

Environmental attitude and water treatment behavior of residents of Kathmandu Valley

Hari Katuwal⁶
University of New Mexico

Mona K Qassim
University of New Mexico

Jose Pagan
University of New Mexico

Alok K. Bohara
University of New Mexico

Population pressure and urbanization have both contributed to the deterioration of water quality and the sanitation situation of the Bagmati River system in Kathmandu Valley. The rapid urbanization has also put a lot of pressure on the municipality water supply system. Additionally, the outdated water supply system in the valley has forced the residents to seek alternate sources for water supply, which includes getting water through the privately ferried tanks. Many households have also built private taps by tapping into their groundwater, which has further threatened the water table in the entire valley affecting the water level in the Bagmati River. All of these have led to two problems for the households in Kathmandu.

First, the cultural value of the holy river has been threatened to its core. There are many organizations which have been formed to deal with the clean-up of the holy river. The Government of Nepal has formed a high powered commission for the purpose. As a side benefit, this issue has enhanced the environmental awareness among the people of Kathmandu valley.

The second issue is the deteriorating quality of household drinking water. As explained above, households depend upon three different sources for drinking water: municipality, private tankers, and private well/taps.

⁶ katuwalh@unm.edu

This paper tries to assess a correlation between the ever increasing environmental awareness and attitude and its practical consequences in influencing the household behavior in dealing with the treatment of drinking water. The paper uses a two-equation system and the full-information maximum likelihood method to jointly estimate the water treatment decision equation and the environmental attitude equation. In addition, the paper looks at the role of media's public health awareness campaign in changing the household behavior. Preliminary results indicate that the environmental attitude and the media both play an important role to affect the household's decision to treat drinking water.