Social stratification and drinking water crisis in southwest Bangladesh

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Introduction and Methods

Water scarcity occurs mainly in the one hand because of natural conditions and in the other hand because of pollution and financial incapability of arranging safe water supply. Though the affect of water crisis is similar to every single person, the perception of water crisis varies according to the socio-economic conditions and to the spatial location (proximity to water source). This research addresses the social-dimensions of water scarcity in Bangladesh.

In 2012, an empirical research was conducted. A total of 274 households in two coastal sub-districts in Bangladesh (Morrelgonj and Fakirhat) were interviewed under this survey. The data analysis was structured in two modules:
1. Depicting the cluster between the respondents, based on their socio-economic characteristics.
2. Analyzing their perception and water related behavior according with the derived societal clusters.
3. Describing the role of societal clusters in drinking water management

Results and discussion

The study villages are facing drinking water crisis. The main reason for it is mainly that the water contains arsenic or salt.

The use of unsafe water sources decreases with a higher socio-economic class.

Usage of a water source mostly has no influences on socio-economic classification, however the societal category-influences on the usage of a source. The spatial distribution also plays a vital role on decisions of water management. For example, “Social supreme”, i.e. most of the rich and powerful local leaders do not belong to the group with a very high level of health concern (people who need to walk more than 1000m to the water source or 30 minutes as total collection time).

Time for collection introduces social problems:
- Time for housewives’ works decreases.
- Conflicts between family members increases.
- Reduction of the monthly income.

Different measure to mitigate the drinking water crisis were mentioned:
- Reinstall or shifting the tube well.
- Information services improvement.
- Health facilities improvement.
- Filtering the water.

Conclusion

Drinking water crisis in the region affects all the people living there. But there is “social supremacy” for the water management.

The water crisis is considered as a cause of social and health problems. Its perception varies according to the socio-demographic conditions of the participants.

References