

THE GENDER DIMENSION OF THE WATER POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON WATER AND SANITATION PROVISION IN THE EASTERN CAPE: THE CASE OF THE PEDDIE DISTRICT

Final Report

to the

Water Research Commission

by

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WRC Report No. 1021/1/02
ISBN No. 1 86845 913 6

MARCH 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Research on the gender dimension of the national water policy and its impact on water and sanitation supply in the Eastern Cape was a project undertaken by the Department of Development Studies at the University of Fort Hare. The aim of the research was to undertake an analysis of the external aspect of the gender policy of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAFF) and the impact it has on water and sanitation provision and management in the Peddie district in the Eastern Cape. The DWAFF gender policy is based on the National Water Act 36 of 1998 which emphasizes the principles of equity, access and sustainability. According to the gender policy equity encompasses identifying major gender issues and setting out goals and objectives to address them as well as establishing evaluation systems that will ensure continuing capacity to recognise and manage these issues.

It is often the case that development projects identify recipients of development assistance in collective terms such as “the community” or “the poor”. This manner of reference translates into project conceptualization and planning that obfuscates the fact that roles and responsibilities between men and women in the communities are culturally stratified. In such instances the role of women is viewed as additional resources for projects to be more efficient and successful. Also, legislation and protocol in development programmes have often downplayed the different roles that women play in any given society. Therefore, this study has undertaken an analysis on the conceptualization of the gender dimension of the national water policy and the manner in which it addresses itself to the different factors which affect men and women in water supply, such as literacy, financial resources, time constraints, cultural values, decision-making, and effective and meaningful participation in the implementation of water and sanitation projects in the rural communities.

Objectives

The original objectives of this research are as follows:

- Critical analysis of the gender dimension in the development of the water policy in the water and sanitation sector;
- An investigation of strategies and institutional arrangements for water supply in terms of decisions concerning water supply, distance to the water sources, the choice of technology, maintenance of water sources, participation at community level and how these affect women as the managers of household water;
- Developing guidelines in conjunction with the local Peddie women and men for educating and training them in construction, maintenance and management of water facilities and sanitation;
- Testing the guidelines on a small group of women and men as a pilot project and;
- Monitoring and evaluating the effects of the project.

The findings of this study are based on the first two objectives mentioned above. This is due to the decision of the project steering committee which advised the research team to focus on the first two objectives. The argument of the steering committee was that the last three objectives were outside the scope, time frame and budget of the study. The study was done in the Peddie district in which the Peddie Regional Water Supply Scheme was established and is operating. The water project under the scheme covers four villages which are the target areas of the study. The water project is the first of its kind in the Eastern Cape which has been implemented along the guidelines of the external gender policy of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF). The information gathering for the study was done through discussions and interviews with various institutions, consultancy groups, the project steering committee of Peddie and its sub-committees and the village people.

Methodology

The information gathering process included information from the literature on policy pronouncements, various documents on case studies from other countries as well as semi structured interviews held with different role players in the water scheme in Peddie.

Information from the literature on water and sanitation policy pronouncements and on case studies was assessed and synthesised in terms of identifying the differences between policy objectives and achievements resulting from policy implementation. Interviews with communities took the form of semi-structured discussions where the research team was playing more of a facilitatory role to elicit information from the respondents through the following activities:

- meetings, and interviews were conducted by the research team to discuss the facets of the study;
- small discussion groups with twelve focus groups as follows:
 - four mixed focus groups of men and women - one group per village,
 - eight gender based focus groups from the four villages - two groups per village (one of men and one of women).

Discussions with the male-only focus group were guided and facilitated by male researchers and discussions with the women's focus group were guided and facilitated by women researchers. Discussions with all groups were guided by a short questionnaire which was used to help the facilitator to focus the discussions.

Evaluation of the Policy Framework

The White Paper on Water Supply and Sanitation (1994)

The White Paper on Water Supply and Sanitation (1994) is the agenda-setting document for water law development in South Africa. In its elaborate discussion on the history of inequitable water resource and sanitation development and supply the White Paper points out that a sustainable development strategy must address the

problem of inequitable allocation of resources in order to address the problems of poverty and misery. While the policy places the question of equity at the centre of the analysis it makes no mention of gender as a historical question of equity and social justice. Instead gender is mentioned as a supplementary policy in three paragraphs at the end of the document. The main principles forming the cornerstone of the policy make no mention of gender and yet the policy claims to have adopted a developmental approach in addressing water resources and sanitation allocation. The historical analysis of the policy seems to overlook the fact that the gender question is a class question as well and that studies have shown that it is poor women who often have to fight for such basic and practical needs as water.

A developmental approach needs to place gender as a central focus and to integrate a gendered perspective in its analysis as a heuristic tool for the assessment of social reality. Placing the gender question as a peripheral issue in processes of major policy formulation helps to marginalise the issue and does not bode well for effective service delivery. It thwarts creative thinking and deeper analysis on the problem.

The DWAF Gender Policy (1997)

For addressing the gender question at the sectoral level DWAF developed a policy which is premised upon the pronouncements of Article 9 of the constitution which prohibits discrimination. The policy encourages visible representation of women in water and sanitation projects. While the DWAF effort is commendable the policy faces challenges in implementation as well as contradictions in content as follows:

- The directorate which is responsible for the implementation of the gender policy within DWAF lacks executive powers to carryout its mandate.
- Accountability for the implementation of the gender policy at the sectoral level has been left at the hands of the implementing consultants and contracting agencies. The DWAF office in Pretoria has no monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure that successful implementation takes place.
- DWAF seems to be operating under the assumption that implementing consultants and contractors have an appreciation and understanding of gender issues and are committed to promoting gender equity.
- Evidence in the Peddie project indicates that the gender consideration was limited to the legal requirement of including women in meetings and committees without meaningful participation in influencing decisions and in deriving benefits from their participation.
- The gender education campaign, while it helped to bring the numbers of women to the project, failed to afford them an opportunity to present alternative views on ways of overcoming some of the obstacles that impede them from benefiting from opportunities presented by the project such as training and employment.

In Peddie much effort has been made to include women in the different committees of the project. All the sub-committees of the PSC met the 30 percent quota requirement of the RDP. The PSC itself surpassed the requirement to 49 percent representation of women. At the VWC level only two committees met the

requirements, in Mgwangqa and Nqwenerana. Cisira and Ncala had only 20 percent representation of women thus falling below the requirements.

The Draft National Sanitation Policy (1996)

The National Sanitation Policy stipulates that rural household qualifies for only one subsidy between sanitation services or an access to grant to purchase land. The policy overlooks the fact that gender composition of rural population is dominated by women and that effective sanitation focuses on peoples behaviour rather than infrastructure.

Also according to the policy, the grant for land purchasing in the rural areas and the sanitation grant are mutually exclusive. That is, if a household has received a grant for purchasing a piece of land they would not qualify for a grant to erect a toilet structure and vice versa. The Draft National Sanitation Policy ignores the fact that land ownership in the rural areas excludes women. Women are not allowed to own land and therefore they continue to be landless. Also sanitation is not just about building toilets, it is also about improving the health of the household and the community. This is a responsibility of women since an unhealthy household places a burden on the women.

The Water Services Act 108 of (1997)

The Water Services Act has gone a long way towards addressing racial inequalities in terms of access to water and sanitation services, however, it has failed to raise gender as a critical question and as part of the pressing needs. Gender has been left out of the main objectives for addressing water and sanitation provision in the Water Services Act. The Act categorises the needs and rights of women under the category of the “poor”, thereby failing to recognize the fact that a gender dimension needs to transcend universal categories such as “the poor” and ascertain different needs, roles and responsibilities of men and women in their respective communities and to acknowledge other variables such as geographic background, income, literacy levels and history.

Factors Affecting Women’s Participation in Policy Implementation

Participation in decision making

It comes out clearly that the meaningful participation of the critical mass of women is not an outstanding feature of the water project in Peddie. Gender education in the project helped to add numbers of women to the project structures to meet the legal quota requirements. Their meaningful contribution has however remained minimal. The obstacles to participation of women in decision-making included the following:-

- i) The planning cycle of the project was done without an input from the women. Decisions about their involvement to take part and to benefit from the project were complete and finalized when they were informed about the project.
- ii) The times at which community meetings were held did not take into consideration domestic responsibilities and other cultural engagements of women.
- iii) There was a lack of proper information concerning opportunities of employment which were created by the project. The processes governing recruitment for employment raised dissatisfaction for the majority of women.
- iv) The problem of timidity of women resulting from a lack of self-confidence and fear of expressing themselves in public was not taken into account. Women were expected to take part in public meetings without any processes of preparing them to be able to assert themselves in public gatherings.

