Assessing the Socio-economic Impact of Water Scarcity on Women and Girls with Disabilities in Gweru Urban

LILLIAN CHAMINUKA[1], DOREEN TSHUMA[2]

Abstract

The study investigated the socio-economic impact of water scarcity on women and girls with physical disabilities in Senga, a high-density suburb of Gweru. It explores urban water scarcity as a critical threat to human survival and argues that its domino effects necessitate improved water services in urban dwellings. The study employed a qualitative research methodology and case study approach. Using purposive sampling, the study identified twenty participants from Senga area of Gweru with the assistance of community elders. Data were generated through interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and document analysis, then analysed using thematic content analysis. Findings from the study revealed that it was very difficult for women and girls with disabilities as they had to wake up around 3 o' clock in the morning to join the queues to get water at the community boreholes. It was also revealed that many able-bodied people often bribed the people who controlled the water sources to avoid queuing for water. In addition, no preferential treatment was given to people with physical disabilities. It is recommended that alternative water supply sources be provided to ameliorate the challenges faced by this special population of women and girls with physical disabilities so as to promote more inclusive and sustainable

[1] Zimbabwe Open University
[2] National University of Lesotho

social and economic livelihoods. Furthermore, duty-bearers and local authorities must strive to improve the situation for women and girls with physical disabilities by aligning efforts with SDG 6, which calls for their access to safe, affordable, equitable and sustainable water and sanitation.

Keywords: *water resources, women and girls with disabilities, socio-economic impact, inclusivity, SDG 6.*

INTRODUCTION

Access to clean and safe water is a fundamental human right which is underpinned by the Zimbabwean Constitution. Section 77 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides that "every person has a right to safe, clean and potable water and the State must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within the limits of the resources available to it, to achieve the progressive realisation of this right" (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013: 38). The Global Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also seeks to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by the year 2030. These provisions are critical for development, because a deficiency in water supply produces several consequences including mental health, destruction of livelihoods and various social challenges. Despite these provisions and the emphasis placed on the importance of access to safe and clean water, water scarcity is increasingly becoming an indicator of vulnerability, poverty and exclusion in lowest income urban neighbourhoods in Zimbabwe and other developing countries. There are several causal factors that have been noted to influence and compound the challenges which are faced by women and girls in the context of water scarcity. Such factors include climate change and variability, a combination of weak institutional arrangements and rapid population growth and the existing vulnerabilities of women and girls living in low-income communities (Gwinji *et al.,* 2021; Damania *et al*., 2017; Zaveri *et al*., 2021). In addition, despite the

provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), women and girls in low-income communities continue to face risks associated with water scarcity as these conditions are allowed to persist. The study was carried out to assess the socio-economic impact of water scarcity on women and girls with physical disabilities within Gweru's high–density residential area of Senga.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Water security, which is the capacity of a population living in a specific area to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for livelihoods, human well-being and socio-economic development among others (UN Water, 2013) cannot be overemphasised. The Maslow Hierarchy of Needs (1943) as postulated by the psychologist Abraham Maslow shows that water is among the physiological needs which are critical for the optimal functioning of the human body (McLeod, 2018). In resonance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Gweru City Council (GCC), has envisioned becoming a sustainable and prosperous city of choice in Zimbabwe by the year 2030 (Kusena *et al*., 2021). The key pillars of the vision are achieving poverty eradication (SDG 1), ending hunger and food insecurity (SDG 2) and addressing water security issues (SDG 6) which have been affecting the socio – economic development of the city. Surprisingly, one of the persistent challenges that people living in Gweru high density suburbs have continued to experience is that of severe water shortages and erratic water supply, and the subsequent challenges that come with inadequate supply of WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) (Kusena *et al*., 2018). As one of the high-density suburbs in Gweru, Senga continues to go for several weeks without water supply and most of the households have been exposed to poverty and health risks (Matsa, 2012). This is because most of the households, particularly women, are largely dependent on water for livelihoods and daily activities such as cooking, drinking, washing and cleaning.

