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WATER POLLUTION: IT'S EFFECTS ON SOCIETY AND WOMEN

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Introduction:

Water pollution means one or more substances have built up in water such as extent that they cause problems for animals or peoples. Oceans, lakes, rivers, & other inland waters can naturally clean up a certain amount of pollution by dispersing it harmless. Oceans, lakes & rivers like these water resources are called surface water. The most obvious type of water pollution affects surface water. Ground water and surface water are two types of water resources that pollution affects. Any physical, biological or chemical change in water quality that adversely affects living organisms or makes water unsuitable for desired uses can be considered pollution. Pollution control standards & regulations usually distinguish between point & nonpoint pollution sources. Point sources: discharge pollution from specific location e.g. drain pipes, ditches or sewer out outfalls. Non point sources: Pollution is scattered or diffuse, having no specific location where they discharges in to a particular body of water (e.g. runoff from farm fields & feedlots, golf courses, lawns & gardens). Water pollution is a major global problem which requires ongoing evaluation & revision of water resource policy at all levels, It has been suggested that it is the leading worldwide causes of death & diseases & that it accounts for the death of more than 14,000 people daily. An estimated 700 million Indians have no access to a proper toilet & 1,000 Indian children die of diarrheal sickness every day.

Causes of water pollution:

Most water pollution doesn't begin in the water itself. Virtually any human activity can have an effect on the quality of our water. Water pollution have many causes such as.

- a. **Sewage & Waste Water:** Domestic households, industrial agriculture practices, produce waste water that can cause pollution of many lakes & rivers. Sewage is the term used for waste water that often contains feces, urine & laundry waste. Sewage disposal is a major problem. Many people don't have access to sanitary conditions & clean water untreated sewage water can contaminate the environment & causes diseases.
- b. **Industrial Waste:** Industry is a huge sources of water pollution, it produces pollutants that are extremely harmful to people & environment. Many industrial facilities use freshwater to carry away waste from the plant & into rivers, lakes & oceans. Pollutions from industrial sources include.
 - **Asbestos :** This pollution is a serious health hazard & carcinogenic .Asbestos fibers can be inhaled & causes illnesses.
 - **Lead :** This is metallic element can causes health & environmental problems. A build up of lead through consumption develops in the skeleton which is highly dangerous for infants & children up to the age of six years. High levels of lead in the blood lead to central nervous system disorders, anemia & cancer.
 - **Mercury:** This is a metallic element can cause health & environment problems. High level of mercury can cause brain damage, paralysis. Exposure of mercury through food, water & air can cause significant harm to human health. Methyl mercury, which is the most commonly found form of mercury in the environment can cause permanent damage to the central nervous system.
 - **Uranium :** The exposure of radioactive, wastes to water has fatal health implications
 - such as increased risk of birth defects, brain damage & cancers.
 - **Arsenic :** High concentration of arsenic in water can have an adverse effect on health.

In 1997, the World Health Organization acknowledged that arsenic drinking water was a 'major public health' in the subcontinent, which would be dealt with on an emergency basis.
- c. **Chemical fertilizers & pesticides:** Farmers use fertilizers for growth & pesticide to kill insects that damage crops. Fertilizers & pesticide which are good for plants may be harmful to human beings & animals. Many of these chemicals get dissolved in rain water which flows into ponds, canals, rivers & seas.
- d. **Plants Nutrients :** Water clarity is affected by sediments, chemicals & the abundance of plankton organism & is a useful measure of water quality & water pollution.

