



THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING IN WATER AND SANITATION (WATSAN) FACILITIES MANAGEMENT IN GA WEST MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY OF GHANA.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CWSA	Community Water and Sanitation Agency
NCWSP	National Community Water and Sanitation Programme
WATSANC	Water and Sanitation Committees
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
POs	Partner Organisations
FMP	Facility Management Plan
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
MWST	Municipal Water and Sanitation Team
RWSP	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme
DRA	Demand Responsive Approach

ABSTRACT

Recognition given to women as major actors in successful management of WATSAN facilities in Ghana is very high yet, women are mostly excluded in demand driven approaches when it comes to siting of WATSAN facilities. This largely contributes to failures and inappropriate siting and using of WATSAN facilities in Ghana. The exclusion often stems from the traditional and deep rooted gender differences where women are not afforded with the same rights and opportunities in Ghanaian traditional societies. Therefore, this research will focus on cultural barriers and socio-economic obstacles and challenges that may hinder involvement of women in water facility management in Ghana. The researcher found significant relationship amongst Economic Usage of Time, Overburdens' of WATSANC and Other Community Activities on Women, Gender and Division of Labour in the Household Environmental Management, Dignity and Enhanced Status of WATSANCs as a Result of WATSANC Training, Decision Making at WATSANC Meetings and Community Gatherings and Barriers to Women Involvement in Decision Making in the three communities as a panacea in stimulating women involvement in decision making and management of WATSANC in the

three research communities of Ga West MA in Ghana. Very few publications were done in this area by IRC Wash, WASH Matters and IWA. These WASH learning institutions findings are largely in harmony with the researcher findings.

Keywords: Female participation, Gender and Water and sanitation committees

Background of Ghana's Context of Water Profile and Policy.

Ghana has population of nearly 24 million. The population of Ghana has 55 % of females and 51 % of males are under 30 years with 58% living in rural areas and 42% in urban areas. Agriculture accounts for 50% of GDP and employs 85% of the workforce. Although Ghana's economy is improving, the nation remains one of the poorest nations in the world, ranking 135 out of 177 on the 2008 United Nation's Human Development Index, which considers indicators such as per capita income, life expectancy, and adult literacy. After decades of improvements, the infant mortality rate (64/1000) and the less than 5 mortality rate (111/1000) seem to have stagnated at persistently high levels. Water-related diseases such as diarrhea, Guinea worm, bilharzia, typhoid, cholera, and dysentery are predominant in Ghana and more pronounced in rural areas including project **selected area Ga West Municipality specifically Onyansana and Onyansana Zongo is not exception**. This is due largely to the fact that more than half of the rural population depends on unsafe water sources. In fact, diarrheal diseases are the third most commonly reported cases in health centers across the country. (Ghana Statistical Service. 2010). These water borne diseases mostly affects women and children that are of the majority in Ghana.

- The government of Ghana realising that water is essential to the existence of people especially women decided to give it a special attention by providing portable water in the rural areas.
- Water is a cross-cutting element of the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) of the Republic of Ghana and is linked to all Eight of the Millennium Development Goals. Improving water services and uses are essential for increasing hygiene and sanitation service levels that affect productive lives of people, enhance enrolment and retention of girls in school, enhance women's dignity and ability to lead, reduce morbidity and mortality, reduce pre and post-natal risks and prevent vector and water borne diseases. Health, nutrition and food production, are dependent on availability of water in adequate quantities and good quality launched the National Water Policy of Ghana which is intended to provide a framework for the sustainable development of Ghana's water resources. It is targeted at all water users, water managers and practitioners, investors, decision-makers and policy

makers within the central Governmental and decentralised (district assemblies) structures, non-Governmental organisations and international agencies. The policy also recognises the various cross-sectoral issues related to water-use and the links to other relevant sectoral policies such as those on sanitation, agriculture, transport, energy et cetera. (Ghana Water Policy, 2007 P 1)

- The Government of Ghana in 1994 again launched the National Community Water and Sanitation Programme for accelerated, equitable and sustainable delivery of potable water and sanitation facilities to rural communities and small towns. The Programme focuses on decentralisation of services under District Assemblies. It also operates under the Demand Responsive Approach where service is provided in response to demand for such services that communities are willing to pay for. A basic understanding of the DRA is that a stronger sense of ownership will be displayed when communities apply for services themselves instead of just supplying them without their involvement and resource commitment. Another key component is that the communities are in charge of the operation and maintenance to sustain the project.

