EXPLORING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS (VAWG) IN RELATION TO THE USE AND ACCESS OF WASH IN BANKE AND SURKHET OF NEPAL.

RESEARCH BRIEF, APRIL 2022

Powerful Women, Healthy Societies.
ABSTRACT

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a pandemic affecting 1 in 3 women in their lifetime globally. Studies in Nepal show that more than one in five (22%) women aged 15–49 experience physical violence, with other forms of violence unaccounted for. Additionally, there is little research done at the intersections of water and sanitation hygiene (WASH) and VAWG. The idea that there is a link between VAWG and WASH is a relatively new concept and the issue has only recently gathered media attention. Using qualitative methodology, this report will delve into the decision-making process about access to and control over WASH resources and how this relates to violence and discrimination against all intersectional groups. It also examines the influence of gender norms in Nepal, Chhaupadi (ostracization to menstrual huts), and structural violence on the usage and accessibility of WASH facilities by women and girls. Some key findings from the study suggest that women are not included in the decision-making process because of existing gender norms, which in turn contributes to structural violence. Inadequate menstrual waste management facilities create unsafe environments for women who are forced to seek alternative ways of disposing used menstrual products. The report then provides programmatic recommendations for minimising VAWG in WASH.

Key Words: WASH, VAWG, GBV, Access, Exclusion, Gender Roles, Structural Violence.
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Glossary.

**WASH**: Water and Sanitation Hygiene

**GBV**: Gender Based Violence

**IPV**: Intimate Partner Violence

**VAWG**: Violence Against Women and Girls

**NPSV**: Non-Partner Sexual Violence

**FGD**: Focus Group Discussion
1. Background To The Research.

One-third (30%) of women across the world have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner. By conservative estimates, globally 7% of women have been sexually violated by someone other than a partner.

Statistics on VAWG in Nepal are concerning. In Nepal, 25% of women have faced intimate partner violence (IPV). Studies evidence that more than one in five (22%) women aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence and 7% of women have experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives. Around 6% of women have been subjected to violence during pregnancy. However, the actual figures might be much higher as under-reporting of VAWG is highly common in Nepal.

From an intersectional lens, there is little research and studies on violence against women and girls in the context of inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

Only recently, there is an increased awareness around VAWG and how it is linked to the use of WASH services and facilities. Simavi assumes that there are social and cultural norms associated to WASH practices which put women and girls in a disadvantaged position in their access and control over WASH resources.

Subsequently, it might result in an increased violence against women and girls.

![Women facing physical and sexual violence.](image)

*25% Women facing IPV
22% Physical violence at age 15

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"Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence," World Health Organization, 2013, [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85239](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85239)


Ibid

OBJECTIVES.

In Nepal, existing studies have not explored this issue. Sexual and physical violence is a gross human rights violation, and if happening in relation to the access and control of WASH resources, it cannot be ignored. This study was commissioned to explore the experience of women and girls in accessing and using of WASH resources. The main objectives are to understand:

1. How are decisions about access to and control over WASH resources made at the community and household level, and how does it relate to potential violence on women and girls (from an intersectional lens: such as by age, caste, touchability/untouchability, poverty levels, gender of household head)?

2. Do women and girls experience any problems or violence in using and accessing WASH? If yes, what kind of problems or violence?

3. How do gender norms influence VAWG in access to and use of WASH?

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2. Methodology.

The study followed a qualitative methodology and was conducted in Surkhet, a district in the hills of Karnali province and in Banke, the plain flatlands of western Terai in Lumbini province. These districts were chosen to capture the diversity of experience, underlying norms, and ideals of different ethnic and cultural groups. Rural (Baijanath in Banke and Barahatal in Surkhet) and urban settings (Kohalpur in Banke and Birendranagar in Surkhet) in both districts were chosen for this study.

The study consisted of 13 key informant interviews conducted during four community workshops, with each group of 16-24 attended by equal proportions of men and women. Four community mapping exercises, four transect walks (one in each site), 16 focus group discussions and five case studies related to VAWG in use of WASH were conducted.

To cover the different forms of violence, definitions of VAWG and gender-based violence (GBV) were based on the United Nations (UN)’s definitions as stated in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW 1993): VAWG is “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women”.

