. These elements are summarized by Africa Community Publishing and Development Trust – ACPD (2006) as strong participation of citizens, responsiveness, transparency and accountability, improved service delivery, consensus on local government policy, and peace and tolerance in communities. These elements are important to consider. However, participation/inclusiveness is more applicable to this study, hence, the concept of participation is given due consideration.

Gender can be defined as a concept that refers to the roles, duties, and responsibilities that are culturally or socially ascribed to women, men, girls, and boys (Southern African Development Community SADC, 2008). In light of this,

gender becomes a very sensitive issue because it relates to power and dominance. In addition, Aureli and Brelet (2004) posit that the term gender points out the relations between men and women as a social construction through which all human beings organize their work, rights, responsibilities, and relationships in short their culture, and their civilization. From such conceptualizations, it shows that gender as a concept gives a 'higher status' and power to men in some societies than women who are subjected to do dominance. This is bolstered by Water and Sanitation Program 2010 which opines that "Water and Sanitation programs are a good source of water. "...these distinct roles and the relations between them may give rise to gender inequalities where one group is systematically favoured and holds advantages over another". Thus, inequality produces vulnerability and poverty amongst women since they are not able to exercise their democratic rights and also participate in decision-making at the local level.

3. Research Methodology

The study used qualitative approach and utilised both primary and secondary data. Primary data was gathered through in-depth structured and unstructured interviews targeting residents in Harare's high-density suburbs of Kuwadzana. The sample was purposively chosen, giving preferences to poor women and girls in these high-density areas. Data were also collected from key informants Harare Water and Combined Harare Residents Trust. Observation was used to gather data for the study. The experiences of poor women and girls were solicited through focused group discussions. Secondary data was mainly obtained from published and unpublished articles. Since there was room for probing and paying particular attention to gestures as the respondents were interviewed, these tools and techniques provided rich qualitative data from selected respondents. The basis of the issues discussed in the paper were analyzed through content analysis.

4. Data presentation findings and discussion

Major themes from collected data were used to present and discuss the findings. The themes include the impact of water shortages, gender perspectives, gender balance, policy perspectives, and representation of women in the decision-making policy of water bodies. In order to give an insightful background on the prevailing water situation, the discussion will start by focusing on the current water shortages in Harare. In order to protect the respondents from harm, pseudonyms were used in the presentation of the data.

4.1 Water Shortages in Harare – A Brief Review

Water shortages in Harare are experienced dating back to late 1990s. Major causes of the shortages are often summarized as, highly polluted water source; capacity of the water treatment plants that's outstripped by demand; worn out distribution network that causes excessive underground leaks; shortages of financial resources to purchase adequate water treatment chemicals 8 different chemicals needed since the water is

heavily polluted; to some extent population growth in the city; and arguably poor water management. These factors have greatly affected the connection between daily demand and supply of water in the city. consistent with Gambe (2013), water demand in Harare is now between 1200 and 1400 megalitres per day against a daily supply of 600 megalitres. These statistics show that the matter has been worsening since 1990s.

Efforts over the years to reduced water shortages in Harare have proved to be fruitless. It emerges from the research that the development of Kunzvi Dam in Murewa is expected to greatly improve the water situation in Harare. However, the present economic crisis has negatively impacted on the progress of work on the dam. The study also revealed that the completion of the dam alone doesn't guarantee improvement of the water situation. this could be supported by water infrastructure refurbishment especially water treatment plants and the distribution network. Despite the replacement of water pipes in some a part of the inner city, the distribution network needs more work since some parts of the town are still characterised by worn-out water distribution network.

