

Water and Health Conference

**How lack of safe toilets threatens to
increase violence against women in slums**

**Experiences from Kampala Uganda; Delhi &
Bhopal India**

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University of North Carolina

Outline

- Context
- Research On VAW
- Specific Issues affecting Women
- The Impacts of VAW
- Recommendations



Context

- Global and Country specific legislation recognizing rights
 - UNDHR, CEDAW, Human RTW&S (2010), UNDEVAW (2010)
 - Global Commitments (GPfA – Beijing, APfA – Dakar) Uganda Constitution (1995)
- WASH, Health and Social Development Sector policies
 - National Gender Policy (2007)
 - National Water Policy
 - Domestic Violence Act (2010)

Research on VAW – Uganda & India

- Studies in Kampala Uganda, Bhopal & Delhi India
- Exploring how women's rights to sanitation and safety are being violated and offer solutions for enabling women demand their rights
- The study observed existence of violence against women due to inadequate access to WASH
- Existing policies are not explicit on how to deal with impacts of gender violence related to lack of access to WASH

Violence against women and girls defined; includes physical, sexual and emotional or psychological abuse, occurring in the family, community or condoned by the state (UN 2010)

Specific Issues affecting Women

- Inadequate access to household & communal toilets
 - Toilets locked at night
 - Not affording paid toilets
- Limited access to MHM services
- Facilities not meeting standards – location, lighting, privacy, hygiene, design
- Lack of protection and support
- Open defecation or in buckets within the households



The human right to sanitation requires services to be available, safe, acceptable, accessible and affordable.

Women's own voices

“We are all using the same toilet and it gets filled up very fast. Everyone finds it disgusting because it is dirty and many people use it.”

“The toilets are almost full. Maggots come out and crawl up your feet.”

Impacts



- Threat of sexual harassment, rape and other forms of violence
- Restricted from eating – less healthy
- Violence and constant fear of attack
 - (94% of respondents in India faced some form of violence going to defecate)
- Fear of losing dignity—early marriage
- Shame and discrimination

Recommendations

- **Urgent need to raise awareness on the role of toilets in reducing the risk of violence against women**
- **Authorities to guarantee access without discrimination**
- **Increased collaboration & dialogue among stakeholders on sanitation financing, affordability and subsidies**
- **Empowering women to be at the fore front of sanitation programmes**
 - **Demanding for accountability and response**
 - **Involvement in design, delivery & M&E to ensure relevance to their needs**
 - **Improving own access through loans and savings schemes**
 - **Skills development & income generation through masonry support**
- **More research on VAW and WASH**

Thank you