GBV is an umbrella term for “any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and is based on socially ascribed (i.e., gender) differences between males and females.” It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or private.

This study focused on VAWG which emerged in a discussion about WASH. Other forms of VAWG exist in the study area but are not relevant to WASH, exploring which was beyond the scope of the study.
3. Key Findings.

3.1 WASH-related sexual and gender-based violence in the community

The main forms of VAWG that are related to WASH in the study sites are structural violence against women and girls, such as exclusion, harmful traditional practices, Chhaupadi practices, physical violence and emotional violence, which continues even when women are in their elderly stages of life. Below, these forms of VAWG are discussed briefly.

3.1.1 Structural violence

The most common form of violence is structural violence, manifested as the exclusion of women and girls from the decision-making process in WASH and access to WASH services. However, these exclusions remain unrecognised as they are seen as issues of convenience or responsibility (of men) and not a form of violence, by both men and women.

This study found that except for Water User Committee, WASH programmes have not made female participation mandatory.

Hence, women and girls are not included in community WASH meetings, resulting in a lack of their perspective in the designing, implementation and programme evaluations of WASH services and policies around local WASH facilities. Strikingly, only male participants interact with the local government officials around any issues of WASH.

In Surkhet, in some cases, there are all-women water user committees or committees where women outnumbered men in instances when men are away. In such committees, men neither participate nor attend meetings saying these are "women’s" meetings. Such committees are usually not active and do not interact with the local government.

Even when participation of women is mandatory, there is no active participation of women. The committee meetings are set up in the morning when women have household duties and cannot attend. Carrying out meetings without women is common and has become a norm. Men in committees theoretically understand that the mandatory participation of women was to ensure
women's voices are included in WASH. However, they feel women's absence is not making any difference. They believed that as men, they are expected to make the WASH decisions, and women do not contribute any new ideas or anything important even when they attend the meetings.

Hence, they stopped notifying the women members about the meetings.

Usually, the minutes of the meetings are taken to the women's houses for signing purposes only. In such cases, women neither read the minutes nor ask what is written there, and just sign it as they think it is their duty to sign the document.

Another form of structural violence against women is the exploitation of women when they participate in WASH committees. Women in the water user committee are usually given the position of treasurer, which requires them to handle funds for the committee.

Women who lack the experience or confidence to manage these funds are utilized for the benefit of the committee. They are made to sign documents and cheques without being informed of their actual purpose. Besides this, there were also instances where women's names were kept on the WASH committee, but they were not informed about it. While on paper it looks like women are well represented, in reality, they have no say in the decision-making process; their names and signatures are being misused without their knowledge.

Additionally, women's access to irrigation and drinking water is heavily limited. Women-headed households are often the last ones to get water through irrigation canals. Irrigation water is usually distributed first to men who hold social and political power and then to other men-headed households.

Women-headed households get access only after all the others' needs have been met. By that time, the planting season is over.

Above all, there are no mechanisms for women to share their grievances because all decisions are taken internally by powerful men.

Hence, women either resort to using pumps for irrigation, which substantially increases the production cost, or abandon agricultural activities altogether, instead of demanding their fair share.
3.1.2 Physical and sexual violence in school

Physical and sexual violence in the use and accessibility of WASH in schools is a recurring issue. Boys peeping from holes, throwing sticks, pieces of bricks and small stones into the stalls when the girls are using toilets are common results in both the study sites. Though not done with any sexual intentions, it becomes a source of significant stress and discomfort to the girls.

Adolescent girls fear using the toilets and they do not want to go alone. They are stressed that these toilets do not have functional locks, and the boys may act unpredictably. While some of the schools have bins and incinerator facilities, they are not well maintained (for example, bins with no lids, overflowing bins, pads stuffed in windowpanes, etc.). In the absence of well-maintained menstrual waste disposal mechanisms, boys tease girls and make them uncomfortable when sanitary pads are littered in front of toilets or playground. When there are no bins to throw menstrual products, girls must bury them near the bushes, risking being followed and harassed. Moreover, there are no ‘grievance sharing mechanisms’ for the girls and fear further stigmatisation in school.

