

# **ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION AND WATER SUPPLY IN DODOMA, THE CAPITAL CITY OF TANZANIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

As it is known at present that, social media have become one of the major sources of information for different people, offices and governments. This study, seeks to examine the role of social media on community sensitization and water supply in Dodoma Urban based on data which were collected through focus group discussions, in depth - interviews and observation in Dodoma urban (DUWASA officials and customers). Social media are proved to be the quick communication channels on disseminating news and information. Findings have revealed that DUWASA do better on the role of community sensitization on dissemination of news and information. Furthermore, it was revealed that despite of DUWASA (Dodoma Urban water supply and Sanitation Authority) facing challenges, such as lack of communication with their customers during dissemination of news and information on shortage of water, social media are an effective, useful, helpful resourceful with efficiently way for communication. It is recommended that the government officials should use the same communication channels which are used by community members such as social media (facebook, whatsapp and tweeter).

**KEYWORDS:** Water Supply, Social Media, Dodoma, Sensitization.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tanzania is located along the shores of the Indian Ocean while Dodoma the capital city of Tanzania is in the central part of the country, which is at 6°10'23"S 35°44'31"E and Coordinates: 6°10'23"S 35°44'31"E, in the centre of the country. The town is 453 kilometres (281 mi) west of the former capital at Dar es Salaam and 441 kilometres (274 mil) south of Arusha, which is the headquarters of the East African Community. It is also 259 kilometres (161 miles) north of Iringa through Mtera and covers an area of 2,669

square kilometres (1,031 sq mi) of which 625 square kilometres (241sq mi) is urbanized. Water supply services in Dodoma is solely dependent on ground water sources, the Makutupora well field found 30 kms from Dodoma town, is the main source of water supply.

Dodoma Urban Water supply and Sanitation Authority (DUWASA), is an autonomous water utility charged with the delivery of water supply and sewerage disposal services to the residents of Dodoma urban.

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It was established in 1998 as per Act No. 8 of 1997 as repealed by Water Supply and Sanitation Act No 12 of 2009 and declared as an autonomous entity by order of the Minister responsible for water sector on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1998; and was officially inaugurated on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1998.

From 2003, it was declared as a category "A" water utility meeting all direct and indirect costs of operations and maintenance as well part of the investment costs. By June 2016, DUWASA had 200 permanent employees.

Before 1950, Dodoma town depended its water supply from Mkalama dam because the population was small. Later on, another source of Makutupora valley was increased to the supply due to an increase of the population in 1950. In the process five wells were drilled and increased the supply up to 2616 units per day.

In 1955 the government completed the operation to supply water to the town, after purchasing bigger pipes which managed to pump 2,352 units per day and enabled to distribute water supply to Msalato, Veyula, Miyuji, Mailimbili on its way to the town centre.

In 1974 it was discovered that, there was a huge amount of water at the Makutupora valley and the government in collaboration with the Chinese government, introduced a drilling school at Mzakwe, known as "Makutupora Drilling School" and other 9 wells were drilled which increased the amount of water up to 24,000 units per day.

From 1976 to 1985 with the Germany government assistance, a pipe of a radius of 600mm was constructed as well 4 reserve tanks which could labor 18,000 units each were established at Kilimani and 1 at Kitunda for 2,300 units near the town center.

With all efforts done still there was water scarcity in Dodoma town due to some irrigation projects, which were introduces by residents between

Mzakwe and Msalato known as the "green belt" and consumed 80% of the water supply to the town.

However, before 1998 water services were delivered by the Regional Commissioner's department of water and at the same year, DUWASA was established which introduced meter reading for water consumed by clients, an operation which was completed in 2003.

The completion of the water reading has reduced the scarcity of water demands in Dodoma town.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media\\_\(communication\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_(communication)) states that Media are the collective communication outlets or tools used to store and deliver information or data. It is either associated with communication. Therefore Media are the communication channels which used to disseminate news and information to the public.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media\\_\(communication\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_(communication)) states Social media is a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas and information and the building of virtual networks and communities. By design, social media is internet based and offers users easy electronic communication of personal information and other content, such as videos and photos. Users engage with social media via computer, tablet or smartphone via web-based software or web application, often utilizing it for messaging.

Social media originated as a tool that people used to interact with friends and family but was later adopted by businesses that wanted to take advantage of a popular new communication method to reach out to customers. The power of social media is the ability to connect and share information with anyone on Earth (or multitudes of people) as long as they also use social media.

Social media and Media in general have played a great role in bringing awareness on water supply and sanitation services to the communities in

Dodoma. Its integration is seen as an interactive process which enables the same-level information exchange among the audience and the brand, creating a long-lasting feedback communication process.

Its water supply source is underground water from Makutupora Basin. The population of the city is growing rapidly; the population estimated to be 2,083,588, while the Urban District had 410,956 while DUWASA serves was 321,194 by National Bureau of Statistics Tanzania-NBST (2012).

