



International Centre of Excellence in
Water Resources Management

Gender, Equity and Water Management Management Development Programme

7-8, November 2016

Report

TERI University in association with ICE WaRM, Australia organized a two day Management Development Programme on Gender, Equity and Water Management on 7-8 Nov 2016. The programme aimed at providing a theoretical grounding of issues around gender, water rights and equity, as well as equipping the participants with practical strategies to implement the goal



of mainstreaming gender in the water sector. The workshop mainly consisted of professionals from various governmental organizations such as Ministry of Water Resources and associated organizations, Delhi Jal Board and Non-Governmental Organizations. In the welcome address, Dr. Leena Srivastava, Vice Chancellor, TERI University, emphasized the need for gender sensitive water planning. Highlighting that there has been considerable international focus on issues of gender and water, Mr. Darryl Day, Managing Director, ICE WaRM, stressed on the need for more collaborations between the academia and government sector. In his keynote address, Mr. Ryan Thew, First Secretary, Australian High Commission, argued that incorporating a gender-dimension in government policies and infrastructure development is the key to being “good water managers”. Furthering the argument, Dr. Georgina Drew added that there is a need to move beyond mere tokenism to a holistic approach towards framing policies that includes cultural and religious factors as well.

The first session on understanding gender and water, was facilitated by Ms. Fawzia Tarannum (TERI University) and Dr. G. Mini (Fellow, TERI). Elaborating on the difference between 'sex' and 'gender', Dr. G. Mini, demonstrated that unlike the biological classification of 'sex'; 'gender' is a social construct situated in a particular time and space. She stressed the need to deconstruct the notions associated with gender and to understand how institutions and access to resources are gendered. The shift in development approach from 'women in development' to 'gender and development' was discussed with focus on power relations in management of water resources. The difference between equality and equity and that equality does not necessarily imply equity in distribution was explained with example. A group activity was conducted, where participants discussed case studies on gender relations and measuring the success of water supply interventions. The case studies brought out the need for looking beyond the conventional indicators (reduction in distance and time spent on fetching water) used for measuring success and focus on policy outcomes and not just policy outputs.

Ms. Rita Sengupta, (Trainer, Gender Equality) initiated the session on 'Mainstreaming gender in Water policy and planning', through distributing a set of thought provoking questions on gender. This was followed by a presentation by Dr. Renu Khosla, Director, CURE, who talked about the various projects undertaken by CURE in the field water management. She suggested three measures for furthering the goal of mainstreaming gender and adopting an inclusive approach to development - a) De-coupling the right to stay with the provisioning of services such as water b) Revisiting the way projects are designed and executed (re-engineering solutions) c) Using technology and apps for reaching out to the stakeholders. A film on the status of women professionals in water sector in South Asia was screened which was followed by deliberations from the participants.

The session on 'Institutions and Water Rights' was facilitated by Dr. Vishal Narain. Enunciating the linkages between institutions and access to resources, he highlighted the relevance of incorporating gender dimension in framing policies on water. He explained the subjective nature of equity which allowed the participants to realize the need for a gendered perspective and understand role of society and institutions in ensuring equity in water distribution. A case study on the Warabandi (fixed turn in water sharing) system in Haryana was discussed. It highlighted the need to be sensitive of local norms that govern how water is used and valued in different context. Dr. Georgina Drew, Assistant Professor, University of Adelaide, Australia presented a case study on Mountain Women, Dams and

Gendered Dimension. In her discussion she drew attention to the fact that even though women contribute significantly in social movements around natural resources, the leaders very often do not adequately represent the specifics of their development concerns, and this impacts the ability of policy-makers to respond to women's demands.

The programme was highly interactive and the participants contributed fairly and significantly towards the conduct of the sessions. They even drew out a plan regarding making their planning, policy, decision making and interventions more gender sensitive in their respective work environment. The programme to a great extent succeeded in making the participants better informed and motivated to make changes within their overall sphere of influence as well as to emerge as stronger advocates for gender equity at a personal level. In the final comments Mr. S K Sharma, Senior Joint Commissioner (PP), Ministry of Water Resources, RD &GR emphasized on the need for engaging with end-users and public participation in planning and execution of water projects. He also mentioned about the "missing link" between the planners and the grass-root level people which could be bridged through Government-Academia linkages.

Feedback & Suggestions

The participants appreciated the programme and the overall feedback was good. Some of the suggestions given by the participants have been enumerated below:

1. It helped in developing conceptual clarity on gender, equity and water rights. Lectures may include more definition of new terminologies. Do such programs in near future to enhance the knowledge. Organize workshops on various other issues on environment, water, conservation and etc.
2. A module on providing training to common water users, especially women for enhancing water use efficiency should be included
3. The duration of the programme could be increased to 3-5 days and should comprise field visit and interaction with communities. More case studies and videos should be covered and the time devoted to discussions should be increased.
4. Line Ministries dealing with water may be invited for participation. As water is a State subject, so senior officers from State Water Resources Departments may also be invited in such programs for bringing ground level changes. The program could also include talks from senior officers from the Ministry.
5. Course on Gender Equity and Water Management may be kept in curriculum of Water Resource Engineering at Graduation/Post graduation level.