4.2.Impacts of Water Shortages - A Gender Perspective

The study revealed that the impacts of acute water shortages are felt more by women as compared to men. In Kuwadzana high density, it's difficult to access piped water during the day. The challenge is worse in Kuwadzana high-density new stands where there are not any individual stand taps but only communal taps and boreholes. Women and girls awoken as early as 2 am to fill their containers with water before it is disconnected at around 6 or 7 in the morning. Sometimes they need to wake up at midnight in order to enjoy better pressure which decreases as more and more people start accessing water. In some circumstances, water is going to be disconnected for more than one day and mostly respondents are caught unaware. Although Harare Water (a department under City of Harare that manages water supply) gives notices before disconnecting water for days, these notices don't reach the majority of residents. Perhaps this is often caused by the media that is used to convey the message. Mostly, televisions, radios and newspapers are used. However, thanks to excessive load shedding most locals do not get the message in time and some do not afford to buy newspapers daily. Thus information dissemination becomes difficult if not impossible. The exercise of fetching water for the family is so demanding that it's affected the performance of mainly women at work and girls at school. one among the respondents, Susan has this to mention,

“Mvura yatitambudza muno mudhunhu reKuwadzana makoronyera arikutibhadharisa dhora kuti tichere mvura yaunenge wamukira pakati pehusiku, kana usina mari hauwani mvura, uyezve vana vedu varikubakwa chibharo nevarume kuti vapihwe mvura zviripachena”
(water is giving us a bug challenge in this suburb of Kuwadzana the they are robbers who collects

money from individuals so that you can fetch water despite the fact that you had woke up mid-night if you don't have money which mean you don't get water, the girl child are being raped with those abusers in order to fetch water)

Susan's sentiments show the burden that's shouldered by females in high suburbs in Harare. Inadequate sleep has negatively affected the performance of females at work or at college. Consequently, they're bound to perform poorly as compared to their counterparts who will be asleep whilst others are busy fetching water for them. This perhaps explains why the highest jobs in Harare are taken by men and not women who do not have adequate time to perform to their maximum due to arduous household chores. The failure by women to awaken in the middle of the night to fetch water will result in long queues the following morning at community boreholes. These boreholes were sunk by UNICEF in 2008 after one among the worst cholera outbreaks in Zimbabwe. From that point onwards, the boreholes have offered relief to high-density residents in times of acute shortages. However, the community boreholes are usually dry during hot seasons because the water table might have gone below the pumping level. aside from that, a number of the boreholes have broken down due to lack of maintenance hence some women will have to travel longer distances to reach the next closest borehole.

In Kuwadzana high-density suburb we discovered that these community boreholes are managed by committees involving people staying around the borehole. The leader of the committee that manages the borehole may be a woman who stays some 50m from the water point. This wife (Mbuya vaChido) complained about the reluctance of those people benefitting from the borehole to contribute money towards its maintenance. Although the borehole is managed by a woman, it's the lack of adequate resources that is worrying. Besides, the woman revealed that she sometimes feels helpless when people do not co-operate hence her belief that she needs the assistance of men in controlling the affairs of this particular borehole.

This shows complex on the part of women when given the opportunity to manage water issues. this is often in line with the argument presented by ACPD (2006), that some vulnerable and disadvantaged groups sometimes lack confidence in themselves when given a chance to manage their affairs. the sort and size of containers used when fetching water are different depending on the types of the water point. When fetching water from a community borehole, the containers are usually bigger for instance 20 – 50 litre containers. Usually, the containers have a much bigger opening at the top as compared to those with smaller openings. This possesses implications on the time taken to fill up the container. Containers refill faster as compared to that are mainly used at private water points. The opening of the container is additionally influenced by the level of activity at the water point. Community borehole are mainly characterised by an outsized number of people impatiently waiting to access water hence containers are not suitable for that environment.

Serious conflicts usually escape if an individual spends more time at the water point at the expense of others. Of these tribulations are faced mainly by women as opposed to men. These findings are almost like those of Remigios (2011), who revealed that in Kadoma, water points became a social point of interaction characterised by possible tensions and dangers.

