



# Sanitation & Violence Against Women

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# Safe sanitation, but safe for who?

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# Overview

1. Background
2. The hypothesis
3. The literature – themes and limitations
4. Research needs

In 8 minutes...



# Sanitation – a gendered issue

- Women suffer differentially and disproportionately?
- Women place greater value on sanitation as a result
- Sanitation enjoys lesser priority as those most affected have less power/voice



# Sanitation as a human right

Depriving an individual of their right to sanitation, results in multiple deprivations:

- Right to dignity - INDIRECT
- Right to privacy - INDIRECT
- Right to safety - DIRECT

(United Nations (2010) The Human Right to Water and Sanitation, GA Res. 64/292 UNGAOR, 64 Sess., Supp. 49, UN Doc. A/64/49 45)

Plausible and supported anecdotally but poorly understood and under-researched





# Qualitative analysis – India, Kenya & Uganda

- All concerned women's experience in high density informal urban settlements
- Both reported that women's experience poor sanitation access differs significantly to men
- Similar themes identified suggesting poor sanitation a significant risk factor for VAW





# Hypothesis

Poor access to sanitation or water increases the risk of violence for women and girls

... and/or compounds existing insecurity



# Grey literature

## **Odongo G (2010) AI – Kenya**

Unspecified number of FGD in Kibera slum,  
Nairobi

## **Massey K (2011) SHARE – Uganda**

32 women through key informant and focus  
group in Jambula, Kiganda, Kifumbira  
slums, Kampala

## **Lennon S (2011) SHARE – India**

42 women through focus group in Bhalswa,  
New Seemapuri, Sunder Nagri slums, Delhi

Briefing note

### Insecurity and shame

Exploration of the impact of the lack of sanitation on women in the slums of Kampala, Uganda

Briefing note

### Fear and anger

Perceptions of risks related to sexual violence against women linked to water and sanitation in Delhi, India



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**INSECURITY  
AND INDIGNITY**  
WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN  
THE SLUMS OF NAIROBI, KENYA  
HOUSING IS A  
HUMAN RIGHT  
AMNESTY  
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# Kenya (AI, 2010)

- Purposive sample of 130 women (50% who had experienced sexual violence)
- Poor access – lack of facilities & affordability
- Average distance to toilet – 300mts
- Journey to toilets especially at night at risk of harassment and rape
- Coping strategies – journey in groups or with male relative