Role of culture and tradition

The study showed that the low participation of women in the water supply project was due to cultural constraints which prohibits women from freely expressing themselves and engaging in discussions in public gatherings of men and women.

Married women, unlike their unmarried counterparts, have to ask for permission from the elders of the family or from their husbands to attend public meetings. Also married women are forbidden to say their names in public. They can only do so through a proxy lest they show disrespect for their husbands.

Attitudes and awareness

Gender questions often challenge established cultural norms and customs. Cultural norms and customs are difficult to change and this cannot be adequately addressed within contractual time frames allocated to consultants working on a project.

Therefore, a process of gender education that begins with the analysis of gender relations and that in turn informs the configuration of project roles would go a long way towards empowering consultants with an enabling understanding and appreciation of the complexity of the gender question. It would also inform recruitment and training processes. The need to have an understanding of gender issues seems to have been ignored by DWAF officials who operate under the assumption that the consultants possess adequate understanding and sensitivity to gender issues.

Training and skills development

The lack of transfer of skills in the form of skills development has robbed both men and women an opportunity for meaningful participation and contribution to the project. Technical training and adequate participation are some of the key objectives

of the External Gender Policy (1997) of DWAF. The water project has not succeeded in addressing these needs.

Barriers to the empowerment of women

The study revealed that, while DWAF is addressing women's involvement through legislation, women's participation and exposure to information is still limited. Some of the barriers to involving women include high levels of illiteracy, which makes written information inaccessible. Other factors are, restricted mobility beyond the work area, holding planning meetings during the day when daycare and household chores make it difficult for women to attend. Lack of clean and accessible water dooms women to poverty and sickness. Research shows that class and gender are crucial elements in the analysis of the struggle for better public services. While it is the practical gender interests that are acutely felt in low-income groups, participation in collective action will lead to an awareness of strategic gender needs.

Discrimination in recruitment and placement

There was insufficient account of the special needs of women arising from their biological and gender roles. This was evident in the fact that posts requiring skilled labour and physical strength such as trench digging and concrete making for the building of the reservoir were mainly filled by men.

Other discriminatory barriers were that in cases where the digging of trenches passed near kraals women were told that Xhosa culture forbids women to enter or pass near a cattle kraal.

Additionally, women who were receiving welfare grants for their children were denied employment on the basis that they could not earn two incomes.

Operations and maintenance

Maintenance was a responsibility of the VWC. However, this function was carried out by a contracting company in East London, a distance of 110km from Peddie. Community members were promised that members of the VWC would be trained to carry out maintenance and operation requirements and to identify problems in order for them to become Water Service Providers.

The project has no monitoring and evaluation procedures to measure progress and to detect problems.

Recommendations

- The position of the Directorate of Special Programmes which is responsible for the implementation of gender policy needs to be upgraded. The responsibility could be allocated to the office of the Director General to give it the necessary status and authority it requires for effective implementation.

- A clear definition of roles in terms of policy formulation and implementation needs to be made.
- DWAF needs to develop clear monitoring and evaluation procedures for implementation which will inform the office whether the intentions and objectives of the policy are being achieved in order to afford the process opportunity for corrective action.
- Addressing gender equity is a legitimate social investment, therefore, considerable attention needs to be given to budgetary allocations and time frames to allow a buy-in into the process by the local communities to maximize the benefits of the project, particularly in terms of opening access for meaningful participation of women in decision making.
- Time and budgetary allocations for projects should be informed by a situational analysis study which should be conducted to determine the nature and extent of cultural role stratification and to identify alternative strategies and approaches to effect change.
- In the awareness raising phase of the project separate meetings for women need to be called in order to give them an opportunity to express themselves in the absence of men and to discuss alternative ways of overcoming some of the constraints that deny them access to the benefits of the project such as employing sons and other male relatives.
- Training is an essential element of addressing gender equity. Training ensures project sustainability after the contractors have left. It is essential that women are afforded training since they are directly affected by non-functioning water and sanitation systems. Training should be conducted in the local languages and participants should be awarded certificates to motivate them.
- Gender awareness should be promoted at the family level and in other social institutions.
- Attention towards maximising the use of the services of established institutions such as universities and research training institutes in the provision of service should be looked into. Tertiary institutions such as university and technikons should be integral part of water supply programmes. These institutions carry out research as part of their academic and training programmes and therefore have a direct interest in issues of follow up. Their availability is therefore not limited to the availability of financial gains but development interest as well.

Further Research

- DWAF Guidelines for increasing the involvement of women in community water supply and sanitation(1995) need further development. The current guidelines do not take into account the multiple roles of women and are based on an implicit assumption that women will be readily available when needed. Also the guidelines do not include an element of monitoring and evaluation with a gendered perspective. A monitoring and evaluation mechanism has to be based on the experiences of the communities and on the analysis of the cultural stratification of roles of men and women.

Capacity building

A benefit resulting from the research has been capacity building for the communities involved in the study which has led to ordinary men and women in the focus groups being afforded an opportunity to voice their feelings about the project outside the formal meetings in which they usually listen to the members of the village water committees informing them about the project.

The project provided an opportunity for the student assistant researchers to apply their theoretical knowledge and to sharpen their research acumen. Some students have used some of the information gathered during the research process for their own dissertations thus enriching their own work and avoiding costs which would have been difficult to cover. One of the student researchers has completed a Master of Philosophy degree in Environmental Science and Geography with a dissertation entitled "Alternative Models for Water Supply Services.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research report emanated from a project funded by the Water Research Commission entitled:

“THE GENDER DIMENSION OF THE WATER POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON WATER AND SANITATION PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT IN THE EASTERN CAPE:THE CASE OF THE PEDDIE DISTRICT”

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We wish to thank the Water Research Commission for financing the project and we would like to extend our acknowledgement to the Steering Committee.

The contribution of the following researchers is acknowledged:

Ms L Ngalo-Morrison, Mr D Nyatela and Ms L Wana.

This project was benefited from the co-operation and assistance of many individuals and institutions. The authors therefore wish to record their sincere thanks to the following:

- DWAf National Office, Pretoria
- DWAf Provincial office, Eastern Cape
- Amanz’abantu
- Mvula Trust
- Khula Development Facilitators
- Limakhozu Development Consultants
- Institute of Water Research, Rhodes University
- Amatola District Council (ADC)
- Peddie Transitional Rural Council
- Peddie Project Steering Committee (PSC) and its subcommittees
- Communities of Nqwenerana, Ncala, Mgwangqa and Cisira villages.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADC	-	Amatola District Council
BOTT	-	Built Operate Train and Transfer
CEDAW	-	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CBHC	-	Community Based Health Care
DAWN	-	Development Alternative with Women in New Era
DSP	-	Directorate of Special Programmes
DWAF	-	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
GAD	-	Gender and Development
ISD	-	Initial Spatial Development
IWR	-	Institute of Water Research
KDF	-	Khula Development Facilitators
LDF	-	Limakhozu Development Facilitators
L	-	Litre
M	-	Metre
NGO'S	-	Non Governmental Organisations
PSC	-	Project Steering Committee
PDI	-	Planning Development and Implementation
RDP	-	Reconstruction and Development Programme
TLC	-	Transitional Local Council
TRC	-	Transitional Rural Council
UN	-	United Nations
WAD	-	Women and Development
WID	-	Women in Development
VWC	-	Village Water Committee
WRC	-	Water Research Commission
WSAct	-	Water Services Act of 1997
WSA	-	Water Services Authority
WSP	-	Water Services Provider
VWC	-	Village Water Committees

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I. INTRODUCTION

The National Water Act 36 of 1998 was developed by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry as the Water Law of South Africa. The major objective of the policy is to meet the needs and challenges of water supply for South Africa in the 21st century and to promote the well-being of all South Africans in the present and in the future. The policy is based on the principles of equity, access and sustainability. The history of inequalities in water and sanitation provision and limited access of the majority of the population to water resources created inequalities in other resources such as health, housing and access to land.

The exclusion of the majority from these resources has put a strain on the lives of the women who are the ones who directly bear the brunt. Women, particularly in the rural areas, are the managers of water in the household. It is their responsibility to see to it that there is clean water for drinking, cooking, washing as well as water for the garden. Since water is not easily available they have to travel long distances to fetch water. If clean water is not available in good quantities the health of the family is threatened and when members of the family are not well the burden of caring for them falls on the shoulders of the women. Lack of clean water and long distances affect the health of the women as well. This gender dimension of water has implications on sustainable development since women are also expected to take part in other community projects besides their household chores.

Equity has to look into the issues of the needs of women in water supply and sanitation. The issues of time spent on collecting water, distances to the water sources, the triple role of women, the health implications of unclean and inadequate quantities of water as well as questions of affordability and sustainability of water systems are important questions impinging on equity.