Men and young boys sometimes fetch water. Young boys usually accompany their sisters and mothers to community boreholes, but men rarely accompany their wives and daughters. It is only in difficult times when men are using bigger containers to fetch water. Young boys make more trips and use wheelbarrows to carry the containers, while men use cars or hand carts less. The comparison shows that women and young girls are more responsible for fetching water than their male counterparts. Their plight is worsened by the fact that while their counterparts use wheelbarrows, hand carts, and cars, they mostly carry the containers on their heads and/or in their hands.

The temporal aspect of fetching water is important to consider. The research shows that women spend more time with each other than men. Women use small containers to fetch water. Women spend more time with water pressure in mind. The activity of fetching water is more strenuous for women than for men. Aureli and Brelet (2008) argue that women suffer more from water scarcity and pollution than men in developing countries. Women are responsible for household hygiene in Kuwadzana high-density suburbs. When water is disconnected, women have to make sure that adequate water is available for all household chores and water to flush the toilets. Women end up recycling water for toilets use. This means water that is used during laundry is stored and later used in toilets. Dirty water in two buckets shown in Figure 3 is meant for use in flushing toilets whilst water in other containers is usually used for other household chores such as washing dishes, washing hands after visiting the toilet, mopping the floors, and even bathing.

There are times when water is disconnected for more than a week in both suburbs. When the household water reserves run dry, women have no choice but to use the Mukuvisi River in Harare for laundry. The river is heavily polluted and this endangers their health. There is a part of the river course that is drying clothes. Industrial areas in the city deposit their waste into the river. The pollution levels are worsened by sewage from nearby suburbs that flows into the river. Although men are sometimes seen bathing in Mukuvisi River, the same river, it is mostly women who are exposed to polluted water. It is the duty of women to take care of the sick if there is a member of the household. The impacts are felt more by women than men.

The study revealed that efforts by mainly women to grow vegetables within their plots are hampered by acute water shortages in Kuwadzana high density. Because of economic difficulties experienced in Zimbabwe, most high-density residents have small vegetable gardens in their backyards. Although some household members/heads are gainfully employed, their salaries are mostly not enough to cater for the dietary needs of the family for the full month hence, it's the

duty of the women, young girls, and sometimes young boys to grow vegetables so as to augment whatever the working members are able to bring back home. However, the vegetables are wilting because of water scarcity. This presents huge dietary challenges, especially to households with members living with HIV/AIDS since these members require balanced diets. Within the event that these household members fall ill, it's again the duty of mainly women and girls to look after them under the home-based-care programmes.

4.3. Gender Parity in Water Management – A Policy Perspective

Zimbabwe is committed to the achievement of gender parity in the least levels of society thus, it's a signatory to international and regional conventions aimed at achieving gender parity. At a worldwide level, Zimbabwe may be a signatory to a number of conventions which include among others, Convention on the Elimination of all sorts of Discrimination against Women CEDAW (1991) and the Beijing Declaration on the Platform for Action (1995). On the regional level, Zimbabwe subscribes to several conventions on gender such as SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008) and COMESA Gender Policy among others (Government of Zimbabwe – GoZ, 2013a). As a member of varied conventions at both global and regional levels, Zimbabwe has shown the dedication to the achievement of gender justice in all sectors and in the society at large.

At a national level, Zimbabwe has made different adjustments to its legislation and policies with the view to deal with gender issues. However, like other countries, Zimbabwe has done not meet gender parity - 50/50 men and women in decision-making by 2015 though efforts are made through different policies to achieve this target perhaps in 2030. The new constitution adopted by Zimbabwe in 2013 has provisions that attempt to address gender imbalances. Section 17 of the constitution stipulates that it's the duty of the state to promote full gender balance in Zimbabwean society. This will be achieved through, full participation of girls in all spheres of the society; ensuring that both men and women are equally represented in all institutions and agencies of government; and ensuring that women constitute at least half the membership of all commissions and other elective and appointed governmental bodies (GoZ, 2013b). Aside from that, the constitution also stipulates that the state should take measures to rectify gender discrimination and imbalances that were created by past practices and policies. Thus, in terms of addressing gender imbalances through policy, Zimbabwe seems to be in line however, it's the implementation that is usually poor.

