

Women's Participation and Project Success in Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Projects in Jaffna & Kilinochchi

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ABSTRACT

In the rural water supply projects, community participation is one of the important factors in terms of achieving goals of development activities. Participation of people is known as the most effective way in promoting and achieving sustainability of rural development projects particularly in developing countries. Women's participations in large scale of rural water supply projects lead to improve projects' success. The present study was designed to identify the linkage between women's participation and project success among rural communities in Jaffna & Kilinochchi through ADB 6th funded Project (Improving community based rural water supply & sanitation project). Primary data and secondary literature reviews were used to conduct this study. A total number of 200 women were selected from five project areas in Jaffna and Kilinochchi on simple random sampling basis. Again 25 community based organization members were selected for in-depth interview in same way. The result reveals that there was a strong linkage between women's participation and project success. Women's participation at the levels observed in this study is found to have strong relationship to project success. This study would hopefully benefit the project report writers on rural water supply projects, researchers, policy-makers, academicians, undergraduate students and practitioners of Sri Lanka and other similar countries through exploring the women's participation in rural water supply and pursuing policy to improve the current status of it.

INTRODUCTION

Globally more than one billion people live without access to safe water supply. Most of them are living in rural areas in developing countries without proper infrastructure (Learning Curves, 2010). Rural water supply and sanitation have been important component of Governments and Non-governmental organizations in developing countries particularly to achieve the millennium development goal on water and sanitation by 2015.

Women in villages often have the primary responsibility for water resources management. They collect water for their household purposes and other's needs (Boesveld & Postel-Coster, 1991). Women's participation in rural water supply and sanitation projects are assuming that women are usually excluded in the development projects due to the cultural and structural barriers such as low education, lack of leadership experience, lack of experience in decision making, low level of self esteem and low level of self confidence (Connell: 2002). Participation of women is a central issue in rural water supply and sanitation projects because it may be conceived as a platform for sustainability and social inclusion. Participation

means contribution or approach (Taylor: 2004). Participation becomes a technical approach and mobilizes the voluntary contributions and involvement of community to reduce the project costs and it is usually led by professionals.

Water supply schemes in developing nations have shown higher success when planned and run with full participation of women in affected communities (Christine: 1998). However when the responsibility for planning, implementing and operating facilities is given over to the community and results are inconsistent. The development literature suggests that greater amounts of participation by all members of society, including marginalized groups such as minority ethnic groups, the poor, landless, illiterate or women, will have a positive effect on project success (Uphoff et al; 1998).

In the rural water supply and sanitation schemes, the role of the women's contribution is important to the success of the project. According to the researchers' concept there are the policies for women to participate and contribute for the success of projects. Only very few studies have addressed the gender aspect in community participation (Yuerlita, Febriamansyah & Saptomo: 2008). As a result of this, international institutions such as the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations have advocated for more women's participation in water supply projects for years. However, despite higher level policies and objectives, in large scale rural projects women's participation rarely becomes a reality. The purpose of this paper is to explore women's participation in rural water supply projects and the success of projects in Jaffna and Kilinochchi.

Women are the key stakeholders in consuming water than the others in the society as well as they are responsible for collecting safe and pure drinking water to fulfill their basic needs such as drinking, cooking, etc. Therefore this study was designed to find out the participation of women in rural water supply & sanitation projects for its success in Jaffna and Kilinochchi districts. The main objective of this study is to find out the linkage between women's participation and project success. This study would hopefully benefit the Nongovernmental organizations, Government organizations, National Water supply & Drainage Board, Academicians, Researchers on water supply and sanitation scheme, policy makers and scholarly paper writers in future in Sri Lanka as well as other similar countries through exploring how women's participation play vital role in rural water supply and sanitation projects and its success.

METHODOLOGY

The method of this research is a descriptive study. Both primary and secondary data were used. As methodology, structured questionnaire and interview were used to identify the participation of women in rural water supply projects. Observation and case study also conducted to find out the project success. In questionnaire the people who were involved in the project and women's participation are identified. These qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed by Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

Secondary data included tables; maps and statistical information was interpreted according to objectives. Secondary data sources such as quarterly project progress reports, committee meeting minutes, ADB guidelines, project appraisal manual, Journals, scholarly articles, books, news papers, annual reports, and organizational reports through the internet sources were used.