In keeping with the principles of equity and fairness the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) went on to develop a gender policy for the water and sanitation sector. Equity, according to the gender policy, entails identifying major gender issues affecting Water Affairs and Forestry and setting out goals and objectives for addressing these issues as well as establishing an institutional machinery within the department to ensure continuing management capacity to recognise gender issues. Accordingly, equity is to be realised under the trajectory of affirmative action.

The Gender Policy of DWAF (1997) distinguishes between two aspects of the policy, namely, the internal gender policy which seeks to increase the representation and affirm the value of women in the Department's employ and the external gender policy which seeks to promote gender equality in all the Department's activities at the community level. These two aspects, accordingly, are guided by the same principle of equal treatment irrespective of gender and are dependent upon gender sensitivity and responsiveness from the Department.

According to DWAF the focus of the Gender Policy (1997) in the rural areas stems from the fact that 58 percent of the rural population is female and 16 percent of households are female headed (Orkin: 1998). This phenomenon together with the sexual division of labour makes the women the managers of water at the community level. The fact of the shortage of water, the long distances that women have to walk to collect water as well as the other household and community tasks and responsibilities that they have make the task of water management a difficult one. When water is not available in good quantities and is not clean and sanitation facilities are inadequate it makes the burden of health care an odious and heavy one for women.

1.1 Objectives

The aim of this research study is to undertake an analysis of the gender dimension of the national water policy, with special emphasis on the external aspect of the policy, and the impact it has on water and sanitation provision and management, particularly, on the lives of women in the Peddie district in the Eastern Cape.

The specific objectives to achieve this aim are as follows:

- critical analysis of the gender dimension in the development of the water policy in the water and sanitation sector;
- an investigation of the strategies and institutional arrangements for water supply in terms of decisions concerning water supply, the distance to the water source, the choice of technology, maintenance of water sources, participation at community level and how these affect women as the managers of household water;
- developing guidelines in conjunction with the local Peddie women and men for educating and training them in the construction, maintenance and management of water facilities and sanitation;
- testing the guidelines on a small group of women and men as a pilot project; and
- monitoring and evaluating the effects of the training project.

The findings of this study are based on the first two objectives. This was as a result of the recommendations of the project steering committee which argued that the last three objectives involving the development, testing and monitoring of guidelines are aspects that would require time frames that would extend beyond the project period and that they are outside the scope and budget limits of the project. The project team thus focused their work on the first two objectives which constitute the basis of the findings of this study.

1.2 Methodology

This study was conceived out of interest and concern on how the government is applying gender considerations in addressing issues of equity in the water and sanitation sector in the rural areas. A study of five pieces of legislation pertaining to gender equity as well as relevant sections of the constitution and the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) document was made. In order to determine the practical experiences of the

implementation of the external gender policy of DWAF on increasing the participation of women in water and sanitation projects the project team identified the four villages of Cisira, Ncala, Nqwenerana and Mgwangqa which are piloting the implementation of the water project in the Peddie area. These are the only four villages in the Peddie District falling under the Peddie Regional Water Supply Scheme. The scheme is the only project in the Eastern Cape province which has been implemented along the guidelines of the gender policy of DWAF.

The Peddie District lies 53km south-west of King William's Town in the Eastern Cape Province. The national road from Grahamstown goes through the district via the town of Peddie to King Williams Town. The town of East London lies 104km east of Peddie.

The Peddie Water Scheme is located in the Peddie District. The scheme was established in 1996 as part of phase 2 of the RDP projects of DWAF for the first stage of the construction of bulk water supply to the Peddie District. The primary objective of the scheme is to provide sufficient infrastructure to supply Peddie town, and the peri-urban and rural villages in the district with safe and secure water. According to the business plan of the scheme the project is divided into two development phases.

The aim of phase one of the scheme is to provide the infrastructure in order to supply bulk water to Peddie town and the peri-urban communities located in the immediate vicinity. However, in order to deliver water to these areas that are designated for the scheme the infrastructure installed passes through certain existing villages. These are the rural villages of Cisira, Ncala, Mgwangqa and Nqwenerhana. Due to their proximity to the scheme, these villages have been included in the phase 1 as beneficiary communities. It is these four villages that are the focus of this study.

The four villages incorporated in the phase 1 of the scheme have among themselves a population of 3 596, distributed as Cisira 1 687, Ncala 1 277, Mgwangqa 316 and Nqwenerhana 316 persons according to the 1996 population statistics. Water reticulation within the scheme was planned to meet the RDP requirement of stand pipes being 200m from households.

Since 1994 several water supply schemes have been implemented across the country and studies have been conducted looking into the different facets of the operations of such schemes such as institutional arrangements, revenue collection and management and sustainability issues. However, the gender dimension of water supply is a new policy issue which needs deeper analysis. At the international level countries in Africa, India and Latin America have been grappling with the issue with the assistance of international aid agencies which have taken keen interest in this issue.

The water project in Peddie was selected by a Fort Hare research team which undertook research in Peddie to investigate the incidences of water related diseases. This research was carried out by Department of Development Studies at the University of Fort Hare.

Information gathering for the project took the form of semi-structured interviews where the research team played a facilitation role to elicit discussions from the respondents in the following activities:

- Introductory meetings with the Peddie Transitional Local Council (TLC) and the Peddie community.
- Interviews with the Amatola District Council (ADC), Peddie Transitional Rural Council (TRC), DWAF national office in Pretoria, DWAF provincial office in Bisho, the different institutional and social development consulting groups, namely, Amanz' Abantu, Mvula Trust, Khula Development Facilitators (KDF), Institute of Water Research (IWR) Rhodes University, and Limakhozu Development Facilitators (LDF).
- Interviews with the institutional bodies of the water project, namely, the Project Steering Committee (PSC); the technical subcommittee, the Labour subcommittee, the operation and maintenance subcommittee and the Institutional Development subcommittee. Interviews were also held with the village water committees of the four beneficiary villages of Ncala, Cisira, Mgwangqa and Nqwenerhana.
- Discussions were held with twelve focus groups consisting of four mixed focus groups of men and women (one group per village), and eight gender based focus groups from the four villages made up of two groups per village, one of men and one of women.

The aim of holding discussions with the focus groups was to hear the views of ordinary men and women of the four villages who did not occupy any positions on the formal structures of the water project and who would, therefore, not regurgitate official views about the project. The usual process of calling meetings through the PSC was not followed in organizing for the focus groups. The researchers traveled through the villages and invited people they met in the streets and on pathways to attend a meeting to discuss water issues in the village. This was repeated in each of the four villages on different dates.

Discussions with the male only focus groups were guided and facilitated by male researchers and discussions with the women's focus groups were guided and facilitated by women researchers. This was in keeping with the local traditions where men feel free to discuss important issues with men and women feel uninhibited to express themselves in the absence of men. Discussions with all groups were guided by a short questionnaire used for the assistance of the facilitator. These discussions brought up experiences which were different from those recorded from interviews with official bodies of the project.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review was carried out to establish:

- International perspectives on gender development
- Research and experiences on gender issues in the water and sanitation sector
- Policies and guidelines developed by government.

2.1 International Perspectives on Gender and Development

Different practices and approaches have evolved over time, these prescribed the ways of achieving gender equity in the development process. These approaches were a response to growing pressure in the 1960s for the recognition of the role of women in development by development agencies and governments. Broadly these approaches can be classified into four main categories. The first is the Women in Development (WID) approach which was developed in the 1960s. The main focus of WID was to develop strategies that would reduce disadvantages and obstacles that keep women out of the productive sector. The emphasis was on income generating activities that would improve the economic status of women and put them on an equal footing with men. The WID approach did not take into consideration the other roles of women such as domestic responsibilities and community involvement. It also overlooked the socio-economic and cultural environment of inequality in which women find themselves (McPherson: 1994).

The second approach is Women and Development (WAD) which was developed in response to the short comings of the WID approach. The WAD approach, while it shares with WID the perspective of integrating women in the mainstream of development, is of the view that the situation of women will not change until the global economic structures become more equitable for men and women. It also argues that inequalities in the development process will not address the problems of poverty and women's oppression. Just like the WID, the WAD approach does not take into consideration the reproductive and community roles of women.

The third approach is the Gender and Development (GAD) approach. The focus of GAD is on the gendered division of labour which, it argues, assigns women to inferior roles. GAD argues that analysis of the situation of women should not leave men out of the equation since they are part of this social construction of gender and the sexually based roles, responsibilities and expectations. The GAD approach links production to reproduction and argues that men and women have to work together to change the socially constructed relationships that determine their place in society.

The fourth approach is the Development Alternatives with Women in the New Era (DAWN) developed in the 1990s. DAWN is based on the grassroots experiences of community development work in the Third World. They argue that the nature of the development process into which women are integrated is not beneficial to them. They are of the view that in order to change the situation of women the structures and strategies that perpetuate their

subordination and inequalities between class, gender and nations should be challenged. Also that in doing this governments should be challenged to become accountable to the people. DAWN emphasizes that women's work should become central in planning development projects and their voices should be heard in processes of policy making (McPherson 1994).