Effect's of water pollution:

Water is important for the existence of life on earth. Water pollution occurs when you have toxins & pathogens present in water in dangerous amount than permissible. One of the worst forms of pollution in the ecosystem is water pollution. The effects of water system are for reaching & affect human beings, plants & animals directly & indirectly. Water pollution affects lakes, oceans, rivers, bays & drinking water making it a global crisis. Water is known be polluted when there are chemicals, contaminants or pathogens detected that are harmful to living things. This condition also leads to the eruption of various diseases & most of them being transmittable & fatal. Lack of water sanitation, & hygiene results in the loss 0.4 million lives while air pollution contributes to the death of 0.52 million people annually in India. (WHO 2007) McKenzie & Ray (2004) are observe effects of water pollution. The study shows that India loses 90 million day a year due to water born diseases with production losses & treatment costs worth Rs. 6 billion. Poor water quality sanitation & hygiene result in the loss of 30.5 million disabilities adjusted life years in India. Ground water resources in past tracts of India are contaminated with fluoride & arsenic. Fluoride problems exist in 150 districts in 17 states in the country with Orissa & Rajasthan being the most severely affected. High concentration of fluoride in drinking water causes fluorosis resulting in weak bones, weak teeth & anemia. Murty & Kumar (2004) estimated the cost of Industrial water pollution abatement & found that there costs account for about 2.5 percent of industrial GDP in India. Parikh (2004) shows that the cost of avoidance is much lower than damage costs.

One of the major effects of water pollution is the damage to the food chain. When harmful toxins are present in water they are transferred to higher level organism through the food chain. These toxins are passed on to humans & animals. Heavy metals like lead, mercury iron, aluminum, magnesium are present in water sources. This Causes heavy metal poisoning in the water. Polluted water is causes for diseases. Microbial water pollution can spread infectious diseases such as typhoid & cholera from drinking contaminated water. When we consumed polluted water regularly our heart & kidney can be badly affected. Also many other health problems such as vomiting, skin diseases are occurs. Marine food sources are contaminated by water pollution & disturb the delicate ecological balance of marine life.

Effects of water pollution on women:

Gender refers to the social & psychological dimensions of the relationship between men & women these relationships are shaped by society & its history, norms, culture, institutions education on & socialization, economy, laws & politics. Biological difference between men & women as the two 'sexes' are obvious reality. However, the notion of gender conveys the wide variation throughout history & across the world in which different societies attribute economic, cultural & socio-political meanings to what is often people strong identity of 'femininity' or 'masculinity'. Therefore it is evident that gender, poverty, water & a poor health status are all intertwined. Women are not only primarily responsible for water supply but a caretakers for children & the sick, women often bear a disproportionate burden of family responsibilities. Often the females of families have decreased access to water due to cultural family practices, yet an increased exposure to polluted water in order to provide for the cooking, bathing, cleaning clothes etc. Further increasing the risk of contracting a water-borne disease as a result of her role in daily activities predisposing her to a life of illness & stress. The convention of Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against women (United Nations 1987) Women's health is further harmed by water pollution. The impact of water pollution & industrial wastes on health is considerable. Inadequate access to domestic water is particularly difficult for women & girls. It is well-known fact that in many counties, women & children spend two hours a day or more just collecting water from rivers or springs. Women sometimes risk bacterial & parasitic infection by having to collect water at polluted sources or where insects or other vectors abound. Excessive time demands of water collection are a factor in the dropout & frequent absences of girls from school. Some studies have found that girls in female-headed households are particularly at risk.

A gender analysis helps identify ways in which the health impacts of water resources affect women & men, girls & boys differently. For example, eye infections are particularly common in water scarce areas, where inability to maintain good hygiene is an important factor in blindness & trachoma in children. Blindness also affects the children's main cares who comes into close contact with the infections & this is thought to be why blindness disproportionately affects women world wide. Girls & women head-load water, this can have very negative health effect on them. Buckets of water carried on the head can weight up to 40 kg & the ergonomic of water carrying has been shown to have detrimental effects on the development and health of the spine, leading to deformities, arthritic disease & injury.

Conclusion:

The quality of water is decided by the source from where it is obtained, Our drinking water comes from either groundwater or surface water. Underground water is taken out by using hand pumps. Water is capable of dissolving many kinds of impurities in it. It may also contain disease causing germs. The issue of water quality is also important. Water borne diseases associated with polluted water sources affect the health of the whole family. Without associated no-formal hygiene education, even water from "Clean" water sources can become polluted during transport or storage

in the home. Women's lives could be considerably easier & the health of their families better if the women had reasonably easy access to domestic water supplies. Maintenance of water points & technologies such as hand pumps remains problematic.

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