WATER SCARCITY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

While water shortages and the subsequent challenges have been noted to pose a public health concern for affected communities around Zimbabwe, there is growing evidence showing that water scarcity reflects social exclusion and marginalisation for the key populations. The nexus between water scarcity and social exclusion is realised when individuals, particularly women and girls, are pushed to the edge of society and are prevented from accessing community resources, including water and sanitation resources (Kummitha, 2017). In their recent joint study, UN Women, UN Water and United Nations (UN) (2025) pointed out that, as a result of water scarcity and shortages in most communities in the low- and medium-income regions, at least more than 800,000 women face a greater risk of losing their lives each year. This is largely due to the fact that water scarcity in most of the affected communities is gendered, that is, lacking access to basic water and sanitation has certain sex and gender implications and connotations (Geere and Hunter, 2020; Kayser *et al*., 2019; Tandon *et al.,* 2024). For instance, women and girls who are the most vulnerable to the phenomenon of water scarcity are those who are already facing gender and other disadvantages related to their socio–economic status, residential area, ethnicity and disability. This was buttressed by the study done by UN Women *et al*. (2025) who also postulated that women from poor and marginalised backgrounds, including refugees, indigenous women and those with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by water scarcity crisis as they often face exclusion from the management and governance of water resources in high–density urban and rural areas. This shows an interplay between water scarcity and social exclusion in the socio-economic context.

WATER SCARCITY AND URBAN POVERTY

Additionally, there is good evidence suggesting that persons with physical disabilities, and living in low-income communities, often find it difficult to safeguard their human rights to life, food, water and shelter (Mills and

Cumming, 2016; Jones *et al*., 2002). Consequently, when persons living with physical disabilities are excluded from accessing WASH facilities, this has a significant impact on their families and communities, "in both human and economic terms." This is because water scarcity creates conditions whereby an individual, household or community lacks access to clean, safe and affordable water to satisfy their fundamental needs (Chakkaravarthy and Balakrishnan, 2019). Water scarcity often takes different forms which are reflective of the seriousness of the impact that the conditions that are created have on girls and women, living in communities which are predisposed to water challenges. In addition, in the event of water shortages within certain communities, there are constraints that are put on the socio-economic development and well-being of those that are vulnerable. For instance, when a vulnerable individual or community is faced with physical scarcity of water, which is increasing as a result of hydro–climatic conditions, as a profound problem in the area, they are most likely to experience food insecurity (Kusena *et al.,* 2021) and increased gender disparities and socio–economic injustices. This is because water and food are not only interdependent, but they have an impact on people's livelihood systems (Gebre and Gebnemedhin, 2019).

Similarly, when economic scarcity of water is at play, which is often reflective of governance related issues that allow the conditions to persist, individuals and households are also significantly impacted by this phenomenon, which is the determining and decisive factor of "who gets how much water, when and how, at what cost and who has the right to water and related services and their benefits" (Kusena *et al*., 2021: 330). This is exemplified by situations where persons with physical disabilities in areas such as Madziwa community, in Shamva, Zimbabwe are faced with economic scarcity of water due to systemic exclusion (Tom and Munemo, 2015). These conditions show that the governance of water resources in most of the urban communities often overlooks the needs of persons with

physical disabilities. In the study that they conducted in Mkoba, Gweru, Mangizvo *et al*. (2016), found a significant impact of water scarcity on the livelihoods of the residents as water scarcity is increasingly becoming dire in urban communities. The experiences of people facing the impacts of economic scarcity of water shows that as water challenges increase, so does the level of poverty particularly for the vulnerable. However, there are limited studies showing the experiences of women and girls with physical disabilities as they encounter the nexus between water scarcity and urban poverty.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were to:

i. Assess community perception on water scarcity related challenges faced by women and girls with physical disabilities in Gweru.
ii. Examine the impact of water scarcity on women and girls with physical disabilities in the area.
iii. Recommend policy pathways for addressing water challenges for physically disabled women and girls in low – income communities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study employed the Theory of Desperation which is widely recognised in psychology and sociology as a state of intense hopelessness and urgency, often triggered by prolonged hardship or lack of viable options (Blum, 1996). It combines emotional, cognitive and motivational elements such as fear, distorted thinking and irrational actions. In this research, water scarcity may not just cause economic hardship, it may trigger desperation, which in turn influences decisions for example, skipping school, engaging in unsafe labour, or enduring abuse to access water (Blum, 1996). In addition, there is an intersectional disadvantage that amplifies water related hardships, as the group is more vulnerable due to its gender and physical disability.

