

Water management is not a choice, it is about our womanhood

Women, Water and Health: an ethnographic study in Uganda

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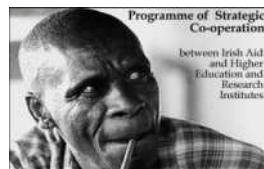


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Overview

Definitions

- Water management
- Household
- Women

Background

- Understanding health
- Disease model
- Socio-cultural model

Methodology

Some key findings

- Women's understanding of their role and life around water health
- Socio-cultural factors

Implications

Purpose

Objectives

1. Characterise the daily experiences of women around water
2. Explore the role of women in water management at household and community level
3. Gain an understanding of the influence of water on the health and wellbeing of women

Study context

One village, different water technologies, semi-urban, and rural-rural settings

Definitions

Water management

- Collection, use, handling, storage
- Maintenance of communal water sources

Household

- Unit of immediate relatives in a rural setting

Women

- Limited exposure to education and life beyond where they live

Introduction

Women's social and cultural responsibility for domestic water supply and management

Significant effect on the health of women (Singh 2005; WHO 2009)

Emphasis on reduction of water related diseases e.g. diarrhoea (WHO 2009)

- Access to safe water
- Health promotion

Health promotion mostly targets women towards hygiene behavioural change and improved sanitation

Little knowledge exists on the socio-cultural constructs (Smith 1983; Seedhouse 1997; Gunn 2001) around women, water and health

Methodology

Research approach

- Ethnography
- Symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1986)

Methods

- Fieldwork/participant observation (14 months)
- Informal and formal interviews
- Field notes and reflective diary

Data analysis

- Agar's "breakdown, coherence and resolution" (1986)
- Katz's framework from the "how" to the "why" (2001 and 2002)
- Generation of themes and sub themes
- Description and interpretation

Key Findings

Private management (household)

- social role
- decision making
- negotiating
- water as a symbol of womanhood

Every drop counts"

*"Mukazzi munnange nkugambe ki ndekeki?"
You are a woman, what shall I say and not say...*

*"Mukazzi wattu ntandikirewa kubyamazzi!"
My sister where should I start to talk about water...*

*"Amazzi gatufuula bulogoyi"
We work like donkeys...*

"Men are inferior these days"



Findings continued

Public management (community)

- women are responsible but with limited power
- male present as authoritative and dominant, but do little

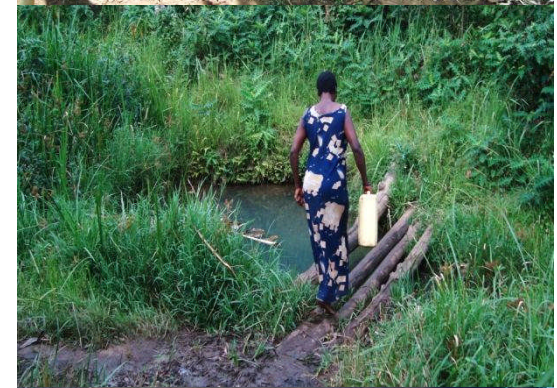
"If only men could give us a helping hand with water issues"

"If women talk well to their husbands, they would assist them with water issues"

"Child bearing as a social security"