Many community water and sanitation service providers especially NGOs adopt various sustainability approaches through the formation and training of community based institutions including WATSAN to manage facilities (Water Aid, 2005)

- The Statutory and Traditional Authorities: Like all other communities in Ghana, Ga West Municipal Assembly has their traditional rulers –Queen mothers, Chiefs and the Community Elders in Onyansana and Onyansana Zongo as the leaders and custodians of the land and all other communal properties including WATSAN facilities managed by WATSANC. There are also the Unit Committees as decentralized units of the District Assembly concept. . (Water Aid, 2005)
- The WATSAN Committee: Though the water facilities belong to the queen mothers, chiefs and their people, and they would have been in charge of their management, they rather elected 7 members of the communities as WATSANC members at Onyansanya and Onyansanya Zongo to manage them on their behalf. At least 40 % of the elected WATSANCs must be women to be in charge of the operation and maintenance of the facilities. They had to ensure that the pumps were properly handled, the sites were clean, broken parts were fixed, and reports were made to the Municipal Assembly in case a particular technical problem was beyond their control. The committee also, with the assistance of the municipal Assembly and drafted some byelaws to regulate activities at the well site. They derived their

authority from the community, the Police and the Municipal Assembly (even though nationally, WATSAN Committees have no legal backing).

- The WATSAN Committee received training in facility management and maintenance, community animation and bookkeeping. They report to the chiefs and the community members at community gathering monthly and accounted to the community every three months of water proceeds or money generated from water tariffs.
- The major problem associated with community meetings was the low participation of women because of their perception of decision making to be the preserve of men whilst they play the role of water collectors and water facility cleaners .Women engagement in economic activities so as earn an income that will be used to cater for their homes also is one of the reasons of being absentees. (Water Aid, 2005)

INTRODUCTION

In most societies, women have primary responsibility for management of household water supply, sanitation and health. Water is necessary not only for drinking, but also for food production and preparation, care of domestic animals, personal hygiene, care of the sick, cleaning, washing and waste disposal. Owing to women dependence on water resources, they have accumulated considerable knowledge about water resources, including location, quality and storage methods. However, efforts geared towards improving the management of the world's finite water resources and extending access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, often overlook the central role of women in water management (Water for Life, 2005-2015)

Men and women in rural developing communities traditionally play different roles in water supply and management. While men have traditionally been responsible for making decisions and have dominated the processes which affect the management of water supply , women play a major role in collecting, managing and maintaining communal water supply, regulating and controlling its social use and safe maintenance IRC , 2005 (Cited in Boateng, Brown and Tenkorang, 2013) . Women indeed have the best information, knowledge and skills on the availability, quality, reliability and purity in their community and Ga West Municipal Assembly (**project selected area**) in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana is not in an exception to this assertion. It was the realization of the above that led to statutory provision that made it mandatory for women to occupy 40% of the positions in WATSANC so as to enable them to be active participants in decision making and management of new WATSAN facilities installed in 2010 in the three communities where the study was carried out.

The promotion of community member's involvement including women through the concept of community management of WATSAN facilities places managerial responsibilities on WATSANC. Members of WATSANC require appropriate knowledge and skills to be able to discharge these responsibilities effectively.

To give legal backing to WATSANC members in their communities, they required to be selected by community members to represent and manage their WASH needs for them. The activities of WATSANC fall under community ownership and management as being promoted by NCWSP. It is also part of Ghana's deliberate attempt to decentralize WASH Sector in order to play facilitating role instead of being main service provider.

The WATSANC functions and links with stakeholders within Ga West Municipal Assembly as shown in table 1 below:

Table 1 : WATSANC functions and link with its stakeholders

UNITS	LINKS
COMMUN ITY	They elect new members or agree to form new WATSANC from the existing one. WATSANC holds regular meetings with the community and provides information concerning the facilities. WATSANCs collect water tariffs or water fees, They also conduct hygiene education.
UNIT COMMITTEE	WATSANCs cooperate with Unit committee members. Some also doubles as Unit Committee members.
SERVICE / GOOD PROVIDERS	WATSANCs buy spare parts and sanitary wares from them. They also sign service agreement with area mechanics service providers for the maintenance of the WATSAN facilities
LATERINE ARTISAN	WATSANCs coordinate the latrines construction programme with latrine (s) artisan.
BANK (S)	WATSANCs open and operate bank account on behalf the community. The money in the bank account is used to pay for capital cost of the facility, goods and services procure, and also foot the bill of maintenance cost of the WATSAN facilities
PARTNER ORGANISATION (PO)	POs like AAC supports and trains the WATSANCs, POs also supports them in preparation of FMP, O & M and M& E. They also carry extension services in the communities
MWST	MWST provides technical advice to the WATSAN. They also supervise the election of WATSANC and WASH facilities in the community