Many respondents in this study stated that sexual violence, such as rape, is not common. They shared that there was one case of rape some years ago, when a girl was on her way to use a neighbour’s toilet because the school toilet was not clean. They have not come across such incidences again after that. However, incidents of sexual assault often go unreported due to fear of stigmatisation and ostracisation by society.

3.1.3 Physical and emotional violence in the use of WASH facilities at home and public WASH facilities

Accessing WASH facilities often becomes the site of physical and emotional violence against women. Some women are accused of having illicit sexual relationships during their journeys to fetch water. Consequently, they are thrown out of the house and/or restricted from using water pumps and toilets when they get separated.

In Banke, when a family separated from joint to a nuclear family structure, the restricted access to WASH services was a common form of violence. Once the members move out of the house, they do not have space to install additional water pumps (a common source of drinking water in the study sites) or to construct another toilet because the land allocated to them is very small. When families have a small plot of land and have to use the common WASH facility for the whole family, the risk of such ostracization is high.

The extended family members do not let them use the toilets or water pumps. Given that water collection and household-related activities are largely done by women, they bear the brunt of such exclusion.

Particularly in households where the man is absent, young women are at a higher risk of physical and emotional violence from their in-laws. The amalgamation of such exclusion leads to both physical and emotional violence. While four cases of physical violence at home during the use of WASH facilities were recorded, emotional violence is speculated to be more common.

“VAWG is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women.”
3.1.4 Chhaupadi: secluding women during menstruation

Chhaupadi is a traditional practice that is followed in some parts of Nepal, where menstruating women and girls are ostracized to animal sheds (in the fields) for up to four days and new mothers are kept for 15 days. There are no beds or bedding for sleeping, and menstruating individuals are forced to sleep on hay or grass floor in the sheds. In addition, they are not allowed to touch any water resources.

Not only does it lead to social isolation and discrimination, but it can also have negative impacts on menstruators’ mental and physical health. Chhaupadi has also been linked to incidents of violence and abuse.

The Supreme Court of Nepal declared the practice illegal in 2005, and it was also criminalized under the Muluki Ain, Nepal’s civil code, in 2017. Despite that, it is still practised in both Surkhet and Banke. Particularly, households of priests or shamans (dhami) in rural Surkhet and families who migrate to Banke from Surkhet and Jumla continue practising Chhaupadi.

There is a strong link between chhaupadi and access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services.

During menstruation, women and girls are not allowed to access water sources, use household or communal taps which makes it difficult for them to maintain proper hygiene, leading to further stigma and discrimination.

There is also a fear of sexual abuse and assault at night, alongside the danger of attack from animals and snake bites. As women and girls are already violated in WASH-related sectors, this exclusion faced during menstruation magnifies the inequality and discrimination they experience.
3.1.5 Violence against the elderly in the use of WASH

Another common form of violence in WASH is domestic in nature and related to the denial and stigmatisation of elderly women by family members while accessing WASH facilities. Generally, women and girls face violence, but this does not stop even in their elderly stages of life. Despite their age, elderly women are still expected to be responsible for WASH related roles and responsibilities. But their needs and ability to do so not considered.

Elderly women were found to be harassed by their family members as they struggled to keep them clean. In households where water taps are not inside the toilets, they have difficulty carrying water all the way there. In such cases, they cannot clean the toilets properly and family members verbally abuse them or do not allow them to use the facility at all.

In such scenarios, they depend on their neighbours' kindness and use their toilets. While the study found this in the case of elderly women, this might equally be applicable to elderly men and people with disabilities.

3.2 What are the underlying causes of VAWG in WASH?

The study found various interconnected underlying causes of the forms of VAWG in the use and access to WASH facilities. Schools and communities often lack adequate WASH services significantly affecting women's lives. Additionally, gendered social norms, women's ascribed status in family and society, curtailing of women's voice and agencies in political spheres and lack of women-friendly infrastructures have contributed to VAWG in WASH. These factors are not mutually exclusive; they interconnectedly shapes the current perspectives and practices that result in VAWG. These underlying causes have been described in detail below.

