

GEOG 371 Rural Water Supply and Sanitation

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Mid-term Q(3)

Write an essay about the International Water and Sanitation Decade of the 1980s. Was it a success or a failure? Give 4 examples from peer reviewed journals.

- By the end of the two decades of the 1960s and 1970s, optimism of providing water to the rural people of developing countries faded away.
- As a result, new thinking and ideas emerged among planners, decision-makers and the international community.
- The 1980s represents a turning point in terms of providing improved water supply and sanitation for the world population and the rural people of the developing nations in particular.
- The 1980s decade (from 1980 to 1990), has been declared by the UN as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (IDWSSD).
- It aims at providing water to all population of the world especially people of the developing countries with improved sources of water and sanitation.
- Adequate safe water should be at least 20 liters of safe water per person per day at a source of one mile (1.6 kilometers) away.
- Governments of developing countries were enthusiastically involved in this ambitious program.
- Access to sanitation was understood to mean the safe disposal of excreta and waste.
- At the start of the drinking water decade an estimated 42% of people in developing countries had access to adequate water supply.
- Only 25% had adequate sanitation services. Although 1.2 billion people gained access to water supply and 700 million.
- At the end of 1980s, 1.3 billion people living in rural areas had to live without access to safe water
- and 1.9 billion had no access to appropriate sanitation.
- In 1990 79% (4.1 billion) people were served with improved water supply . That means 21% of the world population were still lacking improved source of water.
- In 1990, percentage of those who were provided with sanitation was 55% (2.9 billion) while 45% of the world population was not.
- It was found that 80% (2 billion people) of those who lack adequate sanitation in the rural areas.
- Problems of providing water in the 1980s decade:
 - **1-** Provision of safe water and sanitation in the 1980s is affected by the increase of population in the developing countries that did not allow meeting the goal of the decade.
 - **2-** Provision of water depended mostly on national government and they did not have enough resources to meet the objective of the decade.
 - **3-** two contradictions took place:

- **A-** This was the time when the International financial institution were imposing neo-liberal and privatization policies which does not allow national governments to contribute to the process of development, including water.
- **B-** In the same time national governments were assigned the responsibility of providing water supply to rural and urban communities.
- **4-** Provision of safe water and sanitation in the 1980s was affected by poor performance of the economic growth in LDC which reached an “impasse” and the decade is called “**The lost decade**”.
- As a result of these problems, new approach of providing water to rural communities emerged.
- People were involved in provision of water supply and it is called “Bottom-up” approach.
- This approach has further been recognized by international community as effect contribution to the international development.
- It is now called Participatory Approach, which becomes a significant contribution to water and sustainable development.

Problems of the provision of rural water supply during the 1960s – 1980s

- Before the technical revolution people suffered in getting water supply.
- They lived in small groups around small water points.
- Tens of thousands of boreholes were drilled through technical revolution since the 1960s
- As a result, population has increased around water points. This has resulted in environmental degradation such as:
 - Over-cultivation (clearing of land from trees and cultivation of large areas),
 - Over-grazing (concentration of a large number of animals and grazing –eating- all of the grasses around water points)
 - and Deforestation (cutting trees for cultivation, building houses, cooking or for sale).
- The three of them together creates desertification which means (creating desert-like condition in productive land which means turning the land into bare land with no trees or grasses)
- Desertification means removal of vegetation cover, which means no trees and no grasses.
- Therefore, desertification causes environmental degradation through: 1- soil erosion and 2- it becomes the engine of drought.
- Soil erosion means removal of the top soil (which contains nutrients) by wind or water and expose the second layer of soil (B horizon) which is a poor soil and that turned the land into non-productive land.
- It becomes the engine of drought. Vegetation increases humidity that helps cloud formation and consequently giving rains.
- Therefore, the removal of vegetation (trees and grasses – means desertification) which triggers drought.

References

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