METHODOLOGY

Central to carrying out the study was the research methodology which addressed the what, how and why of data generation and analysis. A qualitative research approach was employed in the collection, investigation, analysis and interpretation of information that was gathered in line with the research objectives of the study. This approach allowed the researchers to explore and understand the meaning that the participants of the study attached to the challenges related to water scarcity within the context of the Gweru high–density suburb of Senga (Creswell, 2014). The case study research design was also utilised in the study as it allowed the researchers to have an in–depth analysis of water scarcity and subsequent challenges in the area. This design also allowed the researchers to collect information using various methods (Yin, 2012). Supporting the study was the interpretivism research philosophy. This was important in understanding the experiences of people within the study area and their understanding of the identified challenges (Gemma, 2018). Interpretivism was selected based on the realisation that reality in relation to the water scarcity challenges is a social construct. However, it was important to note that the researchers may not completely be separated from their own values and beliefs, so these inevitably informed the way in which they collected, analysed and interpreted data. To address the limitation, the triangulation of inductive methods of data collection, that is, in–depth interviews, FGDs and participant observation were utilised.

Key informants of the study were drawn from persons living with physical disabilities, members of residents' association and local authorities in the area. A councillor with the help of community elders and health workers assisted in purposively identifying 15 women and girls living with physical disabilities. In total, a sample of fifty (50) participants were selected for the study.

In total, seven Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with women and girls with physical disabilities (PWDs) and general members of the community. Five (5) FGDs were conducted with persons living with physical disabilities, while two (2) were conducted with other participants of the study. The groups constituted 8-10 people who were selected from the study area. Other members of the community were selected based on convenience.

Participant observations were also conducted to generate important data. To conduct the observations, the researchers randomly selected the sites where communities drew water. An observation guide indicated to researchers the various aspects that were going to be observed. Observations were conducted at various times of the day, as early as 3am and as late as 8pm.

Table 1: Population and Sample Size *(Author's Creation, 2025)*

POPULATION		SAMPLE	
Girls and Women with Disabilities	20	Girls and Women with Disabilities	15
Residents Association Members	6	Residents Association Members	6
Local Authorities	4	Local Authorities	4
Local Residents	35	Local Residents	20
CBO Members	5	CBO Members	5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thematic content analysis was used in analysing the information generated using qualitative research instruments. The results of the study are divided into three categories informed by the research objectives.

WATER SCARCITY RELATED CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

The first variable of the study focused on investigating community perception on water scarcity related challenges faced by women and girls with physical disabilities in the Gweru suburb of Senga. The responses from the participants of the study indicated their perception on the various socio–economic challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities in the area. Looking at the responses, which were given by the participants of the study, the results revealed that 87 percent of the participants recognised that as water scarcity is increasingly becoming one of the major challenges being experienced within Gweru's Senga suburb, women and girls living with physical disabilities are adversely affected. One of the key informants living with disabilities reflecting on their experiences indicated that:

> *Vema NGO varikubatsiridza kuchera zvibhorani kuti dambudziko remvura ranetsa rive nani kuvagari vemuno, asi tinoona kuti zvibhorani zvine dambudziko kune vakaremara. Isu tiri kurarama nehurema tiri kusangana nematambudziko pakuchera mvura pazvibhorani izvi uye pane dzimwe nguva totomiswawo mumutsetse kuti tichere mvura yacho.* (While NGOs have drilled boreholes in the area to help alleviate water challenges for the residents, the boreholes are not designed with the needs of individuals who are physically disabled in mind. As disabled people, we cannot manage to access the water infrastructure. Moreover, as water challenges have become the norm, there is no longer a privilege for the disabled females to skip queues as men often dominate the water points).

Another key informant in the interviews also indicated that:

> *Ndiri kutorangaridzwa kunetsekana kunoita imwe hama yangu iri kurarama nehurema kuti igare pane hutsanana nekuda kwedambudziko remvura. Dambudziko iri rinonyanya munguva yekuteera pavanofanirwa kunge vakashambidzika, nekuti mvura inenge isingachereke zviri nyore.* (I am reminded of how difficult it is for my female relatives with physical disability to meet their sanitation and hygiene needs due to water challenges. Imagine their experience during the period of their menstruation when their sanitation and hygiene needs have increased but access to water points is a challenge).

