Phase II Research in Tanzania

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Women’s sanitation vulnerabilities in southern Tanzania.

Background

Inadequate access to water and sanitation services disproportionately affects women and girls. It has been associated with reduced quality of life, adverse pregnancy outcomes and reduced educational attainment (Padhi et al, 2015; Dreibelbis et al, 2013; Freeman et al, 2012). Lack of access to sanitation infrastructure can further compromise a woman’s safety and privacy (Lenon, 2011; Massey 2011). These unmet needs have been shown in India to result in acute and chronic sanitation-related stress (SRPS) (SHARE & WSSCC, 2015).

However, to date the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) needs of women and girls in Sub-Saharan Africa and the impact on psychosocial stress has received limited attention. In the context of this and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.2 that proposes eliminating open defecation by 2030 in a way that “pay[s] special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations” (UN, 2015), a greater understanding is needed on this issue.
Aim and objectives

The research will apply the evolving understanding of gendered impacts of inadequate water and sanitation services on women and girls in urban and rural Tanzania. Using mixed methods, it will:

- Examine the gender-specific water and sanitation needs of women and girls though specific life stages.
- Explore the impact of inadequate and/or constrained access to water and sanitation on psychosocial stress, violence, education, and drudgery.
- Adapt and apply measures of sanitation-related distress and water insecurity among a sample of women and assess relationships with international standard measures of psychosocial distress and quality of life.

Project overview

Qualitative phase

The study will begin with a qualitative phase, collecting and analysing data in an iterative process. Data will be gathered through in-depth interviews with questions on household stress, sanitation practices and challenges, and water security. Interviews will be conducted with 60 women and girls, from urban and rural locations. Respondents will be identified across life stages to account for women’s changing sanitation needs. Purposive sampling, whereby half the participants will have “good” water and sanitation services and half “bad”, will help elucidate the impact of WASH access on stress and vulnerability.

From the qualitative data a conceptual model of SRPS and sanitation vulnerabilities in the local context will be developed. The model will indicate determinants of SRPS among the research population and be compared with existing theoretical models (Sahoo et al, 2015). This work will be used to inform and adapt measurement scales for SRPS that will be validated during the quantitative phase.

Quantitative phase

A quantitative survey will collect data on individual and household demographics, socio-economic status and access to water and sanitation services. The survey will collect data from 500 women and girls aged 14 to 65, across urban and rural settings.

The primary outcome of interest during this phase is an adapted measurement of SRPS. This scale will be adapted from a preliminary scale developed in Odisha, India, that assesses women’s environmental, social and gender-based violence stressors and modified based on findings during the qualitative phase. Additional data will be collected using the Household Water Insecurity Assessment Scale, Perceived Stress Scale and the World Health Organization’s Wellbeing Index to inform the analysis and further validate the measured SRPS.
Relevance and uptake

The impact of inadequate access to water and sanitation on the psychosocial stress of women and girls is not well understood, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. This research will shed light on the SRPS experienced by women and girls in southern Tanzania. These findings will help to better understand the gendered WASH needs of women and girls, which can ultimately improve sanitation planning and implementation, and help us progress towards SDG 6.2.

Findings from the two phases of this study will be published in a peer-reviewed journal and as more accessible policy briefs which describe key implications for policy and practice.

Find out more

Listen to reflections on the SHARE phase 1 research looking at SRPS among women in a Delhi slum: http://bit.ly/india-vid

Sign up to the SHARE newsletter to keep up-to-date with this and other interesting projects: http://bit.ly/1GrEEi8

References