The estimated population currently in Dodoma Urban District is 455,958; hence water demand is also increasing. In order to manage the water supply, the need for Social media and Media in general cannot be avoided for sensitize customers and the Community in general.

## **STUDY AREA**

This survey was designed to capture views, experiences and perceptions of the government officials about the contribution which the social media is making, and has the potentiality, in communicating with community and in improving the planning, organization, as well delivery of Government services. The survey has explored benefits, risks and barriers to the government in using better social media, and identified areas where the social media could serve the sector in a best way.

In the present study, data have been collected from Dodoma Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Authority as the government public sector office and community members serves by DUWASA. The sample was taken from Dodoma region only especial urban area such as Nkuhungu, Chang'ombe, Mailimbili and city center and only from 80 participants that is; 30 workers from different departments and sections of DUWASA. 50 community members of DUWASA were included in the sample as customers of DUWASA

whom were receiving the service whom were randomly selected as long as they are connected with DUWASA water service.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Analysis was done only on the basis of two dimensions; the organization with the usage of social media as the communication tool, community members and the usage of social media on interaction with the government sector, through in-depth interviews and group discussions.

The selection of two focus group discussions as a method of data collection was dictated by the nature of the study which sought to find out how community members addressed their problems of shortage of water, high bills and unattended leakages in their areas to DUWASA.

Apart from focus group discussions, in depth interview method was used because of its effectiveness in giving people to focus on the research problems, and allowed respondents to be free on sharing their person feelings, ideas and experiences.

## **THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION AND WATER SUPPLY**

At the website of <http://socialmedia today.com/isra-garcia/278936/social-media-integration-theory-model> explained that; The exposure, feedback, engagement (*connecting*) and exchange (*sharing*) that Social Media platforms provides and creates major changes for the traditional communication understanding. Information flow essentially is no longer considered "*one-way street*" in which audience received messages through the "*I communicate – you receive*". Therefore Social Media integration is seen as an interactive process which enables the same-level information exchange among the

audience and the brand, creating a long-lasting feedback communication process.

A research for the usage of Social Media and Media was conducted by Ferro and Molinari (2010), and they stated that an evolved e-government approach, should involve Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools, enabling conditions, and institutional changes. They further explained that, government could obtain changes even on development through the usage of social media as a place for publishing the information and as a tool for communication between them and the clients whom were receiving their services.

Anne E. Howard, (2012; pg 5), again explained on the benefits of using social media as follows:-

### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO ORGANIZATIONS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA?**

There are several areas where the media could assist people and their organizations (Golden, 2011):-

- **CUSTOMER RELATIONS, SERVICE AND BRAND ENHANCEMENT:** This involves by having understood customers and clients, demonstrating accessibility, and listening to what was being said about the organization and the business.
- **BUILDING REPUTATION AND CREDIBILITY:** This can include attracting attention, organic 'pull' marketing and creating expert and 'thought leader' status.
- **DEMONSTRATING ACCESSIBILITY:** It involves identifying and listening to people with valued opinions and knowledge.
- **NETWORKING:** This involves deepening current relationships with more frequent and better quality contact.
- **ENGAGEMENT:** This involves establishing credibility by providing information-based content.

Media is mostly and very important when getting out delivering services to a targeted people. Some of the government officers pointed out that, social media had been highly effective in facilitating them to connect interact and communicate with targeted audiences whom had usually been hard-to-reach.

### **AWARENESS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS ON CLEAN AND SAFE WATER SUPPLY**

There is awareness among community members however still big job have to be done. Currently many people are satisfied by only physical parameters of water. Only water colors and smell become significant justification to use or not using water. However there are some other water quality parameters which should be earmarked which are chemical and biological parameters.

People have knowledge on how to treat biological parameters by boiling or treating water by using chemicals such as the usage of water guard but little knowledge on how they can treat chemical parameters such as chlorine on the basis of underground water.

### **ACCESSIBILITY OF WATER SUPPLY**

#### **RURAL WATER SUPPLY**

The rural water projects constructed as per March 2018 have 117,190 domestic points that could service 29,297,500 which is equal to 79% of the people leaving in rural areas.

Nevertheless, it is only 79,894 water points which are function and that make 53.1% of rural dwellers who have access to clean water. The situation is contributed by the poor management skills of Community Water Supply Organization (COWSOs) to run the projects.

#### **URBAN WATER SUPPLY**

The average coverage of urban water supply is currently 78%. The percentage is lower as

compared to 86% during 2016/2017 due to expansion of service areas. At district head quarters, townships and National water projects the coverage is 60% and 75%.

## **CHALLENGES FACING DUWASA AND INITIATIVES TAKEN TO ERADICATE THEM**

There are challenges facing the Water Supply and Sanitation Authority – DUWASA, on supplying water to the ever expanding city of Dodoma, some included the increased complaints on high bills and shortage of water from the customers.