Another key informant also noted that:

> Because of the prevailing economic challenges in the country, women with disabilities would want to participate economically, particularly in the informal sector, but this requires access to water and sanitation facilities within the marketplaces. However, as water is a major challenge in the areas, women are faced with the challenge to freely participate economically.

The results show that women living with physical disabilities residing in the high–density suburb of Senga in Gweru, face water scarcity challenges, because of their vulnerability. The results also show that existing vulnerabilities coupled with systematic factors create an environment where the poor and the vulnerable are further pushed into poverty and marginalisation. This is in line with the views of Kanyepi and Tanyanyiwa (2021) who pointed out that the state of affairs in most of the urban areas in Zimbabwe reveal an imperfect reflection of the legal framework, the skewed water flow, favouring the powerful and the privileged while excluding vulnerable communities. The results of a study were also in line with the findings from the study done by UN Women *et al*. (2025) who revealed that the coalescence between gender, socio–economic status and disability among other factors heightens the risks that women and girls face in relation to water and scarcity. The researchers also observed that women and girls with physical disabilities cannot access wells which are dug within the residential areas and also face difficulties accessing public water points. Based on these findings, there is ample evidence showing that women and girls living in low-income communities are vulnerable to the challenges associated with water scarcity.

THE IMPACT OF WATER SCARCITY ON DISABLED WOMEN AND GIRLS

The second variable was looking at the impact that the phenomenon of water scarcity has on women and girls with physical disabilities living in the low-income communities. The results show the perception of the participants of the study on the impact of water scarcity on women and

girls in the high-density area of Senga in Gweru. Looking at the results, 90 percent of the participants perceive the disproportionate and adverse impact of water scarcity on the group that is already facing challenges. Based on personal experience, one of the key informants with physical disability indicated that:

> *Tinodawo kuzviriritira tichiwana chekubata, asi nzvimbo dzekutengesera hadzina matoilets akashambidzika nemvura zvinokwanisa kuti isu vari kurarama nehurema tibatsirike. Izvi zvinova zvinozounza hurwere kana tikada kuti tipinde munzvimbo idzi.* (While we desire to participate in the economic space, the marketplace still lacks water and sanitation facilities which are accommodating to persons living with disabilities. This subsequently exposes disabled persons to diseases if they choose to participate in the informal marketplace).

Another key informant from the residents' association also indicated that:

> Water scarcity exposes people with disabilities to various health issues including mental health challenges and other diseases which are water and sanitation related. For example, when women and girls with disabilities are faced with water challenges in meeting their sanitation needs, they often find themselves facing mental health challenges related to stress.

One of the participants for the FGDs also indicated that:

> *Pasina mvura yakachena uye yakakwana kuti vanhukadzi vari kurarama nehurema vashandise, zvinowedzera kusangana kwavo nezvirwere zvakaita saana cholera nezvimwewo. Zvinogona kutovauraya nekuti zvirwere izvi zvinotouraya.* (Without adequate, clean and safe water at their disposal, women and girls living with disabilities are exposed to diseases which are related to sanitation and hygiene. This exposure may also lead to deaths if not well managed).

The results reveal that water scarcity, particularly economic scarcity further exposes women and girls with disabilities to economic challenges, that is, they are further exposed to poverty and lack of economic opportunities. This is in line with the Theory of Desperation which explains how (water) scarcity, social exclusion and poverty are constructed in the communities by those in power (Mtapuri and Myeni, 2020). Women and girls with physical disabilities become emotionally stressed

due to prolonged deprivation of access to clean and safe water resulting in socio-economic woes. In their joint publication, UN Women, UN Water and United Nations (2025) also found that in the face of water scarcity and lack of access to water and sanitation facilities, women and girls living in low-income communities often face risks of the increased likelihood of contracting urinary and reproductive tract infections. This is especially an issue of concern for women and girls with physical disabilities whose risks are further compounded by their existing vulnerabilities.

The results reveal that water scarcity, both physical and economic, increases the exposure of women and girls to various forms and types of poverty and increased food insecurity as a result of limited livelihood options. This corroborates findings from the study conducted by Kusena *et al.,* (2021) who found that water insecurity adversely affects food security for vulnerable communities in Senga in two ways. These include high water bills and severe water shortages. This has an impact on the physically disabled persons as the major sources of livelihoods in Gweru are informal sectors. During participant observations, researchers observed that water scarcity imposed a major limitation on the socio–economic activities of the poor and vulnerable in Senga, including women and girls living with physical disabilities. During early morning observations as early as 3am, some disabled women were seen queuing for water. When asked why they chose to come to boreholes at such a time, two physically disabled women mentioned that pressure at boreholes at that time is less compared to mid-morning and afternoon. In addition, some of the physically disabled women and girls did not have wheelchairs, and others had malfunctioning wheelchairs. The boreholes were not designed with accessibility in mind for the physically challenged persons. The results show that water scarcity negatively affects women and girls with physical disabilities in terms of health and socio-economic wellbeing.