Power relations

- limited male participation
- patriarchy, masculinity tendencies



Findings - continued

Limited availability of water

- constrains ability for role performance

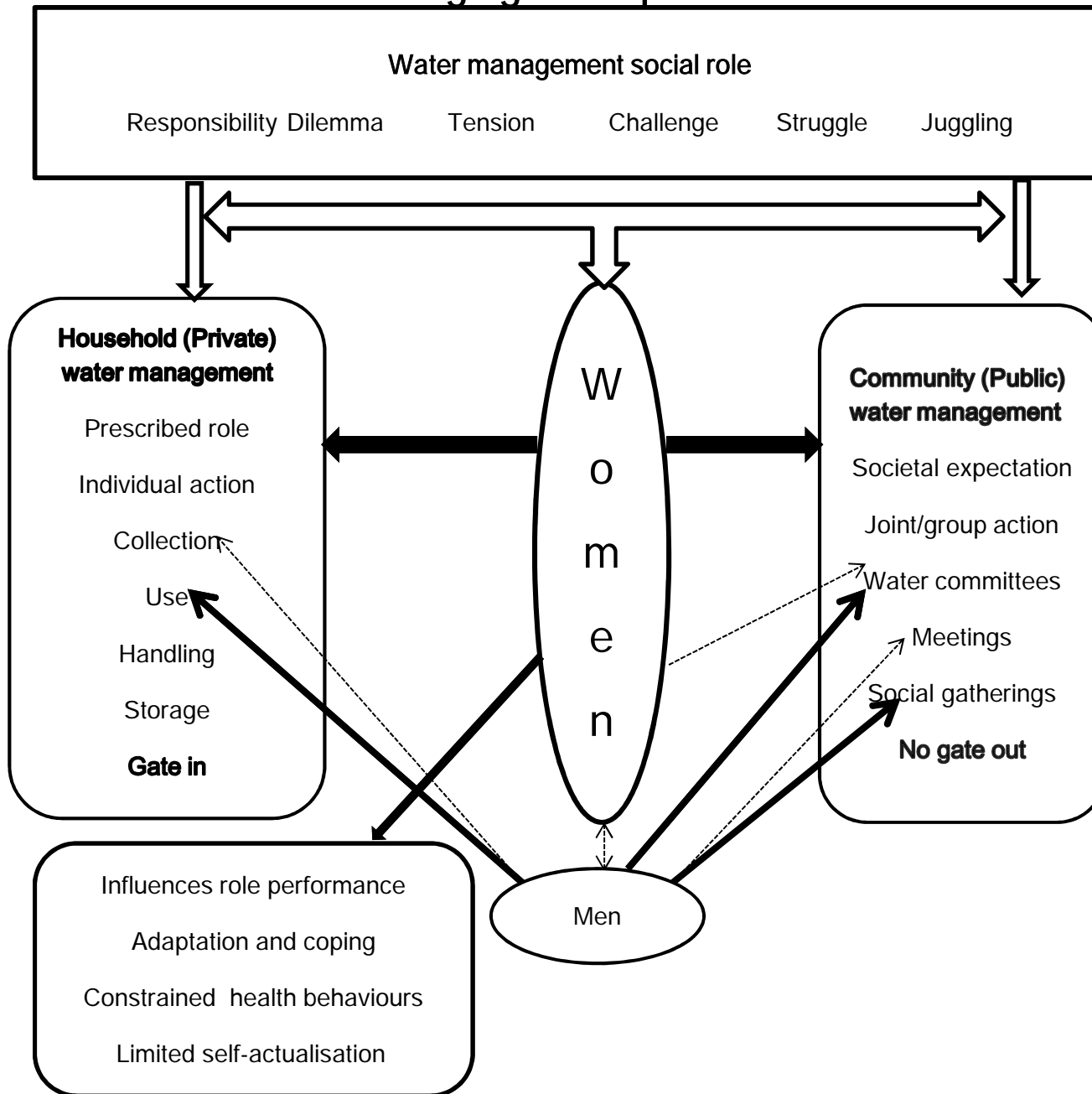
Responsibility for water management

- hinders the realisation of a woman's full potential
- limits self-actualisation

Disease model of health

- fails to account for the socio-cultural issues

Emerging conceptual framework



THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

- Gate keeping (Lewin 1943)
- Tokenism (Arnstein 1969)
- Ecofeminism (Archer 2012)
- Gender (Kabeer 1999)
- Power relations (Goetz 1996)

PhD research and WIL project



Gender-sensitive approaches

- men and women engaged in raising topics of concern that determined the focus of this study



Field-based placement in the local community

- foregrounding of social reality from the everyday life of the women



Enhanced capacity

- as an academic (research skills)
- development worker (linking research to practice)
- stakeholder (enhanced capacity during the process of working with others on a collaborative project)
- policy maker (based on evidence)

Implications and knowledge on sustainable water management in Uganda

Reciprocity

- Women got space to engage and talk about their world of water and health
- Consciousness raising , increased awareness and understanding of the water management issues
- Opportunity for shared understanding and moments as women (insider and outsider)

Long term impact to be felt if evidence is transferred into policy

Implications and knowledge on sustainable water management in Uganda

Study findings suggest:

- The need to view water management and health from the women's perspective
- Shift from conventional health promotion and its emphasis on disease to a foregrounding of the socio-cultural issues

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THANK YOU

Questions