

**THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY BASED MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN IMPROVING  
THE FUNCTIONALITY OF RURAL WATER SUPPLY FACILITIES IN IGANGA  
DISTRICT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the research project sought to investigate the role of Community Based Management Systems (CBMs) towards improving the functionality of rural water supply facilities in Iganga District. The objectives of the study were to; assess how the Water and Sanitation User Committees have affected the functionality of rural water supply facilities in Iganga District; examine the role of community operational and maintenance services in the functioning of rural water supply facilities in Iganga District and identify mechanisms of improving on the functioning of rural water supply facilities in Iganga District. The study used cross-sectional survey research design adopting both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

A descriptive research design was used adopting both qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher used a sample of 167 respondents. Simple random sampling and Purposive sampling were both used. Methods of data collections were questionnaires and interviews guides. Descriptive statistics provided the techniques of numerically and graphically presenting information. Qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis.

The results of the study indicate that whereas CBM is well-known in Uganda's rural water sector and policy framework to be a desirable approach for achieving the much needed sustainability of rural point-water supply, service authorities especially from government are not consciously taking the necessary actions to leverage its effectiveness.

Findings of the study suggest that the rampant practice of vandalism of borehole parts for sale as scrap coupled with the lack of spare parts outlets has resulted into frequent borehole breakdown and consequent failures. Similarly, the irregularity of community contributions towards O&M of rural water facilities have subsequently affected the O&M of rural water facilities, resulting into reduced functionality. The study recommends for institution of a registration mechanism of all scrap buyers in the district, where they operate, and stores of registered scrap dealers need to be inspected regularly by relevant authorities to ensure that the content does not include vandalized water source components. It also recommends formation of HPMAs as a means of raising demand for spares.

The study findings further suggest the inability and ineffectiveness of WSCs to handle roles related to O&M of rural water facilities. WSCs lack a legal back-up for their operations and are mostly active immediately after their inauguration for newly constructed water sources, but later lose the interest; training of WSCs was not effectively carried out due to short timeframes allocated for implementation, inappropriate methods, inadequate funding and lack of prioritization of software activities. Consequently this has resulted into a decline in communities' level of involvement and participation in matters concerning operation and maintenance of rural water supply facilities. The study recommends provision of a clear legal framework by MWE/DWD to protect members of the WSC, in case of legal conflicts that arise from performing their roles and responsibilities, increased funding and prioritisation of software activities by both MWE and the district local government and introduction of incentives by the district local governments to motivate WSC members.

The study indicates that the user community morale towards contribution to O&M fund of rural water facilities has drastically declined. Enforcement of bye-laws by the WSCs is another challenge because communities no longer have trust in the WSCs. The study recommends that; for more sustainable delivery services by water and sanitation user committees, Community management should properly be embedded in, and supported by, policy, legal, regulatory frameworks and support services in order to achieve Professionalization of community management. To ensure continuous and reliable operation of a completed water facilities for at least three years, water user groups should have an operation and maintenance plan prior to commencement of any construction.

The study findings established the urgent need for MWE to carry out capacity building and dissemination of information to sector actors in Iganga district as a mechanism of improving on the functioning of rural water supply facilities. This will equip the HPMS and other members of the WSCs with the necessary technical information useful for proper the O&M of the rural water sources. The study recommends establishment of Sub-county water boards to be responsible for providing technical support supervision on O&M aspects e.g. to HPMS and WSCs in the following aspects/areas.