While it is clear that gender approaches are varied in perspective and emphasis there are common threads that can be drawn together in their arguments. These can be briefly summarized as follows:

- the relationship between men and women is traditionally defined; also that the value of women's work must be recognized and that traditional attitudes must change
- Structures of economic, social and political inequality from which society is constructed must change
- Development processes which maintain the status quo will perpetuate women's subordination as well as and will further reduce their access to resources, opportunities and income
- Strategies to meet short term practical gender needs of women should be used as an entry point to meet long term strategic gender needs.
- Women's knowledge and experiences need to be legitimized, documented and translated into language that development planners and practitioners can no longer ignore (McPherson 1994)

2.2 Research and Experiences of Gender in the Water and Sanitation Sector

In South Africa the area of gender dimension of water and sanitation is a new area. The only study that has been undertaken in this regard was conducted in the Limpopo Province looking at strategies for the empowerment of women in water and sanitation projects. There is not much research and writing that has been done in this area of gender issues in the water and sanitation sector and there is none looking at the gender dimension of the water policy.

At the international level valuable work has been done and recorded concerning the role of women in water and sanitation projects. This has been complemented by the inclusion of women's priorities in public investment programmes for water and sanitation infrastructure and promotion of their participation as advocated in the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

On the other hand efforts at the national level are that some countries, including South Africa, have introduced quotas for women's representation as an attempt to improve women's participation in local councils and development committees.

While quotas are a commendable effort in part, they can be used as a window dressing exercise to add visible numbers of women without changing their position. An article in *Democratising Control of Water Resources* (Mjoli: 1999)

revealed that although women are included in local councils as members, as required by the law, they sometimes are not even aware that they have been elected because their names are included to meet the quota requirements (Agenda 42: 1999).

While many countries are addressing women involvement through legislation, women's participation and exposure to information is still limited. Some of the barriers to involve women at the planning stage of a project include illiteracy rate, which makes the written information inaccessible. Other factors are restricted mobility beyond the work area, and holding planning meetings during the day when childcare and household chores make it difficult for women to attend. Mjoli (1999) argues that the non participation of women in water management decision making results from among other factors, fear of participation in male dominated gatherings, lack of skills and facing men's resistance to women's participation.

Taking the issue further, Bennett, argues that class and gender are crucial elements in the analysis of the struggle for better public services. Based on her study in Monterrey, Mexico, she states that it is the poor women who often have to fight for practical needs such as water, finance, child-care etc. She further advocates for action that crosses class lines. Bennett points out that although it is the poor women who often find themselves in a position of having to fight for their practical needs, organising from strategic gender interests can cross class lines because gender oppression is common to all women Practical gender interests that are most acutely felt in low-income neighbourhoods, participation in collective action will lead to an awareness of strategic gender needs (Bennett: 1998).

2.3 Country Case Studies

2.3.1 Uganda

In Uganda women's participation in the Water Supply and Sanitation sector is guaranteed by the constitution. Article 33 of the Constitution of Uganda states that, *the state shall provide the facilities and opportunities necessary to enhance the welfare of women to enable them to realize their full potential and advancement.*

The Ugandan Constitution provisions are re-emphasised by the National Gender Policy of 1997. The Policy requires that all levels of planning, resource allocation and implementation of development programmes should respond to gender needs.

In 1989 in the Kikokwa parish a Community Based Health Care (CBHC) approach for improving health care was introduced. A committee was formed and chaired by an influential woman. The approach of the committee to their task was that each of the members of the committee was responsible for health care improvement in ten homes in the village. The CBHC also included the production of sanplats for construction. The benefits of the sanplat project was that women acquired technical skills in the production of sanplats which

had been an area traditionally dominated by men. The project also provided income to the women and helped to increase their self confidence. However, the women were adversely affected when the project collapsed.

Another example is that of the agricultural project in Bugamba parish which was income generation and health promotion activities. The project also included the production of sanplats for the improvement of their latrines in the village. The construction process engaged both men and women who were involved in unskilled labour such as the collection of construction materials such as sand, bricks, digging of trenches and cleaning the construction sites.

The Community Based Health Care (CBHC) project in Kikokwa Parish and the Bugamba Bakyala Tuyimukye project in Uganda are cases of gender sensitive community projects. These projects did achieve some of their objectives such as imparting skill and improving some aspects of the women's lives. However, a common problem which was confronting these projects was that while they could be shown as some of the efforts to improve the participation of women the study reveals that the two projects suffered from the problem of having the efforts of the same small group of "the enlightened" women stretched across different community projects.

The study shows that the same group of women in these projects was made up of individuals who were members of the women's councils, the water user committees and other local committees. As the study shows the concentration of a few women in projects defeats the purpose of having a critical mass of women in water and sanitation activities (McPherson: 1994).

2.3.2 Pakistan

In Pakistan a water and sanitation project, which targeted both men and women, was launched in Buluchistan in the Loralai District. The project was supporting the local water and sanitation cell with the aim of improving access to water and sanitation services. The cell was responsible for implementing involvement approaches to the construction of hand pipes and latrines. The project was to target men and women in such a way to ensure that both sexes participate in the project process and benefit from the services delivered.

The Pakistan situation was that the social and economic indicators for both genders reflected a low standard of living and welfare, where women were less well off than men with regards to wealth as measured by indicators such as income, land ownership and capital. The literacy rate showed that only 4.3 percent of women were literate as compared to 15.2 percent of men. The school dropout rates were higher for girls, 93 percent, and for boys 80 percent (Reijerkerk: 1994).

Before the commencement of project construction, an assessment was made relating to the different priorities and preferences men and women attach to the project. Assessment results showed that women were very interested in the design regarding height, shape and location of water supply and sanitation

facilities. The analysis showed that there was often a striking difference between the sexes with regards to preferred location of facilities: women sometimes made it clear that a particular site would be inaccessible to them because of traditional or political disputes.

The analysis also showed that men handled the family income and made spending decisions. Hygienic water containers and soap were to be bought in order to improve the hygiene situation of the family and men involved in the hygiene education programme made these decisions.

The implementation of the approach was not an easy task. Two different types of problems were identified. One problem at the implementation level was the difficulty of involving women community organisers who were observing strict cultural norms while the second problem was concerning the rules for segregation of sexes, which did not allow male and female staff to travel together in the same car. It was also observed that hygiene education was quickly labeled a 'feminine' task.

The situation shows that while involving both men and women is seen as bringing about a balanced gender approach it is important at the same time to consider the issues of equity. In a situation where social indicators favour men benefits deriving from participation in the projects tend to be equally skewed.

2.3.3 Ghana

The Accra 1993 conference on Sustainable Operations and Maintenance of Rural and Urban Water Supplies in Ghana recognized the need for the better integration of women into the community based approach to water supply system management. As a result, a review of four water projects was undertaken which revealed collective experiences of women which brought certain concerns to light. These concerns are summarized as follows:

There is a need for the continued exposure of the needs and opinions of women in the community, for further research and experimentation with different approaches and the initiation of a collaborative process between the various agencies working in the water and sanitation sector at the community level.

First the four projects showed very little understanding of the need to focus not only on women but on men as well. The need to look at the relationship between men and women has often been overlooked resulting into the overburdening of women with work without political, economic and social power to change their positions (McPherson: 1994).

The second problem was that the women were the ones who had to take the brunt of operations and maintenance responsibilities, tariff collection, health and hygiene education and collection and pump site and latrine cleanliness. While these have helped to meet the practical needs of women the status of women have not been raised to meet their strategic needs such as awareness

raising, increasing self confidence and training and strengthening women's organizations.

Thirdly, there is a need for an enabling environment which includes policy framework, adequate information and assistance in organization at the community level, training and human resource development and appropriate financial arrangements for capital and recurrent costs and access to external loans and grants.

Fourthly, strong institutional linkages between government agencies working at the community level and capability for gender analysis were pointed out as missing elements in the projects reviewed (McPherson: 1994). These problems were commonly experienced by women in these project despite the use of the WID/WAD approaches in their implementation.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 Assessment of the Policy Framework and the Gender Dimension

The Water Services Act 108 of 1997

The Water Services Act 108 of 1997 provides an institutional framework for water services and addresses the imbalances and inequalities in access to water and sanitation services. The Act, however, fails to raise gender as a critical issue and as part of the pressing needs. The Act sets out three main objectives to address disparities in water and sanitation provision as follows:

- setting national standards for water services and tariffs;
- proper planning and;
- clarifying institutional framework.