WATSANC members are normally selected by the community members from community women and professional groups, unit, health and other development committees. The composition is normally seven and could be more. The positions to be occupied are shown below:

- Chairman
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Caretaker (2)

- Hygiene Educator (2)

The composition and functions of WATSANC are also shown in table 2 below:

TABLE 2 SHOWING COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONS OF WATSANC MEMBERS

Chairman	S/he presides over meetings and directs activities at such meetings
Secretary	S/he takes and reads minutes at meetings
Treasurer	Responsible for accounts of the WATSANC
Caretakers (2)	Responsible of preventive and routine maintenance
Hygiene Educators (2)	Facilitators of hygiene education in the community

Adapted from WATSAN Handbook

Even though women occupy positions of authority in WATSANC, in practice, women's participation and decision-making appear not to be equal initially to male authority in the design, planning, implementation and management of water supply projects in the communities used for this study. However, it's being realised how crucial their involvement in the management of water and sanitation work is needed, meanwhile the societal demands or cultural norms made them to be seen as deviants whenever they attempt to assume full responsibility as men. It was the response of this societal gender inequality that led CWSA and Ga West MWST contracted AAC as one of the POs to provide equal training opportunities to both women and men; even though women were the main focus of the program, their attendance was very low as a result of their engagement in other economic activities. Other reasons being socially constructed norms and beliefs that have shaped the thinking of some women themselves to accept the patterns of their roles as collection of water and therefore did not appreciate to get involved in decision making. This assertion was made by African Advancement Campaign (AAC) team and the researcher who was the lead consultant when WATSAN needs assessment was conducted on the three selected research communities.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Currently, women participation in WATSANC is expected to be 40% according to WATSANC or Water Boards policy in Ghana but this is mostly not adhered to in WATSANC or Water Board in most of the communities whereas their involvement is associated with more effective water management and participation in regular meetings, revenue collection, rendering of hygiene services around (WATSAN) facilities and improved facility management. The study will investigate these earlier findings to ascertain their validity in order to contribute to advocacy efforts to gender balance in WATSAN service delivery and management in Ghana and Ga West Municipal Assembly in particular.

Potable water supply in the urban/peri-urban areas of the Municipality has been a major challenge to the Assembly, especially since the Assembly has no direct control over urban

water supply. In the rural areas and small towns however, the Municipal Assembly is responsible for water supply. The Municipal Water and Sanitation Team (MWST) has been established and trained by the Community Water and Sanitation Agency to facilitate the provision of potable water. The Team represents the Assembly in its water and sanitation activities to achieve favorable health outcomes, economic growth and sustained poverty reduction. About 21.85% of the rural population has access to potable water either from a borehole, stand-pipe or a hand dug well. The focus of the Assembly with regards to rural water supply over the plan period is to maintain and expand the current facilities to cover the remaining 76.15% of the rural population. This will mean ensuring that boreholes and stand pipes serve not more than 300 persons and 600 persons respectively. Therefore, access to good drinking water is a major problem in most communities, particularly during the dry season where most of the community members, especially women, have to trek long distances in search of water that may not necessarily be safe for consumption. Among the consequences are the stresses on women's time and energy, risk of injuries, prevalence of water-related diseases and inadequacy of water for improved livelihoods. To accelerate the coverage of the rural communities and small towns with good drinking water and sanitation facilities, the government of Ghana, based on the global consensus on the principles guiding the provision of community water supply, has initiated the implementation of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (RWSP) by the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) to provide potable water supply in rural areas. This project which is demand driven and demand responsive involve consultation with, and participation by the local community not only in the design and implementation, but also in the monitoring process.

Some of the problems that need to be solved and the challenges to manage and ensure the achievement of the above stated project include:

- Enlisting the full participation of women at all levels of the programme including decision making
- Improving the weak management and financial capacity of the Water and Sanitation Committees
- Increasing and sustaining the participation of communities, especially with capital cost contribution
- Sustainable supply chain for goods and services for the operation and maintenance of water facilities

The above challenges were used as terms of reference for our AAC (Partner Organisation (PO) to Ga West Municipal Assembly) WATSANC training assigned to us by Ga West Municipal Assembly and CWSA in ten communities; out of which we chose three study areas –Ayawaso, Onyansana and Onyansana Zongo because of geographical proximity.