# India (Lennon, 2011)

## Fear

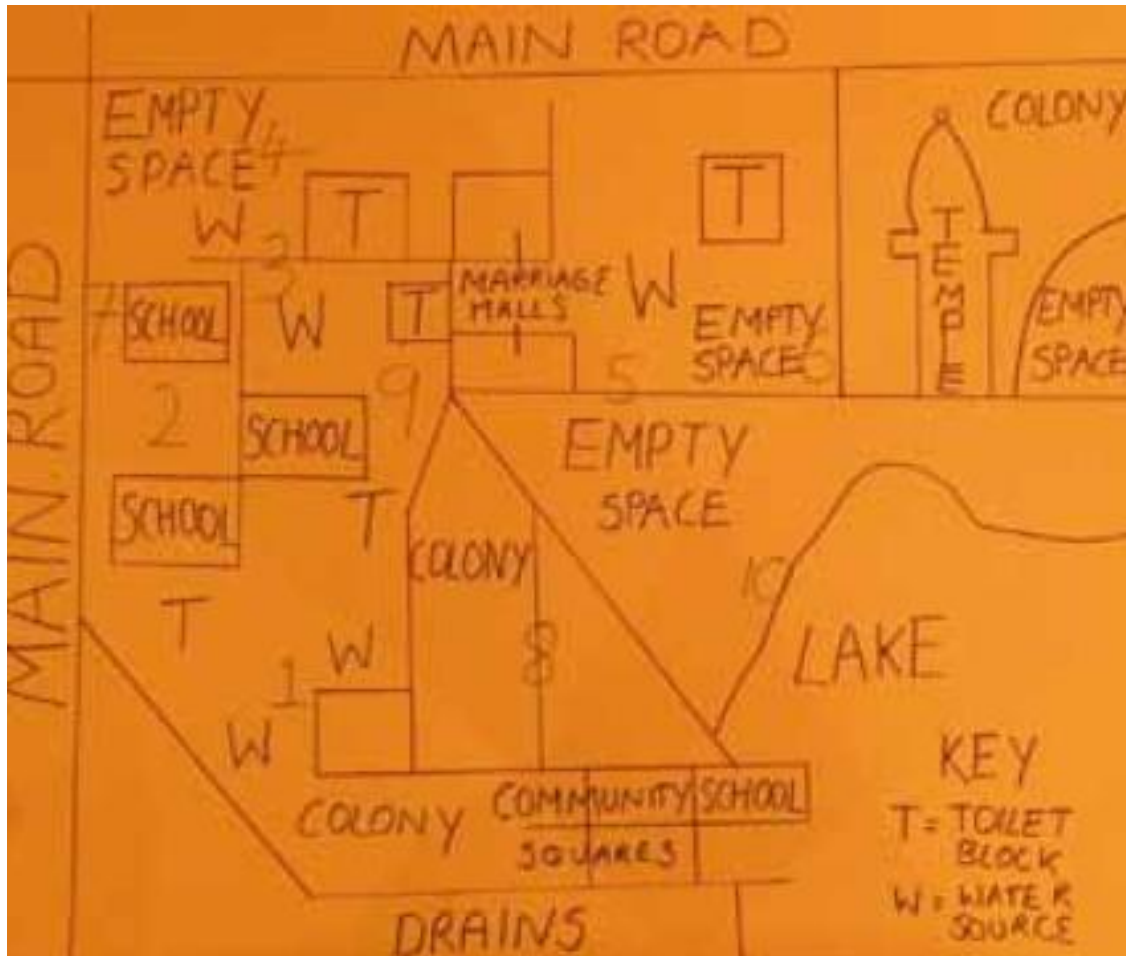
- Women afraid of sexual violence when using public toilets and open defecation
- Reported incidents of rape and harassment

## Anger

- Lack of protection nor processing of case from police
- Lack of attention and investment from local government



# Mapping violence against women



# Kampala (Massey 2011)



WaterAid/Benedicte Desrus

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# Kampala (Massey, 2011)

## Facilities

- Few toilets, poorly maintained, locked at night, unaffordable

## Safety

- Risk of violence when leaving house, travelling to toilets
- Did not assess incidence but a clear cause of anxiety

## Burden

- Women felt burden of sanitation feel disproportionately
- Only women feared violence & felt shame of 'home toilets'

## Helplessness

- No choice but to use 'home toilets' due to costs and risks
- Lack of willingness among police to prosecute



# Published literature

- Systematic search (OvidSP)
- Inclusion – cross-sectional/obs/int
- Limits – LIC/MIC
- 8 studies identified; all poor quality





# Published literature

In humanitarian context where related lack of public health infrastructure was associated with VAW (Gasser et al. 2004; Pittaway et al. 2007)

One study suggested that a failure to recognise women's sanitation and bathing needs in emergencies partly explained increases in VAW (Pittaway et al. 2007)

One study of shared sanitation facilities in Madhya Pradesh found that the ratio of male/female users was 2:1 (Biran et al. 2010)

One review suggested that as well as education, sanitation services contributed to reduced levels of VAW (Grown et al. 2005)

Many of the studies looked at water collection only and did not address sanitation (Boone et al. 2011; Karim et al. 2012;

One study looking at hospital admittances looked at sanitary nature of cases' homes but as a proxy for wealth (Mugala & Imataa 2007)



# Conceptual diagram







# Research –

## Characterising problems –

- Investigating exposure – where, when, how
- Quantification of prevalence of sanitation-related violence
- Qualitative analysis of experiences of, and effects , on women’s health and well-being
- Quantification of associated disease burden (violence, psycho-social stress)

## Identifying solutions –

- Using formative research to re-design interventions
- Combining infrastructure and security/justice reform (policing)

## Assessing impact –

- Relative costs and benefits of providing ‘safe’ sanitation





# SHARE – research

Cumulative effects of sanitation across the life course of girls/women in India:

- Framework to quantify multiple effects of sanitation on girls and women
- Cross-sectional research where we lack reliable data on prevalence
- FGD (qual) and household survey (quant)





**Thank you**

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