The research aligns with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that promotes inclusion, advocates for the human rights of all persons with disabilities, and provides recommendations to support the implementation of the provisions enshrined in the Convention (Stienstra, 2022). A number of articles in the CRPD were found to be violated in the study area. For example, Article 6 in the CRPD, highlights that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple and intersecting types of discrimination (*ibid*). The study shows how water scarcity amplifies gender and disability-based exclusion, thereby violating Article 6. Women and girls with physical disabilities in Senga face many barriers to realising their rights, including accessibility in the built or physical environments, in communications and access to information, access to services, in addition to discrimination, stereotyping and stigma. The lack of disability-friendly water points and sanitation facilities in Senga area violates Principle 9 of Accessibility of the CRPD (*ibid*). Article 28 that emphasises rights of women and girls with disabilities, is also violated because the findings show that water scarcity undermines this right for this group with physical disabilities.

POLICY PATHWAYS FOR ADDRESSING WATER CHALLENGES FOR DISABLED WOMEN AND GIRLS IN LOW – INCOME COMMUNITIES.

The third variable was looking at the policy interventions which can be formulated to address the challenges related to water scarcity for women and girls with physical disabilities, living in low-income communities such as those residing in the high-density area of Senga in Gweru. The results revealed a general agreement from the participants on the need to formulate interventions that would address the risks that are faced by women and girls with physical disabilities, in the face of water scarcity. Eighty percent of the key informants in the study, emphasised the need to address the barriers which heightened the risks faced by women and girls in the context of water scarcity. One of the key informants emphasised that:

Matambudziko emvura ari kuramba achienderera nekuti vari kutonga havasi kufunga kuti matambudziko aya ari kukanganisei munharaunda dziri kusangana nematambudziko aya. Zvakakosha kuti vari kutonga vabatirane nevari munharaunda dziri kusangana nematambudziko emvura kuti vagadzirise matambudziko aya. (These problems have been allowed to persist; it shows that there is little to no regard on how water challenges have an impact on the socio–economic fabric of our communities. There is a greater need for serious political will and active community engagement in the design of interventions to ensure sustainability and effectiveness in addressing these water challenges).

One of the interviewees added that:

> The infringement of human rights needs to be addressed. This means that, access, availability and affordability of fresh, clean and safe water needs to be regarded as a fundamental human right not only on paper, but the practicality has to be seen especially in addressing the WASH needs of low-income communities as they lack resources for exploring alternatives.

One of the participants from the FGDs also stated that:

> We are in the 21st Century. We cannot be fetching water from water sources such as community boreholes, shallow wells and unprotected streams. There is nothing right about that. Responsible authorities need to be exploring sustainable alternatives to meet the increased demand for water supply and also mitigate against the impacts of climate change.

The results show the perception of the participants regarding what can be done to address water challenges in low-income communities such as Senga suburb in Gweru. Kanyepi and Tanyanyiwa (2021) argued that there is a dire lack of representation or in some cases misrepresentation of key stakeholders who are knowledgeable of the intimate water challenges which are being faced by residents in urban areas. They further pointed out that this drives corruption which leads to overlooking of the needs of the communities and the promotion of agendas of special interest groups. Borgomeo *et al*. (2021) suggested the implementation of people–and–area–based approaches to address water risks and crisis situations. They contended that the approach has long-term and sustainability benefits that

come with it. They posited that policies that are aimed at the rehabilitation and reconstruction of national institutions and components of water resource management, are bound to fail in the absence of the foundations of a renewed social fabric and trust in institutions, which can be achieved through people and area-based interventions (Borgomeo *et al*., 2021).

