Water Security and Gender Disparity –Indian Scenario

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ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the water access outcome of water security and uses household survey data from India to determine factors which outline the choice of drinking water source. This study uses the definitions from the World Health Organization (WHO) and divide the water sources into 3 broad categories: piped, improved and unimproved. The results obtained using the multinomial logit model (MNL) highlight that household income is an important determinant and positively affects the choice of a better water source. Other significant factors include gender and schooling of household head. While for number of women of age group 15-49, there is clear trend throughout, having positive association with choosing an improved water source and negative association with choosing an unimproved water source, the number of men in the age group 15-59 is negatively associated with choosing an improved water source in rural areas but not significant for any water source when looked at urban India. Policies that augment household income could provide for a better source of drinking water. The wealth effect appears to be larger for urban India. The majority of water collection is done by women and girl child and thus any benefits from investments in such policies will be greatest for this segment of the population. Since the data shows around 10% of the households to be still using unimproved drinking water sources, India as a long way to go so that it is able to achieve the target of safe drinking water and ensure water security for all by 2030.

 Key Words: Drinking water source, rural urban, water security, India,

 JEL Codes: J16, Q25