



Session 5 «Women's role in water resources management and use»
Central Asian International Scientific-Practical Conference
«Water Partnership in Central Asia», Almaty, 26-28 May 2004

Women have primary roles in the collection, transport, use, and management of water and the promotion of sanitary practices, and yet are hardly involved in decision making in the sector.

Asian Development Bank
ADB Gender Checklist: Water Supply and Sanitation

GENDER AND WATER IN CENTRAL ASIA

In developing the full and effective participation of women at all levels of decision-making, consideration has to be given to the way different societies assign particular social, economic and cultural roles to men and women. There is a need to ensure that the water sector as a whole is gender aware, a process which should begin by the implementation of training programmes for water professional and community or grass root mobilizers.

Global Water Partnership
Integrated Water Resources Management

What is gender?

Gender is a socially constructed definition of women and men. It is not the same as sex (biological characteristics of women and men) and it is not the same as women. Gender is determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in society and in public and private life. [Gender in practice. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation]

The Gender approach is distinct in that it focuses on women and men and not on women in isolation. It highlights:

- the differences between women's and men's interest even within the same household and how these interact and are expressed.
- the conventions and hierarchies which determine women's and men's position in the family, community and society at large, whereby women are usually dominated by men
- the differences among women and among men, based on age, wealth, ethnic background and other factors
- the way gender roles and relations change, often quite rapidly, as a result of social, economic and technological trends (Wijk and Francis, 1999)

Gender equity requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender equity does not mean that women and men become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances are equal.

Gender Analysis takes into account social and economical differences between women and men at each stage of policy development for the purpose of:

- Revealing potential different impact of policy, program and law on women and men;
- Ensuring equal results for women and men, boys and girls, in measures design and implementation. (CIDA)

Gender mainstreaming in relation to water is defined by the World Water Vision as follows:

“It (the gender approach) includes addressing both practical and gender needs such as improving women's conditions through the provision of water and sanitation closer to their houses as well as strategic gender needs: improving women's position in society by increasing her awareness of her situation and her capacity to take decisions and influence change. A gender approach also seeks to prevent further overburdening of women and stresses the importance of not automatically reinforcing and perpetuating traditional roles. This implies the needs to address men as well as women, since men are required to change their attitude and behaviour to support this”. (World Water Vision, 1999)

“Gender and Water in Central Asia” Initiative

“Women’s role in water resources management and use” session is organized by Asian Development Bank (ADB), Global Water Partnership Central Asia and Caucasus (GWP CACENA), Network Women Water Professionals (NetWwater, Sri Lanka) and Scientific Information Center Interstate Coordination Water Commission (SIC ICWC)

The main goal of this meeting is to highlight the variety and complexity of the problem, attain understanding of the relation between gender and water issues, discuss the opportunities for the implementation of gender and water program in the region and formulate recommendations for the arrangement of future activities on the matter.

Gender and Water in Central Asia Initiative was proposed by GWP CACENA and NetWwater, Sri Lanka to establish cooperation among various agencies and individuals on gender issues.

The objectives:

- Raise awareness and promote gender mainstreaming in the region
- Attain more knowledge and understanding of gender issues in water management
- Exchange experience and best practices on the matter, translate

theoretical concepts on gender into action

- Build profile for the need of gender sensitization and a platform for women’s voices within the governance structures of the region
- Lay the foundation of further cooperation leading to successful gender sensitive water management
- Create the network among concerned agencies and individuals to facilitate further cooperation both national and regional level

The value of this initiative is that it will be implement as:

- Open forum that will be aimed at multilateral cooperation and mutual coordination by different agencies and individuals on the basis of their specialization and experiences;
- Based on local stakeholders involvement;
- Intend to overcome interdisciplinary barriers since gender is a transversal concept;
- Will include analytical methods for the purpose of the attraction of decision maker’s attention at different levels;
- Will develop practical approaches to gender-water interrelation.

«The implementation of a gender approach within institutions and organizations and the establishment of formal and informal networks are crucial».

**International Conference on Freshwater.
Bonn. 2001**

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