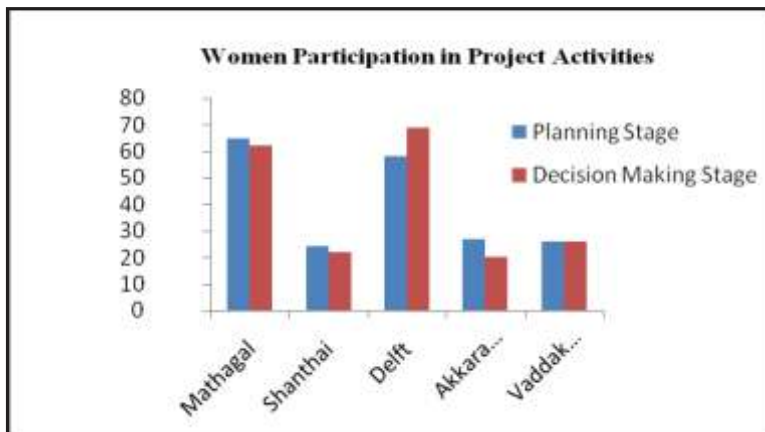
The cluster sampling method was used to select project areas from Jaffna and Kilinochchi. A cluster is a unit that contains a collection of population element. Cluster sampling selects more than one population element of a time. There are five project areas in Jaffna and Kilinochchi Districts: Mathagal, Shanthai and Delft in Jaffna District and Akkarayan and Vaddakkachchi in Kilinochchi District. 200 families were selected from 05 project areas based on simple random sampling. Again using simple random sampling method 25 community based organization members were selected for in-depth interview from the 05 project areas. This study sample is 225.

KEY FINDINGS

As a result of analyzed data, this study found that women participation in rural water supply projects of ADB 6th in several stages in the process such as planning, decision making, designing, participating in meetings, implementing, operations and maintaining.

Women's Participation in Planning & Decision Making Stages

Figure 1: Women Participation in Planning & decision making stages



(Source: Baseline Survey: 2014)

Most women were given opportunity to participate in the planning phase which is considered the most important phase of the project success. The above figure shows that, the women participation was in planning and decision making stages. Nearly 65% of the total sample population from Mathagal and Delft stated that, they were engaged with planning and decision making process in community based rural water supply and sanitation projects while 30% of the total respondents reported they slightly engaged with planning and decision making process. Women's participation in decision making is highest proportion during the implementation of the projects.

Women's Participation in Designing & Implementing Stages

Women from Mathagal & Delft stated that, they were consulted about their facilities and their locations during the designing and implementation stage of the project. Women from Delft in Jaffna district reported that they were initially interested to attend the meetings and had enough discussion regarding design the stand post, common tab and pipe laying. The study also found that 82% of the total respondents in all project areas revealed that women involvement in the construction works such as pipe laying, construction of well, tower construction and latrine construction under cash for work programme. And also during the construction phase, number of women from project areas contributed by cooking meals and bringing the meals to men at the construction site (earth filling, digging land, construction of well). Some women worked in the preparation phase before the construction work such as cleaning well construction site, picking the unwanted rocks in the road site where community need to lay the pipes. When considering the linkage of the women with project activities, women are much more likely to contribute themselves as volunteer worker unpaid activities. Voluntary women workers were participated in Mathagal, Vaddakkachchi.



Photograph A & B: Women involving pipe laying works

Photograph C: Women involving construction activities of well

Women's Participation in Operations and Maintenance Activities of Water Supply

Most of the respondents reported that, they have involving operation and maintenance activities through their community based organization. The study found that there is a relationship between women taking part in operations and maintenance of water supply scheme at a superior level and indirect way too. 67% of the participants confirmed that, their participation and involvement were in the activities regarding operations such as pitting pipes which were damaged, repairing pumps, and so on. 33% of women involve with monitoring activities and managing the water resources in sustainable manner. They are responsible for preventing the water waste, water pollution such as over extraction, salinity and preparing bills and collecting money.

Women's Participation in Meetings Regarding Project Activities

This study also found that there is a strong relationship between women's participation in consultations of rural water supply projects and its success.

Table 1: Meetings attendance of women in Project areas

	Number of Meetings			
	None	Only 1	1-5	More than 5
Male	43.7%	-	10.3%	23.8%
Female	1.1%	4.4%	20.0%	76.2%

Table 1 shows that, 76% of the total women have attended five or more than five meetings compared to only 23% of men. Using a chi-squared test for difference, there is statistically significant difference between women and men in meeting attendance in project areas. In Mathagal, Vaddakkachchi and Delft majority of women have attended for more than seven meetings and they were actively involved organizing hygiene awareness programs, health clinics and general awareness programs in school and village level.