![Diagram showing underlying causes of VAWG in WASH.](image-url)
3.2.1 Lack of adequate WASH services

Lack of adequate WASH services is a strong underlying cause of VAWG in schools and community. As discussed earlier, girls face violence in schools due to the lack of adolescent-friendly toilets. At home, there are no bathrooms, and women and girls are stressed out when they need to bathe. They usually have to be cautious and take extra precautions (such as, finding a secluded place at the back of the house for bathing, or seeking assistance of another female member to guard or notify them of any male members approaching the area) each time they shower. Women also face violence, in their household, when they leave for a long period to fetch water from sources located far from their home. Elderly women face violence when toilets are not equipped with WASH facilities because of which they must carry water to use in the toilets. On the other hand, many drug users use public toilets as spaces for injecting drugs. While the drug users may not pose direct threat to the toilet users, their presence may make them feel uncomfortable. Hence, having functional and adequate WASH services is crucial in reducing the risks of VAWG in WASH.

3.2.2 Lack of confidence in women's decision making capacity

On one hand, women who were part of the study expressed they lacked the confidence to step out of the gender box. And on the other hand, men lacked confidence in women's decision-making capacities. This absence of women's empowerment and men's confidence in women comes as important underlying drivers of VAWG in WASH.

Following the prescribed gender norms, male participants believed that it was their responsibility to take initiatives and leadership positions, including WASH-related activities. The belief that women are emotional and indecisive evokes a sense of fear among men that women will make wrong decisions. Respondents gave examples of women's spending habits as justification for their lack of decision-making power; they believed women mostly spend on a whim and do not keep accounts of the budget. Thereby, discrediting women as unfit for making important choices.

Men also believed that because women are reluctant to make decisions, it is their duty to step up even if this is an additional burden for them. They feel that they are forced by society, including at home, to make choices even when they feel they don't want to take any. It reinforces the belief that only men make the right assessments, so women do not necessarily need to participate in decision-making bodies around WASH. This acts as a self-serving cycle: women (sometimes) find it difficult to decide which affects their confidence.

In turn, men believe women are incapable of decision-making, consequently limiting women's access to decision-making positions. Subsequently, WASH infrastructure continue to be catered to the needs of men only.

In the absence of sufficient education, exposure, awareness and confidence, women are unaware of the rules and processes to approach local governments for WASH related activities. They are unaware of their rights and the importance of participating in ward and municipal level discussions on the WASH budget and programming process. They also do not know that they have the right to place certain demands pertaining to WASH or share their grievances around WASH with the local government.

While there are initiatives to encourage women to make themselves familiar with local wards and municipalities or to encourage their participation in WASH meetings, they are often limited to sweeping the community, putting dustbins, and disposing of community wastes. The agencies never focus on building women's confidence and WASH-related awareness, even though there are formal agencies for women. Hence, the voices of men continue to hold greater weight in demanding government actions in WASH-related concerns.

3.2.3 Fear of stepping out of gender norms

Both men and women hold the perception that there are advantages in upholding traditional gender norms. These perceptions keep women stuck in gender-typical roles, giving continuation to women's non-involvement in community affairs, planning and decision-making of WASH in their areas, despite the responsibility of keeping the houses and the community clean. Within WASH, men felt that women were best fitted to do
activities such as cleaning and waste management, while men were best fitted to make decisions at home and in the community. Such beliefs are strongly reinforced, which perpetuates the exclusion of women in WASH.

Sometimes, women themselves uphold such gender discriminatory ideals and they do not question the status quo. Female participants in our research believed that if women behaved as expected (by gender ideals), houses would be clean, children would be healthy and happy, the family would be united, guests would be satisfied and eventually one will have a happy family life. Hence, they accept not being involved in the decision-making of WASH facilities, both at home and in the community, and do not raise their voice against established discriminatory norms in WASH.

Men of all ages also believe that following expected norms keeps the family integrated, by which women earn more respect, trust and support. All the above-mentioned beliefs and perceptions subjugate women as it institutionalises gender discrimination including women's exclusion in WASH-related programmes and policies.

3.2.4 Men's lack of understanding of structural violence as a form of violence

Men have (little to) no understanding of "structural violence." While men agree that women and men should be treated equally, they justified women not being given space in the decision-making process in WASH, including women members of water user committees not being informed of meetings and being left out. They held the opinion that as women are emotional, they cannot make sound decisions, and cannot contribute with important opinions, which warranted their lack of participation in any decision-making.

