



Health Problems due to Water contamination and pollution in India

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Abstract: It is estimated that annually 37 million Indians are affected due to water borne diseases and 1.5 million children die due to diarrhoea and 73 million working days are lost annually leading to economic loss of nearly 600 million dollars a year. Clearly health problems due to water contamination and water pollution are source of serious health hazard.

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I. Introduction

Water pollution and contamination kills millions in India. However not much adequate attention is paid to these problems that can be mitigated if not entirely eliminated with government intervention.

Around 1.5 million children in India die due to diarrhoea caused by water pollution and water contamination. Worldwide, waterborne diseases kill more than AIDS, tuberculosis and measles combined in children under 5-years-old.[1]

Around 70% of India's wastewater goes untreated and each day, more than 40 million liters of wastewater flows directly into India's lakes, rivers and ocean. Because of the poor infrastructure and absence of sewage control, 38 million Indians suffer from waterborne diseases like typhoid, cholera and hepatitis every year. Meanwhile, estimates determine that the health costs to treat waterborne diseases are almost \$9 billion per year.[2]

This paper is not an expert analysis on health problems due to water pollution and contamination. This paper is just a wakeup call on the extent of health problems due to water pollution and contamination. Since by no stretch of imagination is it an expert analysis, this paper cannot offer a detailed and definite solution to the problem of water contamination and pollution. However this paper is necessary to just sound alarm bells on health problems due to water contamination and water pollution in India.

Diseases caused by Water Pollution and Contamination

Many diseases are caused by water pollution such as

1. Cholera – Grave Intestinal Tract Infection caused by the strains of bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*. The symptoms include severe diarrhoea
2. Typhoid – Typhoid is one of common water pollution diseases caused by *Salmonella typhi* bacteria.
3. Giardiasis – A life threatening disease resulting from contaminated water and caused due to presence of water borne pathogen called as *Giardia Lamblia*.
4. Arsenicosis is caused by water pollution and is also known as arsenic poisoning. And is caused due to high levels of arsenic in water. It causes diarrhoea and vomiting
5. Polio is one of dangerous diseases caused by water pollution. It affects central nervous system resulting in paralysis.
6. Diarrhoea: It is characterized by watery stools and pain in abdomen.

Various Types of Contamination and Pollution

Water sources can get polluted because of a range of harmful contaminants[1]. The common contaminants occurring in drinking water can be classified into:

- a. Inorganic Contaminants: Fluoride, Arsenic, Lead, Copper, Chromium, Mercury
- b. Organic Contaminants such as pesticides, wastes that can get into rivers, lakes, ponds and ground water
- c. Biological Contaminants such as algae, bacteria, protozoa or viruses.

- d. Radiological Contaminants include radioactive materials found in soils or rocks.

II. Conclusion

Water pollution and contamination is a serious source of health problems. The study of all solutions to water pollution and contamination is an extensive and intensive discipline, which this paper is incapable of. All that this paper does is to highlight the extent of health problems due to water contamination and water pollution.

References

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