In terms of equality, the supreme law of Zimbabwe doesn't allow discrimination on any basis since all people are equal before the law. As provided for in Section 56 subsection 2, 'Women and men have the proper to equal treatment, including the proper to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres' (GoZ, 2013b). This clause puts women and men at par in terms of opportunities

however, the practice on the bottom is still lagging behind. The workplace – especially at City of Harare is heavily dominated by men at the expense of girls. It's vital to note that the key posts such as the mayoral, official, and Harare Water directorate are all occupied by men. Furthermore, the water distribution section under Harare Water is headed by a male engineer. This scenario hampers all efforts by grassroots women to effectively participate and influence water system and management. As long as their participation is restricted to very low levels where decision-making is minimal, their plight will remain difficult to deal with. Thus, there could be need to craft local-level policies guided by the constitution. Mr. Mapfumo who said that,

“...madzimai vanoramba mukana wekutungamira chavanogona kupunza zvakarongwa kutungamira kwavo kwakasiyana nekwevanhurume”
(...women refuse to take leadership positions, what they only do is to destroy what has been done by other and their leadership is different to those of men)

This entails that there are men who are still not willing to afford women the opportunity to take part in local and national decision making, especially at leadership level.

4.4. Women Representation in Decision-Making Bodies

Representation of girls in decision-making bodies is still very low hence compromising full participation of women in the making of decisions that affect them. At a national level, the demotion of the primary and only female vice president shows backtracking on part of government in as far as equal representation of men and women in top positions is concerned. The hope that women had when the female vice president was sworn in was suddenly thwarted by the act of her demotion. This move showed that Zimbabwe may be a patriarchal society that views politics as a profession for men and not women. Despite the arguments posed by some critics, that ousted female vice chairman betrayed her fellow comrades, we argue that if government was committed to gender parity there was have to replace her by another female candidate. We believe that seniority in party politics took its course within the recent appointments of two male vice presidents.

However, our argument remains, that there are women within the ruling party that are capable of shouldering the role of a vice president thus, on gender basis there was have to appoint a female vice president to replace the ousted female vice president. The uneven political ground in Zimbabwe has also greatly influenced the participation of girls in parliamentary elections. This low participation has indirectly perpetuated the over-dominance of men in deciding. It's vital to note that, within the last parliamentary elections held in 2013, only 85 out of 270 parliamentarians are women while 39 out of 80 senators are women (Zhangazha, 2014). Furthermore, in Harare, the present number of female councillors is six against forty-six male councillors (Dube, 2015). These statistics show that the voice of girls in decision-making is

still overshadowed by men. Their participation in parliament doesn't yield much especially when decisions are made by a majority vote. This features a direct impact on the urgency that is rendered to water shortages by Harare Water. As long because the number of women in decision-making bodies remains low their concerns will never be adequately addressed. aside from that, it becomes difficult for poor women to possess a voice in water supply and management issues.

The impact of inadequate representation of girls in decision-making bodies affects women differently according status in society. If women in Harare are categorized supported areas of residence, then those that are more affected by the current water woes are the residents of high-density areas who are mainly poor and struggling women. Their predicament is aggravated by the very fact that those women who find their way into politics and top management jobs are mainly from medium and low-density areas who do not experience the impacts of acute water shortages on a daily basis. It's our argument that the bulk of women in politics and top management jobs are out of touch with the realities that are faced by poor women thus, they are doing not adequately represent their actual needs. It emerges from the research that there are different factors that hinder the participation of poor grassroots women in politics. Mrs. Dende has this to say,

“Sevanhukadzi hatinga rwisane nevarunme kuti tipinde mukanzuru nekuti zvepolitics ndezvevarume kwete vanhukadzi chimwe zvakare varume vedu havatibvumire nekuti vanofunga kuti zvepolitics zvinoitwa nepfambi nevanhu vasina kudzikama” (As women we cannot fight with male counterparts to enter in municipality because politics are for them and on other issue our spouses don't allow us to join those politics because they thought it is associated with prostitution and people who are not disciplined)