The Government of Zimbabwe (2020) under the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS 1) (2021 – 2025) formulated a number of strategies which could be employed to ameliorate the dire economic situation in the country. These include the development and implementation of the National Dam Safety Plan, focusing on strengthening the existing capacities for water resources management, development of water resources to cater for existing and future demand, as well as reducing hydrological and climatic vulnerability, and rehabilitation and development of basic water storage and transport infrastructure such as canals, pipelines and treatment plants (Government of Zimbabwe, 2020). The results of the study show that policy interventions and strategies which are aimed at addressing water scarcity do not work in isolation but need to be integrated into a system. The study observed that current interventions to address water challenges are not addressing the needs of the disabled, hence the need for mainstreaming disability in water policy and governance. Based on the results, there is evidence pointing to the need for implementing effective and sustainable policy interventions which also address the needs of the vulnerable and marginalised within the communities that are affected by water challenges.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study illustrate the significance of the study which was carried out to explore the socio–economic impact of water scarcity on women and girls with disabilities, within the context of Senga suburb in Gweru. Based on the findings of the study in line with the research

objectives, there is ample evidence which revealed that as water scarcity is a major issue within Senga area in Gweru, women and girls with disabilities face challenges which affect their social, mental and economic wellbeing. The study also shows that women with physical disabilities are at high risk as water scarcity challenges increase. The study has revealed that the interplay between gender and disability increases the exposure of women and girls to the impacts of water insecurity, including diseases and increased poverty. Based on the findings, the study has also shown that there is lack of consideration on the negative impact of water scarcity on the vulnerable groups such as women and girls with disabilities. The study further demonstrated policy and structural gaps in addressing water challenges in Senga.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of the study are:

ROBUST AND FUNCTIONING WATER POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Intermittent and erratic water supply has remained a persistent challenge prevalent mostly in urban areas and emerging settlements across Zimbabwe. This calls for an effective and robust policy design, adoption and implementation, as well as enforcement of regulations (Kanyepi and Tanyanyiwa, 2021) which can address the underlying factors which are affecting water and sanitation provision within urban areas. The study recommends that policy makers face the reality of the situation within most high-density urban areas and emerging settlements through assessment of the needs and concerns of the residents, particularly the marginalised and vulnerable in these communities before policy design and implementation. The study also recommends results-based evaluation and monitoring of the implemented water policies and regulations. Furthermore, the study recommends the engagement of all the key

stakeholders, including persons with disabilities in water policy formulation and implementation.

EFFECTIVE COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 emphasises on the strengthening and implementation of partnerships for sustainable development. The success and effectiveness of these partnerships is to a larger extent dependent on the prevalence of trust and legitimacy as was demonstrated in the countries which implemented Private Sector Partnerships (PSPs) to address water and sanitation issues within regions facing water challenges. The study, therefore, recommends collaboration aimed at achieving SDG 6 (water and sanitation), SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 17 (partnerships for development) among the central government, local government, intergovernmental organisations (such as UKAid, CARE International and USAID), international non-governmental organisations (such as UNICEF), local NGOs, residents' associations, residents and the private sector. The study also recommends creating space for the private sector to intervene and address water challenges within communities facing persistent challenges. This however requires high prevalence of trust, regulations and effective policy implementation.

SUPPORTIVE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

One of the key missing links in addressing the prevailing water scarcity within the high-density suburbs in Zimbabwe has been identified as the mere lack of political will (Kanyepi and Tanyanyiwa, 2021). Hence addressing systemic issues that cause and drive economic water scarcity requires support from the national government. The government can offer support in various ways which include policy formulation, financial support and adherence to United Nations CRPD Articles. The study recommends the active support of the government through policy implementation and enforcement of regulations and also through financial

assistance to the local government. Additionally, the study recommends support for women and girls with disabilities in terms of accessing water and livelihood opportunities.

DIFFUSION OF TECHNOLOGY

The unprecedented advancement of technology in the present digital age has necessitated that both central and local governments take advantage of technology to improve service delivery and governance. The study therefore, recommends that the relevant authorities maximise on cost–effective technologies such as Water-net which creates a network of water management and governance systems. Implementing technologies such as water–net plays an important role in improving access to water, improved distribution of water and also ensure effective community engagement. The study also recommends the effective use of Innovative Service Delivery Systems (ISDS) which refers to the structural changes in service delivery patterns through which empowerment of the poor and the deprived is made possible in a sustainable way. This creates an environment where the disabled are empowered as water scarcity challenges are addressed in the process.

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