3.2.5 Restriction on women's mobility and exposure

Structural violence on women and girls in WASH is also related to and a by-product of other forms of violence against women. Women across all study groups are restricted from interacting with outsiders, pursuing higher education and have restricted mobility.

In Muslim communities, for example, the study finds that girls drop out of third grade, after they reach the age of 10, as they are not allowed to enrol in the non-Muslim or co-education system.

In these families, parents do not invest as much in their daughters' education as they would for their sons. Instead, girls drop out without completing primary education and end up getting married.

After marriage, there is less scope for exposure, to continue learning or building skills required for a good employment prospectus. They are often financially dependent on the spouse or in-laws and relegated to household chores, childbearing, and care roles.

Subsequently, when time comes for decision-making, women and girls have less awareness about rules, practices, and knowledge to draw references from, compared to men and boys.

Women, thus, have less confidence which is used as an excuse by some male members, families, and community members to justify women's exclusion in decision-making in WASH.

3.2.6 Tradition of treating VAWG as a societal norm

VAWG is accepted as a norm. As given in section 3.2.5 for structural violence, other forms of VAWG such as domestic abuse or physical violence are also considered normal.

They are taken as private affairs, instead of violence. Both men and women agree that women should accept dominance, obey men, and follow gender norms for family happiness.

They agree that one of the most important duties for a woman is keeping the family intact and taking care of children and the elderly. They also feel that this should precede any injustice they might face from the household when carrying out those duties or living by the local gender ideals.

This makes VAWG acceptable, and people do not question the repercussions. Such violence then becomes obscure, accepted, and established in society which creates an environment for perpetuation of VAWG in WASH.
3.2.7 Lack of social and political power among women

Exclusion of women from decision-making was also found to be linked to individual and collective political power. The issue of political power came up strongly in Banke and to some extent in Surkhet. In both, the study discovered that allocation and distribution of WASH resources were highly influenced by men who hold strong political power.

Women were not found to have such strong political connections even if they were elected members. In Banke, respondents perceived that water-related projects were highly politicised and were initiated for political popularity rather than based on actual needs.

As a result, women’s concerns were excluded because they did not have the political clout to demand their needs. Additionally, not having women leaders at the political and bureaucratic levels also plays a vital role in the exclusion of women’s concerns in WASH.

Women have fewer connections not only because of their impeded mobility and stigmatisation in interacting with outsiders but also because of the unequal ratio of men to women in decision-making positions.

Women who are in local governments as bureaucrats or elected leaders barely exercise any decision-making powers. Thus, local women cannot rely on those women to ascertain their voice and agency in bureaucracy as well.

The study finds that VAWG in use and access to WASH occurs in forms that are not recognised as violence by communities. The most outstanding is structural violence which restricts women’s participation, voice, and agency in WASH, both in the private and public sphere. Adolescent girls facing sexual violence or fear sexual violence in the use of WASH are also striking in the study. Other forms of violence in WASH are physical and emotional in nature which excludes women from accessing and using WASH facilities at home and in the community. Some of this violence is related to women’s intersecting identities such as age and position within the family i.e., elderly or daughter-in-law.

In the absence of formal structures to ensure women’s issues of structural violence, VAWG in WASH are neither reported nor addressed.

4.1 Programmatic recommendations for minimising VAWG in WASH

Identifying the underlying causes of VAWG in WASH, the study finds some recommendations to make water, sanitation, and hygiene safer through improved programming and services.

4.1.1. Engage and educate men and boys as allies and change agents

When men and boys are involved in ensuring an increased participation of women in decision-making, as active change agents, it creates an environment for the rightful redistribution of power and leadership at home and in the community. Programmes must enlist both women and men to work together as allies in changing social gender norms that perpetuate gender injustice. This study focuses on the need to educate men about structural violence and women’s access to WASH facilities.
It is also important to engage with boys and to educate them in schools about VAWG in WASH. Boys should be made aware of how their actions perpetuate VAWG in school, such as, boys throwing sticks and stones in girls' toilets, bullying girls, issues of pad management, etc. The school WASH committee that has been established by WASH programmes could be used to monitor this.