However, in these efforts gender has not been made a main objective of the Act. Instead a supplementary objective with main emphasis on broader socio-political transformation of the country is mentioned. The needs and rights of women are categorised under the broader category of "the poor". The Act fails to recognise that a gender dimension needs to transcend universal categories and ascertain different needs, roles and responsibilities of men and women in their respective communities and to acknowledge other variables such as geographic background, income status, literacy level and history. For instance, for rural poor women, water conservation and management remain their responsibility and role due to the gender division of labour.

Therefore the WSA fails to take gender into consideration as it concerns itself mostly with national norms and standards, institutional framework and promotion of water resources management, which, while of critical importance do not operate in a social vacuum.

DWAF National Sanitation Policy (1996)

The National Sanitation Policy is concerned with who qualifies for the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry's sanitation subsidies and how this relates to other funding available from other government departments and other sources. The policy concerns itself with the who, the why, and where and when subsidies can be used. The National Sanitation Policy lacks a precise definition of the desired or anticipated outcomes. The priorities of the policy are an area that pricks interest since it seems to choose outcomes that do not seem to ameliorate the inequitable situation between men and women. If there are different outcomes for both men and women, these should be given consideration. The policy programme and legislation that do not provide a level playing field for both women and men may produce results that undermine its own objectives.

A case in point is that in the Eastern Cape province census stipulates that the non-urban population is 3 998 148 as against 2 304 378 living in urban areas which is more than half of the total population of the province (Orkin: 1998). Both girls and boys are born in rural areas and attain their education at rural cost. After this investment they migrate to urban areas where they work and pay taxes and rates. They come back as pensioners and the women have the responsibility to take care of the old and the young children. A cost-benefit analysis would recommend and suggest that inter-governmental grants or cross subsidies are required for compensation, however, the National Sanitation Policy says that the DWAF rural sanitation subsidies cannot be used with any other central government grant.

The Policy also states that if a household benefits from the Department of Land Affairs grant for purchase of land in rural areas, they cannot get sanitation subsidy. What this implies is that if the household of a rural community purchases land for agricultural purposes such as small scale farming, the household cannot have sanitation services. On the other hand the previously disadvantaged communities and groups have been encouraged to engage themselves in small farming and business practices and the majority of them are women. Traditionally, women are constrained by cultural norms and patriarchal structures from ownership of natural resources such as land and water. The Policy appears as though it reinforces the situation where the previously disadvantaged groups cannot have access to resources of land and sanitation services.

The rural communities will be most affected because it is unlikely for them to receive housing subsidies. The major beneficiaries of sanitation services should be women. It looks like the National Sanitation Policy overlooks the fact that sanitation is not just about building toilets but also about improving the health of the whole community. The burden of an unclean sanitary environment is a health hazard that falls on the shoulders of women.

The National Sanitation Policy lacks commitment and gender responsiveness as it overlooks the relation between low income levels of households and the

unemployment rates distributed by population and gender. The unemployment rates which were provided in the 1996 census stipulated that 52 percent of South African Black women are unemployed. The rate in the Eastern Cape is 49 percent (Orkin: 1998). Inter-governmental grants and cross-subsidisation could help to relieve the situation.

The White Paper on Water Supply and Sanitation (1994)

The White paper on Water Supply and Sanitation 1994, which is the agenda setting document for the water law development, gives an elaborate discussion of the history of inequitable water resource and sanitation development and supply in South Africa. The White Paper goes on to point out that a sustainable development strategy must address the problems of inequitable allocation of resources in order to address the problems of poverty and misery. In South Africa the White Paper on Water and Sanitation of 1994 requires that women constitute 30 percent of membership of water and sanitation committees. However, a recent evaluation of water supply projects by DWAF in 1998 has indicated that real participation of women in decision-making on water issues is lacking.

While the policy places the question of equity at the center of the analysis, it makes no mention of gender as a historical question of equity and an integral part of issues of social justice. Instead gender is mentioned as a supplementary policy in three paragraphs at the end of the analysis. The main principles forming the cornerstone of the policy make no mention of gender and yet the policy claims to have adopted a development approach in addressing water resource and sanitation allocation (White Paper on Water Supply and Sanitation: 1994).

A development approach that places gender as a central focus in development integrates gender perspective in its analysis as a heuristic tool for the assessment of social reality.

Placing the gender question as a peripheral issue in processes of major policy formulation helps to marginalise the issue and to thwart creative thinking and deeper analysis of the problem.

The External Gender Policy of DWAF 1997

The objectives of the external gender policy of DWAF are as follows:

- to provide various forms of in-house training on methods for recognising and addressing gender issues within problem identification, planning, design, development, construction, maintenance and operations;
- to base all planning on gender disaggregated data

- to establish a system that ensures that all consultants and contractors observe the departmental principles and regulations concerning gender equality in the implementation of all work;
- to pay special attention to the needs of poor rural households, where the average distance to the sources of water, sanitation and firewood is further than in the urban areas;
- to pay special attention in all projects, to the needs of women who are among the poorest segment of the population, or who are heads of households or single parents;
- to ensure adequate participation by women in the planning, operations and maintenance of service delivery systems at the local level;
- to provide technical training to both women and men of the community in order to enable their participation in project planning and implementation;
- to co-ordinate with other national and regional Departments in contributing to the collective national effort for the women's advancement and empowerment;
- to collaborate with the Office of the Status of Women and the Gender Commission, maximising the Department's contribution towards the national effort for women's advancement; and
- to network with key stakeholders in civil society, trade unions and the private sector, in order to contribute towards the coordinated implementation of the national gender policy (DWAf Gender Policy: 1997)

Accordingly, the implementation of the above objectives will be the responsibility of the Director of Special Programmes (DSP) under the aegis of the Chief Director of Human Resources. This directorate is responsible for the overall strategic planning and for providing a framework for the implementation of the policy as well as co-ordination and evaluation of progress.

Alongside this Directorate is the Gender Committee which functions in an advisory capacity to the Director. The special brief of the Gender Committee is to advise the Directorate of Special Programmes (DSP) on policy implementation and reporting to the Minister on progress. Members of the committee are appointed by the Minister on the basis of involvement and interest in the gender issues.

Assisting the Directorate is the Directorate on Special Programmes (External Transformation). This Directorate is responsible for the implementation of gender policy at the project level.

The Directorate has drawn up guidelines outlining policy requirements on how to increase the involvement of women in the water and sanitation sector in the local level in the rural areas. The requirements carry a recommendation that all statutory bodies in the water and sanitation sector should comprise 30 percent women. The guidelines identify four areas in which women should be involved, namely,

- the project management level;
- the project construction;
- the project design; and
- the health and water usage promotion.

Discussion of the External Gender Policy of DWAF (1997)

The gender policy of DWAF is premised upon the pronouncements of Article 9 of the constitution. Section (3) of Article 9 states that "the state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth". Section (5) of the Article further states that "discrimination on one or more of the grounds listed in section (3) is unfair unless it is established that the discrimination is fair".

Other instruments which form the basis of the gender policy include:

- the Women's Charter for Effective Equality adopted in 1995;
- the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service of 1995 and
- the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development of 1994.
- The gender policy is also informed by the principles of the United Nations conventions which are contained in documents such as:
 - the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) ratified in 1995,
 - the Convention on the rights of the Child of 1995,
 - the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action of 1995 and
 - the Report of the United Nations (UN) Earth Summit of 1992.

Within DWAF itself the gender policy is built upon the tenets of four instruments comprising the National Water Act 36 of 1998 on equality and equitable access to the nation's water resources, the White Paper on Water Supply and Sanitation Policy of 1994 which gives a focus on numbers of people employed in the development projects, the DWAF Employment Equity Policy which calls for gender equity in all aspects of employment, and the White Paper on Sanitation of 1996 on the participation of women in the sanitation projects.

All the legislation mentioned above converge within the trajectories of affirmative action and of equity. Accordingly, it is within the policy of affirmative action that the actualization of the principles of equity will be achieved. Conceptually, affirmative action is concerned with the quantitative aspects of a project. The inclination is to add visible numbers of women with the underlying assumption that the numbers reflect the sensitivity of the project to the needs of women.

While a visible representation of women in a project addresses the question of inclusivity it, however, does not guarantee meaningful participation of the women in decision making and in making choices about the different options

available to them. Often experience has shown that critical aspects pertaining to the project structure such as the gendered division of labour, women's access and control over resources and benefits, are often not addressed by simply adding more women to the project. Also a visible number of women in a project is no indication that the goals of the project are addressing the practical and strategic needs of women. Women are not a homogenous group. The issues of class, ethnicity and race are multiple identities which need to be given attention.