The basic principle underlying the above RWSP and WATSAN projects is that water is both an economic and social good, and therefore should be managed at the community level so well that, all community members feel part of the planning process and not alienated. This

principle enables both men and women including boys and girl to be involved in WATSAN decision making in their communities and schools.

The project requires the formation of a local gender-balanced Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) committees to provide local institutional support for its implementation and promote community ownership. It thus, outlines specific guidelines requiring that at least 40% of the available leadership positions in the WATSAN committees must be allocated to women. This specified quota represents a clear and significant departure from earlier projects, where communities were only appealed to and sensitised on the need to include more women in their local committees and then left to decide how they would do it and how far they wanted to reach out to women and elect them as leaders. Since non-compliance with the guidelines invariably meant exclusion from any benefits, the guidelines were largely adhered to. While these initiatives are laudable, largely built on demand responsive approach (DRA), the local gender-balanced WATSAN committees could be questioned. This is because in some communities, very few women are given the role of secretary or treasurer; none is WATSAN chairperson, which does not always result in meaningful involvement of women in decision-making process.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions will be addressed by the study.

- What role do women play in selecting the site, installation and management of WATSAN facilities?
- What are the gender roles of women and men regarding the use and management of WATSAN facilities?
- What changes (positive or negative) have affected these roles in the past /are currently undergone?
- What are the incentives/barriers to the inclusion of women in WATSANC?
- How is a gender perspective integrated in Ghanaian WATSAN management
- How could women participation be improved and enforced in national WATSAN management

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study therefore examines the following issues that will be raised in the literature review:

1. Ascertain involvement of women in demand driven approach to selection, installation and management of WATSAN facilities.
2. Appreciate different roles women and men play in WATSANCs in order to be active in decision making and management in all stages of WATSAN facilities
3. Study socioeconomic-religious- cultural limiting issues and challenges in order to develop an understanding for the complexity of , and obstacles to female participation in WATSAN management
4. Make recommendations to improve women participation in WATSANC management

LITERATURE REVIEW

Key literature references and knowledge gaps:

- Policy makers should ensure that the overall basic service delivery is gender-sensitive (**UNDP, 2009**) but this is not so with WTASN service delivery in Ghana. The above recommendation for further research will be addressed by this research in encouraging women involvement in selection, installation, maintenance and management of WATSAN / WATSANC in Ghana.
- Ghanaian women carry valuable knowledge and experience in water supply management but their participation is often disregarded or underutilised in developing WATSAN measures and policies (**Svahn, K., 2011. p.9**). This research will make recommendation to address gaps of obstacles to women participation thereby informing policy formulation.
- Mainly women who are most visible as primary users of e.g. water, however, where gender is associated with and limited to the social, linkages with power and their political rights are ignored (**Analytical framework, SDC**) The research will address such gaps or barriers to women inclusion in critical roles in WATSAN rights.
- The Ghana Water Policy also recognizes the various cross-sectoral issues related to water-use and the links to other relevant sectoral policies but did not capture women participation in demand driven approaches to selection, installation and management in WATSAN facilities and the research will address that gap (**Ghana Water Policy, 2007. p 1**).
- Women engagement in economic activities so as to earn an income that will be used to cater for their homes led them being regular absentees in WATSANC meeting (**Water Aid, 2005**). This research will therefore address the gap of gender perspective integration in Ghanaian WATSAN and WATSANC Management
- The principal environmental management tasks such as cleaning home and toilets are normally performed by women and yet men make decision on behalf of women when it comes to WATSAN issues mostly in rural communities of Ghana (**Songsore and McGranahan, 1998**). Therefore the research will address gender roles of women and men regarding the use, maintenance and management of WATSAN facilities.

DATA COLLECTION OVERVIEW

The researcher used qualitative approach by eliciting information from 50 respondents through survey, focus group discussion, interview and case studies approach that would be used to elicit information from the above 50 respondents within the field of provision and

management of WATSAN and female involvement in decision making of WATSANC in Ga West Municipal Assembly of Ghana.

