
Keeping Water from Contamination

We often take advantage of our daily necessities, whether that be food, water, clothes, or household appliances. These items, however, have journeyed a long way around the world to find solace in our homes. These things we depend on are largely affected by varying factors; such as politics, economics, the environment or industries. It is a horrifying thought to realize that a resource considered vital for life is growing scarcer by the day. Unfortunately, this is the case for the abundance of water. Despite water covering a vast majority of the Earth's surface, only a very small percentage of this water is safe for human consumption. According to the National Geographic, less than three percent of the Earth's water is freshwater (Mohan, Postel, Treiber, Posner, Covitt, Miller-Rushing, 2012). Moreover seventy five percent of that three percent of water is frozen, which leaves us with only one percent of water to consume. In order to make the most out of the scarce amount of water we have, we must reduce and prevent the contamination of water.

Causes

Water is a soluble liquid, meaning it allows several pollutants to dissolve it thus contaminating it. There are several factors that contribute to the rise in water pollution, such as agricultural pollution, toxic waste, runoff, organic pollution and thermal pollution. In a single day, several animals and humans die from consuming polluted water. In order to minimize the consequences of water pollution, we must improve the quality of water. Furthermore, the world's population is constantly increasing and therefore there is naturally a demand for water consumption. A troubling reason that water pollution still exists is because of politicians' lack of interest; most politicians have expressed disinterest in maintaining or extending water quality services. There is an urgent need to repair the damage water pollution has inflicted on our environment and economy and the only way to do so is to tackle the rising pressures that affect water quality.

Consequences

The severity of water contamination effects not only the environment but also the economy; it impacts tourism, business, commercial fishing, in addition to other industries that are dependent on clean water. The costs of cleaning up polluted water bodies can range from millions to billions of dollars estimatedly. In fact, approximately \$28.4 billion dollars has been lost in Africa due to the effect of mortality impacts from a lack of water and sanitation (Pacific Institute, 2010). As for the tourism industry, polluted bodies of water symbolize losses in fishing and boating activities. In regards to agriculture, reduced water quality could be detrimental. For farmers, a

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lack of water reduces crop yields, which in turn can lead to food shortages as well as increases in commodity prices. Furthermore, lowered crop yields can negatively impact trading with other economies. Failure to accommodate for contaminated water leads to rising costs in association with illness and water-borne diseases. To further complicate the effect of polluted water, illnesses will negatively affect education as well as productivity. Additionally, weather can also negatively impact water purity. Climate change has made droughts, rising temperatures, and intense downpours more common than ever before. The new conditions caused by these climates permit bacteria and viruses to thrive in our water, thus contaminating them.

Effects in Third World Countries

In comparison to first world countries, third world countries face a severe issue with water contamination. In third world countries, there are no proper ways to dispose of contaminated water and so, its inhabitants often reuse polluted water. According to the World Health Organization, 844 million people lack a basic drinking-water service and of that population, 159 million individuals are solely dependent on surface water (2017). Consuming polluted water can lead to several health issues, such as diseases, deformities or even death. Furthermore, third world countries lack access to proper medical treatment; they lack medical staff, antibiotics, water purifiers, etc. In order to combat water communication in all countries around the world, a cost friendly and easy to utilize solution must be implemented.

Solutions

Diminishing water pollution completely in the next couple of years would be a near impossible feat. It would take several years in addition to several resources in order to minimize the extent of contaminated water. Although we cannot accommodate for conditions caused by the weather, we can minimize the damage done by other factors, such as agriculture and toxic waste. An easy solution that can be implemented rapidly is establishing laws for industries and businesses that work with water. These laws may fine industries for improperly disposing waste; this will help ensure that chemicals and toxic materials will be properly trashed and thus they will not reach large bodies of water. Another factor that may reduce contamination is using eco-friendly chemicals that do not deter water quality. In regards to farming, farmers should be urged to practice using eco-friendly methods that reduce runoff. When water is acquired from accessible sources there is less time and effort put into collecting it, which means less expenditure on health and water purification.

Conclusion

Water is vital for our survival as humans. If we allow water to grow contaminated, we risk acquiring water-borne diseases, degrading our environment, and facing economic losses in

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industries dependent on water. In order to make the most out of the scarce amount of water we have, we must reduce and prevent the contamination of water. Through implementing rules and regulations for consumer based industries as well as water dependent businesses, we can greatly minimize water pollution.

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