Secondly, in the functional arrangement of DWAF gender issues have been placed under the Directorate of Special Programmes (DSP), four levels under the Minister and three levels from the Director General, with the hope that the Minister will be interested in enquiring about progress in this unit. In terms of implementation the Programme Directorate is at a junior level where its mandate is undermined by senior officials and from where decisions are difficult to enforce. This might cause resentment and tension resulting in a negative impact affecting the implementation of policy pronouncements.

The appropriate location for the Directorate would be the office of the Director General. The reasons being that this office carries the appropriate weight and legitimacy in enforcing policy including the monitoring and evaluation thereof. Placing the gender unit in the office of the Director General would provide the much needed leverage for effective mechanism for realising the intentions of the gender policy.

Thirdly, in terms of function, all the three units in the Directorate of Special Programmes (DSP) are concerned with the implementation of gender policy. The Directorate is heavily loaded with the implementation function with no mention of who is at the helm of policy formulation and the nature of the inputs thereof. The structure reflects a top-down nature of policy development.

Related to the structure is the issue of accountability for implementation of the policy at the sectoral level. The seventh policy requirement of the guidelines states that accountability for women's involvement in the project must be placed on the shoulders of senior project management with the reports on women's involvement being submitted from time to time.

This means that accountability for policy implementation is left at the hands of contractors and consultants. The policy assumes that these people have an understanding and appreciation of gender issues as well as the social commitment to promoting gender equity. This assumption has not been followed by empirical evidence. In fact, the contrary is the case in point in Peddie.

Also the policy seems to assume that there is adequate understanding of the agenda of the Department at the community level. The policy ignores the fact that the cultural norms and customs of the community often are not congruent with the principle of gender equality as espoused by the Department's policies. Lack of understanding of these cultural norms and customs on the part of the implementing agents results in the development action being a top-

down approach. Thus the intentions of the policy tend to be a legal requirement of the authorities rather than a spontaneous desire of the community.

Gender questions often challenge established cultural norms and customs and they require attitudinal change. This is a long process which often extends beyond the contractual period of consultants or contractors on the project. Therefore, if policy creates perceptions of imposition on the part of the community it will raise resistance against change.

While accountability for achieving the objectives of the gender policy is left in the hands of consultants and contractors there are no provisions on how progress will be measured.

The issues of monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation are mentioned in very vague terms in the policy. Without effective implementation of such measures of control it raises the question whether the needs of women are being met.

3.2 Evaluation of Policy Implementation in the Peddie Water Scheme

Institutional Setting

The Peddie scheme is operated through a Project Steering Committee (PSC) comprising 29 members from the beneficiary communities, local and regional authorities and community organisations based in Peddie. The beneficiary communities include the four rural villages of Cisira, Ncala, Mgwangqa and Nqwenerhana mentioned above, and the three peri-urban villages of Peddie extension, German village and Durban village. The local authorities are the Peddie TLC and Peddie TRC. The organisations involved include the Peddie development forum, the African National Congress ANC Women's League and the unions and the NGOs. The regional authorities are DWAF, community Water Supply and Sanitation, RDP Unit in Bisho, Amatola District Council and the Ninham Shand Inc company.

The communities and the local authorities have two representatives each on the PSC while the organisations and regional authorities have one representative each. Of the 29 members of the PSC eight are women, representing 30 percent as required by the policy.

The overall role of the PSC is to represent the interests of the various benefiting communities and to ensure that the planning and implementation of the project meets the requirements of the RDP. This consists of ensuring that rural communities accept the responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the internal reticulation and the payment for the bulk water supplied by the DWAF. The PSC is also responsible for the overseeing of the training components comprising technical, management and financial skills.

The PSC has four sub-committees that focus on aspects of the project which maximise community participation. These sub-committees are the education, training and capacity building sub-committee; the labour sub committee; the technical sub-committee and the institutional and social development sub-committee.

At the village level, in the four villages, the scheme is operated through the Village Water Committees (VWCs). Each VWC consists of 10 members elected from the community. The members of the VWCs represent their communities on the PSC. The role of the VWCs is concerned with issues of operation, maintenance and administration of water sources in the distribution of water within the village reticulation. The task demands administration of payment to DWAF, appointment, management and payment of village maintenance personnel and keeping of administrative and accounting records.

The involvement of organisations and authorities in the scheme results from their administrative and financial role. DWAF is responsible for the appointment of the project managers to actualise DWAF's operational model of Build, Operate, Train and Transfer (BOTT) which is based on the objective of engendering and transferring ownership of the project to the beneficiary communities. This includes training members of the community (including the PSC) in all aspects of operating, maintaining and administering a water supply scheme. The project managers in turn appoint the social consultants who work on different aspects of community education in the fields of health and hygiene, environmental education, institutional social development, and technical skills training.

The Amatola District Council is the Water Services Authority for the four rural villages and it is acting on behalf of the Peddie Transitional Rural Council.

The water scheme brought with it some benefits to the communities. These include the availability of clean drinking water, reduction in distances to water sources and the reduction in high incidences of water related diseases. The reduced distance to the water source results in time saving and in the reduction of molestation of women and young girls. These have a direct impact on the quality of life of women and the community. However, the issue of affordability is an impediment to those community members who cannot afford the purchase price of water. Also the separation of water supply from sanitation acts as a drawback to the total health of the community.

Assessment of the implementation of the DWAF gender policy took place through the interviews held with the different stakeholders mentioned above. The interview with each stakeholder focused mainly on five issues, which are:

- the role of the organisation in the project,
- their understanding of the water policy in general and
- the gender aspect in particular,
- their actual experiences in implementing the gender aspect, and
- their opinion of the way forward.

The Quota System for Gender Representation

The gender policy of DWAF requires that 30 per cent representation on all committees in the water and sanitation sector be women.

AUTHORITIES & COMMITTEES	TOTAL	WOMEN %	MEN
Amatola District Council	10	10	90
Peddie Transitional Council	12	50	50
Project Steering Committee(PSC)	29	49	51
Cisira Village Water Committee	10	20	80
Mgwanqqa Village Water Committee	10	30	70
Ncala Village Water Committee	10	20	80
Nqwenerana Village Water Committee	10	70	30
Labour Sub-Committee	3	66	34
Technical Sub-Committee	3	34	66
Initial Spatial Dev. Sub-Committee	1	100	0
Operations and Maintenance Sub-Committee	3	34	66

Table 1 shows that the majority of committees and local authorities achieved the gender quota requirements of DWAF.

At the level of institutional arrangements for the project much effort has been made to include women in the different committees of the project. All the sub-committees of the PSC have met and even surpassed the 30 percent requirement of the policy. The Initial Spatial Development subcommittee has 100 percent representation of women. The PSC itself surpassed the requirement to 49 percent. At the village level only two village water committees have met the requirement, namely, Mgwanqqa and Nqwenerana. The other two, Cisira and Ncala, have only 20 percent representation of women.

The ADC had a total of ten council members, one of which was a woman without portfolio. The TRC had 12 members and six were women. Two of the women held positions of secretary and vice secretary while the rest of the four were additional members. The representation of women in the PSC depends on the people who are sent to the PSC to represent their own organisations. The leadership of the PSC is all men, the chair, the secretary and the treasurer. The four subcommittees of the PSC altogether had ten people with an equal number of men and women.

It is clear that the gender education campaign during project implementation in the villages helped to add women in the committees of the water project in order to meet the quota requirements. However, while this is so, women did not have an input in the important stages of the planning of the project, particularly with regards to how they were going to participate in the project in

order to take full advantage of benefits from project activities such as training and employment. Also during discussions with the committees of the project, it was indicated that women did not have an impact in influencing decisions in the implementation of the project.

The view of the chair of the ADC was that involving women in development projects is time consuming. He argued that people want results and will not accept excuses for non-delivery. He viewed the legal requirement for the inclusion of women as a party political obligation which demanded compliance.

The section below makes an analysis of the problems that obstructed women from meaningful participation in the activities of the water project.

3.3 Factors affecting women's participation in policy implementation

Decision making

The four villages in Peddie were introduced to the water project when it was ready for implementation. The business plan for the project was introduced to the communities as a complete product with all decisions on the main aspects of service provision made. These aspects were distance to the water sources, the type of technology to be used and the mode of participation of women. The involvement of the communities commenced when the social development consultants started their job of setting up project structures such as the PSC and its subcommittees and the VWCs. The issue of the participation of women came as a legal requirement to which the communities were expected to respond. This manner of top-down approach robbed the project of the opportunity to obtain support, understanding and input from the targeted communities, particularly the meaningful contribution of women.

Role of cultural norms and tradition

The involvement of women in the project structures did not lead to their meaningful participation in the decision making processes. While the gender campaign conducted by the consultants helped to add women to the project, the real stumbling blocks to their participation were not addressed. Women who attended meetings did not contribute anything to the decision making because of cultural norms that restricts women from asserting themselves in the presence of men.