First, constructs and sub constructs were used for identification and analyses of the research questions through review of secondary information and conceptual framework was developed for the study. Second, current state of WATSAN facilities in the various chosen communities and M & E actions with sustainability on economic, environmental and social performance was also developed through survey instrument. Data was collected through focus group discussion instrument to triangulate and gain collective views of women involvement in WATSANC in the communities and the Municipal Assemblies (MA). The FGD centered mainly on the roles that men and women played in the provision and management of WASH and the role WATSAN committee members also played in the managing of water facilities and services. FGD was organised with sole purpose of identifying community members, policymakers and implementers, researchers and planners in order to ascertain issues, challenges with the view of deriving opportunities for implementing community water schemes. Also to triangulate and gain collective views of women involvement in WATSANC in a Municipal Assemblies (MA)

Third, case studies were undertaken to derive strategies, resources and competences for WATSANC within the communities and validate the overall findings of the research questions.

The researcher found it necessary to sample the opinion of WATSANCs, municipal water and sanitation team (MWST) members, and community member who participated in the water project as key informant. The views of the above stakeholders of WATSANC were relevant because, they are directly involved in the formation and management of WATSANC at the municipal and the community level. Again, their choice helped in explaining and complementing further information on women's level of involvement in decision-making and management issues in the three communities (Opare, 2005).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS IN GA WEST MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY, ONYANSANA, ONYANSANA ZONGO AND AYAWASO

Presentation of the Three (3) Communities in Ga West Municipal Assembly

The three study communities are located within Amansaman Local Council (as shown in fig. 1). About 99% of the farmers are small scale holders and fisher folks and productivity in the three communities is rather low due to several factors. These include high illiteracy rate, poor soil conservation and improvement management skills, low capital, and high cost of inputs. High incidence of pests and diseases, high post losses (25-30%) and these led to high rate of poverty in the three communities. The result is migration of the youths to urban centres such as Amansaman, Nsawam, and Pokuase among others.

Research Results and Analysis of Findings in the three Communities.

The results showed that Economic Usage of Time, Overburdens' of WATSANC and Other Community Activities on Women, Gender and Division of Labour in the Household Environmental Management, Gender and Division of Labour in the Household Environmental Management, Dignity and Enhanced Status of WATSANCs as a Result WATSANC Training, Decision Making at WATSANC Meetings and Community Gatherings, Barriers to Women Involvement in Decision Making and Barriers to Women Involvement in Decision Making in the three communities.

Recognition of women role in WATSANC

Both men and women in their communities considered women as main stakeholders of water and therefore, should be given prominent roles and responsibilities in the WATSANCs since they collect and have good knowledge of safe water for their households

Economic Usage of Time

The male WATSANC interviewed confirmed that they (men) do not have time for water collection and safety therefore, women involvement is very important but WATSANC chairman from Ayawaso thought differently by saying ***that I spent average of four (4) hours daily on WATSANC activities including organisation of WATSANC emergency meetings, meetings with the community and households, community members and school environmental team members on environmental cleanliness and keeping of our community open defecation free (ODF) in order to eradicate possible breaking out of epidemic such as cholera, diarrhea among others. My wife supports me to do all these because she wants the community to develop.***

Overburdens' of WATSANC and Other Community Activities on Women

On the contrary, the male community key informant viewed women role in the WATSANC as a way of overburdening them since they are already saddled with heavy household activities. This claimed was supported by one of the MA female respondent that ***the women involvement is very efficient in the beginning of water projects, with high representation of women. However, as time goes, participation declines after the first year of the programs, subsequent years you would find women involvement very low in some of the communities.*** She believes that one reason may be that the increased participation constitutes such a major burden for the women so that they gradually give up their participation. There is thus a need to thoroughly monitor and evaluate programs to ensure continued female participation. She again felt that measures must be developed as a means to deal with the additional work burden that women's participation often involves. She emphasises the need to systematically study every community to analyse and consequently understand gender issues adequately. She again alleged that we must ensure that as we include female or male participation, we do not burden one group at the expense of the other, and this requires that you do a much more detailed analysis of the community.

Gender and Division of Labour in the Household Environmental Management

All female WATSANC respondents asserted that prior to inception of WATSANC in their communities; they (women) ***viewed women main responsibility as collection of water***

which stems from their reproductive role and decision making as preserved for men. But this has changed as a result of awareness creation and sensitisation activities that went on in WATSANC and the women are now actively involved in decision making even more than men in the WATSANC and men are also complementing their efforts by taking up their socially constructed roles. Responds from WATSANC chairman from Ayawaso supported this view by alleging that ***my one and half (1 ½) hours is being spent on supervising my children homework, household chores such as helping my wife to wash our children cloth-ens, bowls and bathing my children. My wife also reciprocates these gestures in helping me and WATSANC caretaker in collecting water tariffs from the borehole that is close to our house.*** We earned one and third of all the proceeds she collects daily. This applies to the two caretakers. I encouraged WATSANC members at our meetings to do the same.