Mrs. Dende's assertion brings out three vital factors that hinder women participation in local politics. Firstly, women sometimes feel that they cannot contest against men in elections. This shows that some women suffer a complex or are still trapped in the belief of the past that women cannot compete with men - who are viewed by local cultures as superior to women. Besides, most men don't allow their wives to participate in politics especially if the men are not involved. Political participation has been related to prostitution and women with 'loose' morals. Whether this assertion is correct or not, this is often subject to debate. However, it's vital to note that the political arena in Zimbabwe is heavily dominated by men hence in most instances women who are politically active are believed to be abused by men who are mainly their 'bosses'. In light of this, we are arguing that not all women involved in politics are of 'loose' morals. Some are victims of rape or sex in exchange for political favours or high political posts. Either way, women are victims of male dominance. The third hindrance is lack of adequate financial resources to run successful campaigns. the bulk of poor women do not afford to financial support their political ambitions. Besides, their

main worry is that of raising enough funds to survive and having the ability to send their children to school.

4.5. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations are presented in the following paragraphs focusing mainly on, the water situation in Harare; a gender perspective on the impacts of those water woes; gender parity in water management, and the representation of women in decision-making bodies. The daily supply of domestic water in Harare is way outweighed by the daily demand. The availability is further reduced by high percentages of non-revenue water, high pollution levels of the water source, and therefore the capacity of the treatment plants which is now less than the daily demand. In light of this, it is recommended that the development of Kunzvi Dam be fast-tracked followed by the expansion of the water treatment plants in Harare. Aside from that, heavy fines should be imposed on the polluters of water focusing mainly on industries and concrete residents who are the major culprits. Urban residents should be encouraged to be environmentally sensitive and conserve natural water bodies for the benefit of all residents.

The burden of water woes in Harare is especially shouldered by women and young girls as compared to men and young boys despite the fact that the latter are sometimes involved in the exercise of fetching water for the household. It's also the burden of females to care for the sick when water shortages cause disease outbreaks. Thus, there's a need for a paradigm shift in the gender distribution of household chores. Men and young boys should be equally liable for providing or fetching water for the household hence behaviour change is needed in that respect. Zimbabwe may be a signatory to many international gender conventions and has passed legislations/policies at a national level in order to address gender imbalances. However, implementation of those remains poor thus there is a need for serious engagement at all levels of governance, seeking better implementation of policies or legislations that address the present gender imbalances, especially in water management. A task force should be founded that oversees the implementation of these policies from the national to the grassroots levels.

The representation of girls in decision-making bodies is still very low in Harare. Besides that, Zimbabwe as a rustic has failed to achieve gender parity in terms of 50/50 men and women representation in decision-making bodies. Men are still enjoying dominance at the expense of girls' participation. This has partly been caused by cultural beliefs that are still enslaving some urban residents as a result of perpetuating the exploitation of girls in general. Emanating from this, it's recommended that complete change is required that will achieve equal representation of men and women in the decision-making bodies. Aside from that, women should close and unite against discrimination by men in terms of access to decision-making bodies. Additionally, confidence amongst women to contest in local and national elections also will greatly improve the situation. Women should have courage to

contest against men without worrying or regarding themselves as inferior. On the opposite hand, men should be gender sensitive and permit women to have free participation space in both local and national decision-making. Men should regard women as their equal partner at workplace and in deciding. This may greatly assist in achieving gender parity.

Lastly, there's a great need to improve the number of women in water decision-making bodies in Harare since they are the household managers of water. Their participation in the least levels of decision-making will provide vital insights as far as the addressing of water woes in Harare is concerned. This is often a high time for municipality departments such as Harare Water to consider employment of women in the top managerial posts. However, this could be based on academic merit and should be done progressively.

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