Secondly women remained timid in meetings and found it difficult to express their views. Culture does not allow women to interact with outsiders such as project implementing agents. Men are expected to take a leadership position in dealing with development consultants. The high mobility of men in terms of being engaged in employment away from home and in community projects has given them experience in dealing with diverse groups of people.

Thirdly, married women are not allowed to make decisions by themselves. They have to ask permission from their husbands or from male relatives to attend meetings. In meetings it is men who lead the decision making process. Also married women are not allowed to say their names in public gatherings, that is, a married woman is not able to introduce herself and announce her surname lest she dishonours her husband. For married women to introduce themselves they have to use a proxy who will say their names on their behalf.

Peddie is an area which still enjoys celebrating traditional feasts of different kinds. These are a common occurrence in the Peddie area and women are expected to prepare for these feasts. Women find themselves having to divide their time between domestic duties, cultural activities in the villages and community projects. Consequently, very few women are involved in different community projects and are thinly stretched. The two women who are the chairpersons of the Cisira and Ncala VWCs are also chairing subcommittees of the PSC and are holding positions in other community organizations. They were more vocal in meetings and more informed about developments in Peddie. Their view is that women are less informed about development projects in the villages. This causes them to miss opportunities to be active and to occupy decision making positions in such projects. The chairperson of the Cisira VWC indicated that she gets an opportunity to discuss community projects with women when they meet at the water sites, when collecting water for their household use.

The difference between women who are more active in village affairs and those who are less active was very notable. The two women, the chairpersons of Cisira and Ncala VWCs, displayed more self confidence and were more knowledgeable about the water project. They were more articulate and were leading discussions. They readily expressed their opinions on the reasons why women were not participating in the water project. On the other hand during discussions with the Nqwenerana VWC, the chairperson was not leading the discussion and was more timid and shy. She was not a member of the PSC nor was she active in other community affairs as her two counterparts. It was her two male colleagues who were responding to questions and engaging the research team in discussions.

Recruitment and placement

The range of jobs which were created by the project for Peddie community included digging trenches, pipe laying, catering, concrete mixing, driving and payment to members of sub-committees such as operation and maintenance. The project employed 350 people. While the Labour subcommittee of the PSC could not supply statistics, a report from the project managers, Amanz'Abantu indicated that women constituted 39.8 percent of the total. Accordingly, jobs which were available for the majority of women were those which needed less physical strength such as pipe laying, stone gathering and tea making. These were fewer in number. On the other hand posts requiring skilled labour and physical strength such as trench digging and concrete mixing were mainly filled by men.

This division of labour was not discussed with women. While the women indicated that they did not want tasks that were taxing on their physical strength, citing the case of a woman who fell from the wall of the reservoir, they felt that they were not given an opportunity to suggest alternative ways of overcoming the problem. The women indicated that they should have been allowed to substitute with their sons and male relatives who would earn income for their families.

Women who were involved in trench digging had a tough time. The first problem facing them was that culture does not allow women to pass near kraals and this made it difficult for women to be employed in digging. This problem was overcome when the technical subcommittee intervened and it was decided that the digging should avoid the vicinity of kraals. The second problem was the bad treatment they received from the consulting company employed by the project. The company foreman did not allow people to stretch when digging. Women were not allowed to visit the ladies rooms. The labour subcommittee intervened in the matter and, without improving the situation, the convener of the subcommittee was fired by the consulting company. The case was finally taken up by the PSC.

The better paying skilled jobs such as brick laying, pipe laying, carpentry, plumbing and code 11 driving were allocated to men because women generally lack these skills. There was insufficient account of the special needs of women arising from their biological and gender roles which partly contribute to their lack of experience.

Furthermore, the company supervisors denied employment to women who were receiving welfare grants for their children. A woman who was already in the employ of the company was dismissed after being accused of earning two incomes. The matter was also taken up by the labour subcommittee and the woman was reinstated after a battle.

The feeling, particularly from the focus groups, was that there was no transparency in the recruitment process. Women were disadvantaged in that the submission of an application form for skilled jobs required a payment of fifty cents. The majority of the women were unemployed and could not afford the fifty cents. Also they complain that they were not afforded opportunities for training which would have helped to open access for them to some of the jobs.

Training and skills development

The Peddie water project operates on the principle of skills development and transfer known as Build, Operate, Train and Transfer (BOTT). This is so because technical training and adequate participation are among the objectives of the external gender policy of DWAF. The principle of BOTT is based on an objective of engendering a sense of ownership of government projects among beneficiary communities. Consultants are required to design and build infrastructure for projects, get them operating and train local community members to take over the project. The training is supposed to

build the capacity of beneficiary communities to manage and operate the project.

However, no training was done in the Peddie project. The consultants left the project before this was done arguing that the time allocated for training had expired and that people would gain experience on the job.

One problem which is very clear is that the water project was conceived as a technical issue and was driven by technical people whose main concern was about the number of taps to be provided. This concern was tied to specific costs and time frames for the completion of the project. While these issues are by no means unimportant, the social dimensions of the project which are the investment in human capital and the gender aspect do not seem to have been duly appreciated. Gender issues deal with established social norms and cultural practices. Implementation of a programme that requires a change of attitudes certainly cannot be accommodated within the time frames such as those allocated to consultants in the project.

Attitudes and awareness

Gender questions often challenge established cultural norms and customs and these require attitudinal change. The DWAF gender policy seems to assume that there is an adequate understanding of the agenda of the Department at the community level. Cultural norms and customs of the community are often not congruent with the principles of gender equality as espoused by DWAF's policies. The process of attitudinal change is long and often extends beyond the contractual period of consultants and contractors on the project.

Gender awareness taken up at the project level but within the time frames set by the project there was no sufficient education to change cultural attitudes. It needed sufficient lead -time before the commencement of the project to lay sufficient ground for sensitization. Also it was apparent that practitioners and consultants themselves needed to be educated on gender issues. A process of gender education that begins with the analysis of the gender relations, and that in turn informs the configuration of project roles would have gone a long way towards empowering the consultants with an enabling understanding and appreciation of the complexity of the gender question.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The water project in Peddie was implemented without any monitoring or evaluation of performance by the authorities. The Planning Development and Implementation(PDI) division of DWAF in the province and the national DWAF office in Pretoria depended on reports from consultants claiming completion of tasks.

On the other hand communities in the villages registered numerous complaints of interruption of service due to breakage of materials used. The investigation of the PDI later revealed that some of the jobs the department

had paid for on the basis of claims for project completion by some of the consultants did not even exist.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

Policy Framework

The gender policy of DWAF is based upon sufficient national and international legislative background from which it draws its sharp theoretical perspective in articulating the needs for gender equality in the water and sanitation sector. The policy recognizes the need to include women in water and sanitation projects for an equitable gender balance in the provision of these amenities. The policy has gone further to set out principles and guidelines for the inclusion of women in water and sanitation projects. However, implementation of the policy perspective has not translated into the achievement of policy objectives on the ground.

This is due to several intervening factors that have undermined meaningful participation of women in the project. One of these is that the National Water Policy treats the gender issue as a supplementary aspect of development, leading to adding more women in projects, and not as an imperative of social justice. As a result responsibility for implementation was left in the hands of contractors and consultants with no follow up mechanism to monitor performance.

The quotas which had been set to meet a target of a third of the number of women in the project committees were met and, in some instances, even surpassed. The inclusion of visible numbers of women in the project has not led to any qualitative changes in their participation as set out in the policy guidelines.

Decision Making

The implementation of the water project has left both the men and women feeling that they have not been part of the genesis of the project but that they were roped in when all decisions had been made. The project was introduced by consultants who were given the responsibility to sensitise the communities about the project, implement the gender requirements of the policy as well as train them on aspects of operation, management and maintenance of the project. The communities were not asked to make any input on issues of distances of water sources to the houses, nor were they asked to voice any opinion on the type of technology to be used.

Participation of Women and Cultural Norms

The gender campaign conducted by consultants helped to add more women to the project. Men and women were told that the representation of women

was a legal requirement and women were persuaded to participate in discussions in the meetings. The campaign became a process of information which focused on making the women part of the project without giving due consideration to speaking to the nature of the constraints they were facing and the manner in which these could be addressed taking into account that these women have to remain part of their cultural milieu during and after the project.

Employment Opportunities

Women had limited employment opportunities because of lack of relevant skills and their physical strength also excluded them from heavy work such as trench digging.

Training and skills development

There was no training offered to equip the people with skills for the project. The community members worked in the project on the basis of trial and error except for a few who had acquired experience from elsewhere.

