
GENDER ASPECTS IN WATER RESOURCES ACCESS AND MANAGEMENT

STUDY OF REPRESENTATIVE HOUSEHOLDS IN KUVA RAYON OF FERGHANA OBLAST, REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

Summary

Based on initiative of Global Water Partnership for Central Asia and Caucasus (GWP CACENA) and Scientific Information Center of Interstate Coordination Water Commission (SIC ICWC), a survey of representative households in Kuva rayon of Fergana oblast was carried out.

Goal: Set out to different needs, roles, opportunities, benefits, and problems of women and men in water resources management and use at community level.

Implemented by: Kokand division of Business Women Association «Tadbirkor ayol».

Methodology: Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). It uses a variety of tools and approaches that aim to enable people to express and analyze the realities of their lives and conditions, to plan themselves what action to take, and to monitor and evaluate the results.

Location: Republic of Uzbekistan, Fergana oblast, Kuva rayon, Sultanobod, Salim, Moi, Urokbashi, Kakir-Turk, Dehkonobod villages.

Implementation time: August 2004

The main issues:

- (1) Different access to and control over resources and benefits (land tenure, water rights, benefits and outputs allocation, credits);
- (2) Different access to information, education/training and other social valued opportunities (education, extension services, trainings)
- (3) Gender limitation in public activities and decision making (for instance, WUA and Water Committee's activities)
- (4) Different scope of work (paid and unpaid; allocation).

SUMMARY

General information about rayon under study

Kuva rayon is located in south-east part of Fergana valley at 40km from oblast center. It has border with Ferghana, Tashlak, Boz and Marhamat rayon (Andizhan oblast) as well as with Osh oblast (Kyrgyzstan). Rayon has been established on September 29, 1926. Total area – 437 sq.km. Kuva city is administrative center (since 1939) having rich historical past.

Population growth rate is 1- 1,1% and amounts to 186,400. **62,58%** from total number are women. Women representative in governmental bodies is low (10-12%). In ethnic aspect, population consists of Uzbek and Kyrgyz (in frontier area).

Agriculture is mainly irrigated. More than a half of land is suitable for agricultural farming. Total sown area is 14746 th.ha (2004). Agriculture development is performed due to crop yield increase, irrigation network extension and reclamation measures. Cotton covers 65% of irrigated area in rotation with alfalfa, wheat and maize. Natural conditions are favorable for gardens and vineyards. Kuva pomegranates, figs, apricots and grapes are famous in Central Asia.

Economics

According to the survey the main source of households' income is private households and garden-orchard with regard to consumed product (36 %). Women occupied in agriculture have low income (5-6th.soums/month). Most important privilege is access to land, irrigation water, forage, firewood, etc. In particular, they can get yield after primary crop harvest. Presently, working women are occupied in low-paid activity (education, public health, culture). Respondents showed that women contribution to family budget amounts to 30-40 % of total sum. Considering men and women contribution to family income, it worth to note that almost all respondents do not consider women labor as contribution to family income though rural woman devotes to home work 36.6%.

Data about household expenditures witness that rural residents spent money mostly for food-staff (42%). At the same time in 74% of cases men make decisions on budget distribution.

Water use

The study revealed that there were many problems in water management. Water supply services are Услуги по водоснабжению предоставляются весьма неравномерно и нерегулярно. Only few villages can use water system regularly. Existing systems are in bad conditions due to poor financing and spare parts absence. Local communities can't timely repair these systems. Thus, efforts of state and communities are needed.

Concerning irrigation water, it can be proved that certain part of villages face water scarcity. Karkidon water reservoir supports agricultural needs during growing season but, simultaneously, causes land water logging in southern part of rayon due to groundwater table rise. Ground water table reaches 50cm from ground surface and causes land fertility decrease. According to beneficiaries from Kakir, Turk, Sultanabad, Dehkanabad villages, all fruit trees dried up due to shallow ground water. In Salim village intensive land water logging occurs. Alizhjon Tillaev, chairman of Navruz farm said that only 25% of land is not subject to erosion. Only third of drainage wells is in operation and they are also often disconnected.

Having high access to drinking water, big part of residents (23%) use water from open sources and drainage wells. According to sanitary inspection specialists, this water can't be used for drinking purposes but, according to Moi residents, they never checked its quality. According to hokimiat opinion, rayon residents suffer from lack of drinking water, especially in pre-mountain villages in south-east part of rayon.

Though almost all beneficiaries agreed with necessity to introduce water saving technologies, nobody knows what should be done for this. Residents have some information about water metering devices but it is unsatisfactory. .

Study in accordance with PRA methodology conduction helped to find out mahallya communities critical issues, which negatively impact rural women.

Determined issues were ranked according to their importance:

- Lack of drinking water
- Land salinization and water logging

- Irrigation water scarcity
- unemployment
- lack of bath houses
- roads are not asphalted and lighted
- irregular gas and electricity supply
- low salary and irregular payment
- morbidity growth (anemia, crow, infection illnesses)
- school bad heating
- houses destruction due to shallow groundwater
- lack of recreation for women, youth and children
- lack of books in libraries.

Thus, water use and potable water supply problems are placed as high priority by all respondents.

In discussion of possible solutions residents (mostly women) firmly believe that cooperation with shirkat, governmental structures and donors is necessary. They expressed idea about association establishing, which can unit efforts of governmental structures, local power, dehkan and private farms and communities in water resources management. At the same time it is important that most respondents have doubts as to external assistance and rely on themselves.

It was revealed that in Kuva rayon water users groups (WUGs) have not yet established. There are no leaders having experience in people mobilization, no action plans. It was evident that residents want to solve problems themselves and women are more active. Women leadership potential presently is not used.

General conclusion is that rural women issues including access to water, land, financial resources and outputs, education and culture are critical and near three-fourth women have limitations in their possibilities realization. Study results show that social policy concerning rural women should be revised and gender inequalities should be eliminated.

For better understanding gender aspects set of measures is needed. It is expedient:

- Carry out set of measures (training) in water use among target women groups. Gender problems, water saving methods and water management skills should be included in training program.
- Facilitate establishing water users' groups with trained women as their leaders.
- Carry out set of actions directed at rural WUG establishing, water saving technologies introduction, water metering, etc. Though mass-media organize presentations of "Global Water Partnership of CAR and Caucasus" and water festivities in mahallyas.
- Begin activity on specific initiatives in water objects design and construction in most water scarce settlements of rayon and their presentation to potential donors.
- Support initiatives facilitating water sources protection from pollution and sanitary state improvement. Most prospective is activity among youth and pupils.
- Organize workshops on experience sharing in water use with participation of water specialists, region representatives where WUG is already established and successfully function.