

Gender-based violence in WASH: A threat to global health security

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Despite the progress in access to WASH in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), significant inequalities exist across space and place. This paper uses insights from feminist political ecology of health to explore the multi-scalar ways WASH inequalities expose women and girls to violence in their WASH spaces. We explore this issue using retrospective narratives from in-depth interviews with 27 Ghanaian migrants (16 women and 11 men) residing in Ontario, Canada. The case of Ghana offers insight into how gender-based violence (GBV) in WASH is produced, maintained, and embodied in space and across temporal scales. The results reveal the embeddedness of GBV in socio-political and institutional structures of place. Expanding the analysis to consider impacts beyond the household (i.e., individual) scale showcased the collective embodiment of WASH-GBV and how vulnerabilities to GBV permeate social structures in Ghana. Collectively, the findings demonstrate how WASH-GBV is a cross-cutting issue and a barrier to achieving SDG 3 (population health and wellbeing), SDG 5 (promote gender equality), and SDG 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies).

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