Attitude and awareness

The responsibility for the realization of the gender policy objectives was left in the hands of contractors and consultants. The policy makers overlooked the fact that consultants and contractors did not necessarily possess expertise nor appreciation importance of gender issues. Neither does their perception of gender equality accord with that of DWAF. Also the cultural norms of the communities are not congruent with the gender perspective of DWAF. Therefore, a process of social engineering of this magnitude required adequate understanding and appreciation of the gender question on the part of the contractors and consultants as well as time frames that extend beyond project completion.

Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of performance in terms of gender policy objectives was not built into the project business plan. Authorities in the province and in the DWAF national office in Pretoria depended on reports submitted to them by the contractors and consultants claiming completion of the work. They were paid on the basis of their own unverified claims. Therefore there was no way of measuring achievement and ensuring that the objectives of the policy of empowering women and opening access for them to participate and benefit from the project were being met.

4.2 Recommendations

The study makes recommendations on the areas mentioned below and provide a table for successes and challenges of the Peddie Regional Water Supply Scheme.

Policy framework

A process of policy development that classifies women within broader categories of the needy such as “the poor” has a tendency of missing the point in terms of targeting constraints that impede access to basic needs for women. In order to capture the special position of deprivation of women analysis of the historical context should put gender in the center as a tool of analysis.

There is a need for the process of policy making to move away from making gender a supplementary appendix to policy development and to see it as an issue of equity and social justice and an integral part of historical analysis. In this way the main principles of policy and its objectives will draw from an informed perspective that addresses the special position of women in service provision.

At the level of implementation the responsibility should not be left at the hands of project consultants and contractors to see to it that policy is implemented.

DWAF should set in place a monitoring and evaluation system for ensuring performance assessment of achievement of gender policy objectives. Professional experts on gender issues such as academics and researchers should be engaged to assess the process of implementation and to give advice and feedback to implementers and policy makers.

Decision making

A developmental approach to service provision requires that the beneficiaries should be part of decisions that are made about their lives. Communities need not only to be consulted in an informative manner but also their suggestions need to be given careful consideration.

Project planning should allow for a process of consultation with women alone to highlight specific constraints confronting them and to solicit their ideas on how they can be reached by information, how they can be equipped with specific skills and the times that are suitable for them.

Participation and cultural norms

Implementation of projects that accentuate the participation of women needs to start with an analysis of the configuration of gender relations in the communities. This analysis will help to identify patterns of cultural power relations and the manner in which these relations position women. It will also help to inform all the other activities of the participation of women in the project.

Employment opportunities

Opening up space for the women to make suggestions on their participation remains a very basic need at all levels of project planning, implementation and

evaluation. This helps to avoid obstacles that impede their participation and to maximize project benefits for them.

Training should be provided in projects to equip beneficiaries, particularly women, with skills that will give them access to jobs.

A process of monitoring and evaluation of project implementation, as suggested above, should be in place to check the attitude of contractors and consultants in dealing with women. Discriminatory practices such as denying women employment because they are on welfare should be exposed.

Training and skills development

The issue of sustainability is a crucial element for any development project. In order to ensure sustainability the transfer of skills and development of competency for the operation and maintenance of a water project is important. Skills development or imparting necessary skills such as managerial, financial, supervision and conflict resolution needs to be given adequate time frames and to be monitored. These skills are necessary to empower beneficiaries to be able to work with consultants and contractors and to influence decisions. The benefits of training should be clearly stated and training schedules should be negotiated to suit the majority of women. This could be done by seeking the assistance of institutions such as universities and technikons. These institutions will help to provide continuity in training programmes and in monitoring and evaluation.

Institutional linkages

There is a need to review the structural positioning of the directorate dealing with gender in the national DWAF office in Pretoria. The directorate is positioned at a lower level where it has no power to enforce and monitor gender requirements at the top echelons. Gender questions are about the changing of attitudes, values and perceptions and, therefore, positioning this in the office of the Director General would provide the directorate with the necessary status and authority required to implement decisions.

Recommendations for Further Research

The DWAF Guidelines for increasing the involvement of women in community water supply and sanitation (1995) need further development. The current guidelines do not take into account the multiple roles of women and are based on an implicit assumption that women will be readily available when needed. Also the guidelines do not include an element of monitoring and evaluation with a gendered perspective. A monitoring and evaluation mechanism has to be based on the experiences of the communities and on the analysis of the cultural stratification of roles of men and women.

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APPENDIX A

KEY CONCEPTS

SEX identifies the differences between women and men.

GENDER is the culturally specific set of characteristics that identifies the social behaviour of women and men and the **relationship** between them. Gender, therefore, refers not simply to women and men, but to the relationship between them, and the way it is socially constructed. Because it is a relationship term, gender must include women and men. Like the concepts of class, race, ethnicity, gender is an analytical tool for understanding social processes.

GENDER EQUITY is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. **Equity leads to equality.**

GENDER EQUALITY means that women and men enjoy the same status. Gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to the national, political, economic and cultural development, and to benefit from the results.

Originally, it was believed that equality could be achieved by giving women and men the same opportunities, on the assumption that this would bring sameness of results. However, **same** treatment was found not necessary to yield equal results. Today the concept of equality acknowledges that different treatment of women and men may sometimes be required to achieve sameness of results, because of different life conditions or to compensate for past discrimination.

Gender Equality is therefore the equal valuing by society of both the similarities and differences between women and men, and the varying roles that they play.

Gender-based analysis is a process that assesses the differential impact of proposed and/or existing policies, programmes and legislation on women and men. It makes it possible for policy to be undertaken with an appreciation of gender differences, of the nature of relationships between women and men and of their different social realities, life expectations and economic circumstances. It is a tool for understanding social processes and for responding with informed and equitable options. It compares how and why women and men are affected by policy issues. Gender-based analysis challenges the assumption that everyone is affected by policies, programmes and legislation in the same way regardless of gender, a notion often referred to as 'gender-neutral policy' (Gender-based Analysis: Guide for Policy Making, Status of Women in Canada).

APPENDIX B

Successes and Challenges in the Peddie Water Project

SUCSESSES	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender requirements were included in the business plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need for adequate understanding of the objectives of the DWAF gender policy in the communities ▪ Need for understanding and appreciation of cultural constraints on the participation of women ▪ Monitoring and evaluation of implementation and follow up mechanism need to be built into the project from the conceptualization stage by DWAF.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PSC achieved the quota requirements of the gender policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need for analysis of community gendered division of labour prior to implementation ▪ Need for consultants and contractors to understand and appreciate gender issues and the social dynamics of the communities they work with
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through PSC women had some input in project administration and supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More meaningful participation of communities, particularly women, in planning and decision making in the project ▪ Need for training to be effected prior to commencement of the project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment of the PSC and its sub committees and VWCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Men formed 80% of the membership of the committees therefore the policy requirement is not met
<p>Integrated development planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need for Integration of water and sanitation services at policy conceptualization, and implementation ▪ Need for government to look at issues of cross-subsidation in order to assist people to meet some of their sanitation requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Redressing Gender imbalances in job opportunities for both men and women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need for contracting companies to be educated on the Labour Relations Act ▪ Need to address gender

	<p>participation in local governance structures such as district councils and TRCs</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Correction of job opportunities for both men and women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need for contracting companies to be educated on the Labour Relations Act ▪ Need to address gender participation in local governance structures such as district councils and TRCs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An average 39 percent of women were employed in the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More men involved in operation and maintenance than women. ▪ Need for training community members on technical and management of the scheme, particularly women
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited transfer of skills for maintenance of communal standpipes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality standards of project material not met e.g. leakages and breakage of water pipes ▪ Project design and implementation needs to make sustainability of service a central issue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to clean drinking water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project implementation needs to consider those who cannot afford to pay water tariffs

APPENDIX C

Appendix: Questionnaires

Questionnaire for the Local Authorities, Consultants, Institutions and Community Structures

1. What is the role of your organisation/structure in the Peddie Water Scheme?
2. How was the issue of participation on gender representation addressed in the water scheme?
3. In the Project Design, Project Management and Implementation, how was the DWAF gender policy considered?
4. How did the decision-making process ensure the participation and involvement of both men and women?
5. What were the factors that inhibited policy implementation in the water project?
6. What are the challenges and possible solutions to sanitation services?
7. What are the experiences and challenges in relation to cost recovery or payment of services?
8. How is the monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation in the project and for project conceptualisation conducted?

Interview Schedule for the Local Communities of Peddie Both Men and Women

1. How were the communities both men and women introduced to the water scheme?
2. What measures were put in place to ensure participation and involvement of both men and women?
3. What are the benefits and challenges of the water supply project for both men and women?
4. How did the communities (both men and women) form part of decision-making in the scheme?
5. What do the communities understand about policy requirements on water and sanitation and what has been the real experience in the project?

6. On sanitation, what are major factors that affect both men and women?
7. What are the measures and strategies that are put in place for monitoring and evaluation of policy pronouncements for the involvement of women in the project?