Again, all WATSANC members claimed that ***women are very little or not at all associated with any decision making role in the water management initially but , the empowerment or the training programmes changed this situation and women are fully involved now in decision making in the three communities.*** The women also commonly have the responsibility for managing the water site in terms of cleanliness as the “The women take turns by family to clean it up. WATSAN chairman at Ayawaso supported the above assertion that he organises and directs meetings, communal labour, clean up campaigns in the community (street, houses, and water facilities environment). This is again supported by the treasure / caretaker of Ayawaso that she takes care of collection of water tariffs, organizes and supervises community women to clean borehole environment with the help of WATSANC men. Women also regularly collate views of community women and send it to WATSANC for discussion; some of those views are: provision of suitable public toilet, clearing of rubbish dump and others to WATSANC meeting, the men sometimes support it but when there is disagreement we vote. We win most of the time since our numbers outweigh them. Now that we are less, we make sure we talk to WATSANC men wives first in their homes before sending the issues o WATSANC meeting; we win most of the time. The criteria are majority carry the vote. This gives us an urge over WATSANC men in decision making.

All the female respondents at Onyansana and Zongo dilated on their tasks performed ***as taking of minutes at WATSANC meeting as secretary, collection of water tariffs- caretaker, and sending it to the bank as treasure, taking good care of the borehole as hygiene specialist and liaising with the municipal assembly officers for the repairs of the broken borehole.*** They also confirmed being aware of women WATSANC chairpersons which they also aspire for. Ayawaso WATSANC respondent endorsed the above by stating that I discussed acquisition of land for public toilet first with my husband (chief of our community) before we (WATSANC members) met him and his elders with the petition. I was also among the WASANC delegation that sent the petition to the municipal assembly for assistance to construct the public toilet for us and the assembly sent engineers to come and survey the

land allocated to us. These request for public toilet originated from us. The male WATSANC respondent who is a Hygiene Specialist in the WATSANC also testified about ***educating WATSANCs and community members of domestic and community hygiene behaviours including tidying out around of the borehole by his colleagues and himself***. He further said that men also are now helping out with the water collection tasks in the community due to consistent education by the water NGOs to complement the efforts of their wives. In effect, men and women are engaged in both fetching water at home and cleaning of pump site together as part of their productive, reproductive and community role. Ayawaso WATSANC chairman added his views to the above that ***my one and half (1 ½) hours is being spent on supervising my children homework, household chores such as helping my wife to wash her and children clothes, bowls and bathing my children. My wife also reciprocates these gestures in helping me and WATSANC caretaker in collecting water tariffs from the borehole that is close to our house***. We earn one and third of all the proceeds she collects daily. This applies to the two caretakers. I also encouraged WATSANC members at our meetings to do same. Especially, the women negotiate with their spouses on household chores. I also speak to their spouses who are not WATSANC members to do likewise

Dignity and Enhanced Status of WATSANCs as a Result WATSANC Training

The female respondents further reiterated that ***they are able to talk and negotiate on water and other domestic and communal issues at WATSANC meetings and communal gatherings***. WATSANC woman respondent from Ayawaso also reiterated that ***we (both WATSANC men and women) all take decision together and arrived at decision. When we don't arrive at decision, we vote***. At our last meeting which took place last week, we took decision on replacement of our two colleagues who had travelled and had not returned almost a year now. A resolution was passed for their replacement. We also arrived at conclusion of training one of us (WATSANC women) as borehole repairer because the one who was carrying out the routine maintenance was one of us who had travelled. This became necessary because we spent almost 60% of our revenue generated from water sales to bring a mechanic from Nsawam which is about 10 km away from here to undertake the routine and major maintenance for us. ***Secondly, we took decision on training one of us to take up the repairs of borehole job***. This will enable the one trained to gain additional income for herself and the WATSANC. We also discussed possible improvement of water quality in one of our boreholes. This became necessary because we make less sales from the boreholes that have poor water quality.

Concerning changes in socio-economic status, WATSANC woman respondent from Onyansana Zongo who doubles as WATSANC and community key informant and currently municipal unit committee member claimed that ***she is now vying for assembly women position so as to represent her entire local area in the municipal assembly. According to her, she decided to move higher because the community member's perception had changed about her since she became WATSANC community member. Initially, she had***

been accused of not having any work to do that's why she's carrying herself around as WATSANC member but now both men and women including the chief reports faults developed in the borehole to her.

