



Tropentag, October 6-8, 2009, Hamburg

“Biophysical and Socio-economic Frame Conditions
for the Sustainable Management
of Natural Resources”

Socio-economic Determinants of Sources of Drinking Water: Some Insight from Ghana

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Abstract

The provision of safe drinking water is enshrined in one of the key facets of the MDGs- “to halve by 2015 the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and inadequate sanitation”. However, access to clean and safe drinking water which is an inalienable right remains a challenge in many developing countries. It is estimated that the lack of clean water for drinking, cooking and washing, and the lack of sanitary waste disposal are the cause of over 12 million deaths annually, many of whom are children aged under-five in the poorest regions of the world. In Ghana, barely 16% of households have access to piped water in their residence. This paper investigates the socio-economic covariates of sources of drinking water among a cross section of 531 Ghanaian households. The study finds that income is a significant determinant of piped water in residence while access to electricity is invariant with source of drinking water. Additionally, access to clean cooking fuel significantly influences access to piped water in residence while distance is inversely related to same. There is also compelling evidence that rural residents are less likely to have access to piped water, public outdoor tap and protected well. Thus access to good drinking water is an urban phenomenon. While we could not detect any strong statistical relationship between education and the use of piped water, we report weak evidence albeit inverse between education and use of unprotected well as source of drinking water. The policy implications of the findings are discussed.

Keywords: Household income, MDG, multinomial logit, safe drinking water