

Stakeholders' perception on drinking water and sanitation and the potential for treatments systems in NWFP, Pakistan

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Abstract

Drinking water supply and sanitation in North West Frontier Province of Pakistan is not satisfactory by any standard and is deteriorating day-by-day with population growth. There exist a wide disparity in water supply, its consumption and provision of sanitation services to different classes and region and between urban and rural areas. The study was aimed to understand the existing condition of water supply and sanitation and the perceptions of stakeholders for potential improvement in the future. Important stakeholders' of this sector were interviewed and reconnaissance survey of the province was conducted. Combinations of qualitative methods like open-ended interview, group discussion, participants observation, transect walk and personal observation were dominant tools of data collection. Respondent's opinion and the field observations show that government had made huge investment in this sector, but is still not promising. The community, NGOs, politicians and academicians are critical to the government on her inefficiency, corruption and also for their exclusion from the advisory and decision-making process. The stakeholders' are more concern about the issue of drinking water supply and are little bother about sanitation. Majority of the population in rural areas are still stuck to their old customs of water-use, open-field defecation and unhygienic sanitation when population was less and the problem was not visible. Decentralized nature-based treatment of wastewater could be one option in rural areas to improve sanitation while open field defecation, common in the rural areas needs to be made user safe. There is an urgency of pragmatic policy, legislation and behavioural change in the government and other stakeholders' for improving the system. The rural people need to be educated about personal hygiene practices and they should be taught about the health hazards that accompany the use of contaminated water, unhygienic practices and unsafe sanitation. Aside from linking hygiene, water supply and sanitation, a possible strategy should be to make sanitation more attractive by linking resource recovery with it. Water supply, sanitation, health, education and poverty alleviation should be a combine package and must not be dealt with in isolation.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of Master of Science in Management of Natural Resources and Sustainable Agriculture (MNRSA)

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