Ayawaso WATSANC respondent (chairman) claimed that ***the chiefs of the community have accepted me as one of them and involved me in almost all matters even though I am not indigens. This earned me a lot of verbal and material support from the chief and others ever since I took up the voluntary work. Again, my decision and negotiation skills are enhanced because of the WATSANC trainings we were offered periodically and this made me to involve my wife, children and church members in taken decision together. Now, I do fundraising, organize meetings and speak with confidence, keep records of my business, make a lot of new friends at workshops which some of them became my customers and business partners and above improve my interpersonal skills that made me more approachable than the former.*** The woman respondent from the same community supported this claim by stating that I became an enemy to those who don't want to pay for the water they fetch. This is making me to stop the WATSANC as caretaker and vendor. Had it not being the encouragement from my husband, WATSANC members including the chairman and other responsible community members I would've stopped long time even though I gained a lot from WATSANC training programmes I have attended. Another personal benefit is that my marketing, record keeping, decision and negotiation skills are enhanced". Now, I negotiate well with my husband, organize meetings and speak with confidence, keep records of my business, make a lot of new friends at workshops which some of them became my customers and business partners. Above all, I earned 1/3 from all the water tariffs I generated for WATSANC. I invest this money in my business and also use part in taken care of my family.

In sum, both Thomas Asiamah and Fatimata Lartey from Ayaaso WATSANC emphasized intra-conjugal negotiation in their trajectories as WATSANC members. Thomas Asiamah helps his wife with domestic chores and in exchange he gets her help and support for WATSANC. Fatimata Lartey also gets support from her husband in the form of encouragement and paving the way of tabling and accepting WATSANC propositions at the palace and community gatherings.

Decision Making at WATSANC Meetings and Community Gatherings

Further probes to find out what accounted for these changes revealed that municipal assemblies offering training to WATSANC females separately, NGOs and WATSANC male offering sensitisation to WATSANC females accounted for that. Ayawaso respondents also agreed that ***we are involved in all decision making that take place in WATSANC, ask questions and have equal vote with men, make presentations at meetings at WATSANC, community and household levels, keep proceeds from tariffs and send it to the bank.*** We never had vote of no confidence in any of the WATSANC members. We all do community and household hygiene education together. Even the chairman and the wife sometimes help me to collect water tariffs. We all have the same voting rights, I beat gong gong sometimes to summons the community to meeting after securing permission from my chairman to organise community meeting. On the other hand, women participation in decision making is

not 100%, in that, there is little female governmental representation and women are furthermore often excluded at community and household levels. All WATSANC respondents confirmed that ***they were elected by the community members at community durbar into WATSANC positions. The exercise was supervised by municipal environmental officers and NGOs.*** Two of the WATSANC female excluding the one that doubles as unit committee member claimed they were unwilling to accept the responsibility because of their low level of education and status in the community but their perceptions had changed as a result of training and encouragement s from both their trainers and male WATSANCs. In that women's knowledge acquired has engender more sustainable and efficient approaches to water management in the two communities.

Barriers to Women Involvement in Decision Making

All the respondents from Onyansana and Zongo including municipal officers stated that ***the WATSANC needs financial assistant in the form of micro credit / finance to better their conditions. They also requested for mechanization of boreholes to draw water in their homes so as to alleviate the plights of women and girls walking a distance to fetch water from the borehole. The community that had its borehole broken down requested for training of WATSANC women as area mechanics (preserve for men) so that they can quickly do repairs when there is breakdown of borehole and also earn additional income to their farming and trading activities.*** Ayawaso WATSANC respondents also stated that they also need dustbin for the community and household members to keep refuse, public toilet and health post. We need health post urgently in that we (WATSANC) are approached at midnight when community members and pregnant women and community are in critical conditions. This is so because of our availability and always in touch with them even though health post is out of our jurisdiction. WATSANC women need micro credit in order to enhance their *trading activities so as to compensate the time they spend on WATSANC activities.*