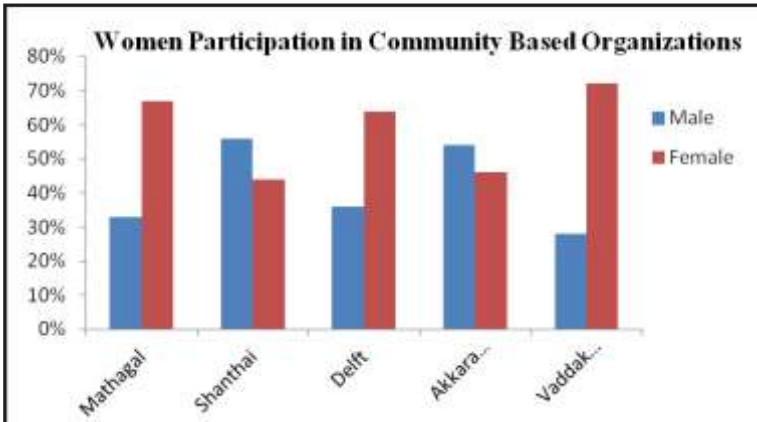


Photograph D&E: Women's Participation in Meetings

Women's Participation in Community Based Organizations

Research findings emphasized female committee members highly involved in community based organizations as members. There are five community based organizations for water supply and sanitation such as Vaddakkachchi water supply committee, Akkarayan Water Supply Committee, Mathagal Water Supply Committee, Shanthai Water Supply Committee and Delft Water Supply Committee. More than 56% of surveyed female committee members in all project areas stated that, they are holding many position in committee as president, secretary, treasurer, and team leader for construction works. They are working with the support of the Rural Development Officers and Women Development Officers from Divisional Secretariat Offices. In Vaddakkachchi and Mathagal where women's participation in organization compare with men is quite high as mentioned earlier.

Figure 2: Women Participation in community based organizations



(Source: Baseline Survey: 2014)

In Mathagal and Vaddakkachchi there are 08 females holding highest position in CBOs and they are playing a vital role in the part of implementing project. Women are the main participants in part of implementing and they are responsible for handling financial documents.

Women's Participation and Project Success

Project success was measured by project effectiveness and project outcomes. Project effectiveness means, it is a measure of the beneficial impact on communities from improvements in water service and other project outputs – improved quality, taps closer to homes, improved community organizations, etc (Carter et al: 1999).

Table 2: Level of Project Effectiveness and level of Project Outcomes

	Level of Project Effectiveness	Level of Project Outcomes
Households have same access to water as others villager's have	***	***
Household satisfied with the implemented new scheme	***	
Household reporting that they have adequate water	***	***
Household stated that there is time saving	***	***
Household think that their community have enough capacity to maintain water supply scheme	***	
Household aware about water tariffs	***	
Household reported their quality of life improved	***	***
Household reported reduced the poverty & water borne deceases after the new scheme		***
Household mentioned now they are using pure safe drinking water	***	***
House hold reported many women committee members maintain this new scheme	***	***
Household participated Many women participated in project activities	***	

In Table No 2 project effectiveness and project out comes were compared. Data collected from households and committee members and two separate set of ordinary least squares regressions are presented. Women participation is measured by meeting attendance during planning, designing, decision making, implementing and monitoring stages. There are other measures also considered to project success is percentage of water tariff and involvement of income generation livelihood activities which were provided by the project. The key result presented water tariff also main factor to the contribution of project success.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the study found that women are engaged with all relevant project activities. They were consulted before designing the projects and during the implementation of project. The remarkable fact revealed in the study is that, Women's participation is very high in Mathagal, Delft and Vaddakkachchi where the effectiveness of the project were in high level when compare with Shanthai and Akkarayan. Women's participation in project activities are still challenging in some developing countries. Socio-economic development cannot be fully achieved without the active participation of women at the level of decision making, implementing, designing and maintaining the society. However the participation of women differs at different stages of the project cycle. High number of women participated and enjoyed in the different stages of the project than the men. The results from over all findings and discussion show that there is a strong linkage between women's participation and project success. Because women are more likely deal in the usage of water than men especially in developing countries due to the socio-cultural factors.