“There is shortage of water, we are receiving tape water twice a week but when bill comes mmmh surprise you find it is very high bill compared to what we have got”. One of the DUWASA’s customers was complain during DUWASA stakeholders meeting.

The other challenge which was complained much with stake holders was an unattended leakage “...you can find a leakage and we call them, especial through toll free numbers! Well their responds are very nice but they never attend to the problem, even sometimes might stay more than a month...” Another DUWASA’s customer heard complained.

This study was done by the communication unit at DUWASA to assess how social media-journalism could be used in community sensitization on usage of water as well education on saving water and proper utilization was conducted.

The aim of the study was to understand the growing usage of social media by the government and the contribution of social media as another channel for communication. This explores the implications of the quickly changing environment for communication, customer service and public relation professionals, working in government sectors as well as people whose job are to maintain and manage the strategic communication.

This idea represents a huge change in the way people communicated with one another, and organizations they interacted with, including government sectors.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA IN COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION**

The in-depth interviews with employees of DUWASA confirmed that the government public sector officers used social media to:

- Promote DUWASA activities and events such as shortage of water days, Proper usage of water
- Festivals such as “*nanenane, wiki ya maji-water week*”, etc.
- Disseminate information of warnings for water theft issues, such as illegal connections, reporting of leakages, and other emergency issues.
- Vacancies advertisements.
- Correct misinformation.
- Engage with the community on the range of issues relevant to DUWASA and government-The Ministry for Water and the community.

Other DUWASA’s officials indicated that, they used media to help and improve the Authority’s customer relations by getting back to people as quickly as possible. Media is very much interactive and there is an expectation that people would respond texts in a very short time through social media and usually within two to four hours.

In-depth interviews also have pointed out that when an officer has communicated responded to the social media, it replied fast and quickly, even if they could not provide the exact answer at that time.

Almost all respondents (93%) were aware and familiar with social media and its contribution, towards the development of communication in offices and were using it too.

Most employees admitted that, they treated social media as a tool for communication in office usage comparing to their daily routine works, since could send information to customers and receive a feedback and also as an easy way for understand people's problems.

Furthermore, all the community members whom were the customers and clients (94%) communicated through social media and most used facebook as a social media tool for communication followed by whatsapp.

However, customers whom were among the community members, 62 percent of all respondents suggested and commenting on the government websites and profile on social media.

## CONCLUSIONS

Social media is an effective, useful, helpful and competent, resourceful with an efficient way to communicate particularly. It will continue to carry on the job of shaping and supporting in the way they communicate and collaborate with community members as they struggle to provide an answerable, responsible and transparent government. As government public sectors use social media they need and have to beat a balance between providing access to information and securing and protecting their government's core, private and central part of the network. This document is meant to help government public sectors to understand the usage of social media for their development and outline some of the best practices for social media usage in incorporate with community members. Moreover, the main purpose of the usage of the social media is to connect the government public sectors' with the community which could lead to the achievements of the following;-

- Without a doubt there are visibly benefits for many government officers in the use of social media-in particular in engaging with hardship they face on reaching the communities and

encouragement a more mutual, transparent approach to community and citizen governance.

- Improve customer service where by people will be able to access the government public sectors' information and services as they need to.
- Remove barriers which were existed and enable people to communicate openly and honestly with their governments' officials during normal transactions
- Make the life of customers more easy and to save the office's money because social media reduce the need of a face to face visit and phone use too.
- Improving the involvement of the community in to government issues.

The topic *"Role of social media in Community sensitization and water supply in Dodoma, the capital city of Tanzania"*, discloses the role of social media on government communication whereby, it gives a great opportunity for the government to reach more citizens that it thought at a time in terms of sending information, messages and making awareness on different issues to the people, publicizing the government and even organization's policies and receiving feedback easily.

Therefore, social media help on saving time, energy and money a cost for the traveling of government officials to different places in order to reach the people and provide them some information and messages on different issues such as for the development and policies.

Furthermore, this study included the impact and importance of social media on government communication and individual in the area of Dodoma especially in water sector which is DUWASA.

Needless to say, the survey was successful and managed to examine, identify, evaluate and bring awareness to the government officials and

community members on social media with its usage and benefits in their daily jobs and life which also helps to bring changes on development issues due to that people can raise their voices about a particular thing such as policies on government public sectors and the government can change or improve.

These benefits can accrue to the government, government public sectors, in an organizational and leadership context, as well as to staff in the management and service delivery context.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

When using social media, it is important to understand and keep in mind that, government officials should use the same communication channels which were used by the community members. If a group of people within the community used social media to discuss a particular issue or event, it is a wise thing to involve a government official, then it could make a sense for the government officer also to join the conversation and discuss it with the same social media channels, which mostly are used and well known by the community.

Government officials are being encouraged and advised to consider critically on the usage of social media as a component of their urgent situation management and organization strategy.

To create greater awareness and understanding of the important applications and usage of social media for the development and develop programs that will help to build capability in the usage of social media, including people involved in the coordination of services delivery.

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