All the male WATSANC and Municipal Water and Sanitation Team respondents answered in affirmative that ***those women with low level of education and high rate of illiteracy that manifest in lack of confidence in the women themselves at the initial phases of the project were identified as main obstacles to women involvement.*** Women husbands also prevent them to participate initially for the few of assuming their roles. On the other hand, women also hinder themselves thinking that it is the role of men to perform such roles in their communities but this erroneous impression had reduced drastically. ***Lack of incentives in the form of micro credit to complement women's efforts so as to cater for time spent on WATSANC activities is very important.*** This is so because time allocation for meetings constitutes one of the key obstacles to women equal participation due to their double workload as in relation to WATSANC activities and household activities. All the respondents called for mechanization of boreholes so as alleviate their plights for walking a long distance before fetching water. Ayawaso respondent stated that ***uncompromising attitudes from some households to pay for their tariffs when they fetch water from the boreholes is a major challenge. Replacement of women who had left the communities and WATSANC***

had increased few women left participation. Increasing of commission on water proceeds to motivate them.

7.2.5 Summary of Key Findings

Among the findings were that both men and women in their communities considered women as main stakeholders of water management and therefore should be given prominent roles and responsibilities in the WATSANC since they collect and have good knowledge of safe water for their households.

Second, all female WATSANC respondents asserted that prior to inception of WATSANC in their communities, they viewed women main responsibility as collection of water which stems from their reproductive role and sees decision making as preserved for men. But this has changed as a result of awareness creation and sensitisation activities that went on in WATSANC and the women are now actively involved in decision making even more than men in the WATSANC. Currently, the men are also complementing their efforts by taking up their socially constructed roles in their households.

Third, the female respondents further reiterated that they are able to talk and negotiate on water issues and other domestic and communal issues at WATSANC meetings and communal gatherings.

Fourth, all WATSANC respondents confirmed that they were elected by the community members at community durbar into WATSANC *positions*.

Fifth, the respondents also stated that lack of incentives in the form of micro credit to complement women's efforts for the time spent on WATSANC activities is very important. This is so because time allocation for meetings constitutes one of the key obstacles to women equal participation due to their double workload in relation to WATSANC activities and household chores.

Sixth, low level of education and high illiteracy is also identified by most of the respondents as another barrier to women equal involvement in decision making in WATSANC.

8.0 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY AND FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS

Based on findings from the three communities, it was realised that the under mentioned questions addressed by the MWSTs, WATSANCs and Community Informant need further investigation by anybody who wants to research into the topic.

- To what extent are women reproductive, productive and community roles having effects on their WATSANC activities?
- What are views of male WATSANCs in relations to female WATSANCs roles their playing in management and decision making?
- What incentives / barriers are female WATSANCs encountering in playing their roles?
- What kind of negotiation skills does women use when their discussing water, domestic and communal issues at WATSANC meetings and communal gatherings?
- What are practices and management of natural resources management such as land and others are concerned as compared to men? (Water Aid, 2009)
- What time / How much time / often / long do both women and men spend on WATSANC activities? (a day, weekly, monthly and annually)

- What level of education and empowerment do women need in order to make WATSANC

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

9.1 Recommendation

Policy Makers, Ga West Municipal Assembly Authorities and other WATSAN Stakeholders should involve women especially WATSANC women in National Water Policy, Small Town / Community Policy and Environmental Sanitation Policy Process (identification, formulation, adoption, implementation and evaluation) so that the women could factor their interests and needs into WATSANC project especially when it comes to time for WATSANC meetings and activities conflicting with women economic and household activities. Since time is not expandable, absence of that will rather worsen their economic plights and thereby, conflicting the overall goal of WATSAN project which is poverty reduction.

9.2 Conclusion

Conclusion was made that lack of awareness on the part of WATSANC members led them not to appreciate the linkage between WATSAN project and Agriculture, Trade and Industry. That is, the inability of WATSANC women to know that the abundant water storage in the boreholes and wastes from garbage could be used for watering and fertilising their okros and tomatoes farms situated around the boreholes dying because of insufficient water and manure in the soil. If these were to be done well, women would have generated enough income from their harvest to feed their family and invest the surplus in their friends businesses. This may serve as a form of panacea of micro credit to pay for the time spent on WATSANC by women that all the interviewees were asking for.

It was also realised that stakeholders of WATSAN Projects lack understanding of gender issues. This contributed largely to their inability to integrate gender in WATSAN. There is therefore, the need to tailor programs to raise gender sensitivity.

More capacity initiatives should be developed to empower women to undertake repairs of boreholes, participate and express their opinion freely at community gatherings and WATSANC meetings.

Finally, the study showed that educated women tend to participate in decision making process at both WATSANC and community gatherings more than uneducated ones therefore, improving the education of WATSANCs women will translates into success of entire WATSANC Project.

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