To increase equal participation and leadership of women and girls in WASH, they should be included in the decision-making process of WASH services. Programmes need to work towards gradually ensuring that 50% of WASH committees have women chairs and 50% of WASH committee members are women. These committees must ensure that women hold 50% of leadership roles (such as in Surkhet, where due to high male migration, women were de-facto members of the WASH committee) and make sure that men are actively engaged. It is also important that WASH activities do not get side-lined as women's issues. To achieve these goals, capacity-building of WASH professionals must be emphasised so they have a better understand the types of violence, how it manifests and can develop programmes that address this issue at the core.

4.1.2 A Rights-based approach

A rights-based approach to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) focuses on the inherent right of all individuals to have access to safe, clean, and affordable water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities and services. This approach to WASH aims to empower individuals and communities to demand and secure WASH services that they are entitled to, and to hold governments and other actors accountable for ensuring that these rights are protected and promoted.

A rights-based approach provides a strong foundation to end VAWG by explicitly recognising it as a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights, thereby holding violators accountable. This approach should be incorporated into gender mainstreaming programmes to reinforce the capacities of duty bearers (usually governments) to respect, protect and guarantee these rights. It also contributes to capacity-building among public officials, teachers, healthcare workers and others who have a responsibility to fulfill these rights.

The current judicial system focuses on VAWG as physical and sexual in nature but does not look at VAWG-related intersections of identities such as age and gender, which are not sexual in nature, unless it is explicitly reported. Programmes could leverage the use of secondary reporting mechanisms to monitor and report such violence. These programmes need to engage with the local judicial committees and government to design local secondary reporting mechanisms and implement them as well as create awareness about human rights and corruption in WASH-related areas.

To monitor different forms of violence including exclusion, local judicial committees like "Nyayik Samiti" (justice committee) should be made aware of exclusion as a violation of human rights and they should be mobilised to monitor violence in access and use of WASH. This committee should also look at impediments to human rights that are related to intersecting identities such as gender, age, and caste.

4.1.3 Communication and advocacy

The use of digital technology, such as videos, should be leveraged to make people understand structural violence. Liaising with other programmes to change harmful and dated gender norms that have been found to impede women's voice and agency in WASH is important. Both men and women need to be involved when addressing structural violence.

A communication strategy and stakeholder engagement plan should sensitise programme implementers about structural violence in WASH.
This communication should sensitise programme implementers at the local level about structural violence in WASH. This can be a three-staged programme where the first stage involves training for the social mobilisers and programme partners. The second stage can use the local partners to raise awareness of addressing structural violence with stakeholders who provide services, such as staff members of the municipality, police and Water User committee and WASH committees. The third stage can involve community engagement to sensitise people about structural violence in access to and use of community resources such as WASH and find local ways to resolve it.

4.1.4 Gender-responsive infrastructure

The way in which WASH facilities are constructed can greatly reduce VAWG. Simple upgrades to existing WASH facilities such as toilets with functional locks, lights and privacy, menstrual product disposal bins, etc can make a big impact on the safety, security, and privacy of those using the facilities.

WASH programmes should also work with public institutions and the local government to make disability-friendly facilities. Even in communities that now have toilets, there are no bathrooms.

This compels women and girls to bathe in the open. girls to bathe in the open. Programmes need to create awareness of the importance of having a bathroom for women and girls at home and encourage households to build washrooms. The needs of the elderly women are often ignored in the WASH infrastructure development. However, with the SDG goal to “leave no one behind”, requires that their needs be included in national guidelines and policies. Advocating for the end of stigmatisation of the elderly regarding WASH will lead to more inclusivity that aligns with the SDG targets.

In public baths, community funds must be used to build and maintain bathrooms. WASH committees or other local groups should be mobilised to monitor and protect WASH infrastructure when other infrastructure, such as roads and underground electricity or internet cables are being built in the community. WASH programmes can facilitate discussions between the different units of the local government to make guidelines on safeguarding pre-existing infrastructures when carrying out new construction work. This will save WASH infrastructures and make facilities available to women. These recommendations are also applicable for advocacy at the national level so that it can be implemented within different parts of the country.

Simavi

Every woman and girl should be able to claim her human rights to water and sanitation resulting in gender equality and sustainable solutions.