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Policy analysis paper

Policy lever

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) is a federal law that aims at providing safe water to the citizens across the United States. The purpose of the policy is to promote public health and welfare. There seems to be tension between government agencies trying to keep our water safe with regulations and corporations. Congress approved a safe drinking water program in 1996 for resolving the fund issues and financing projects for meeting standards. It aimed at allowing eligible communities to follow the standards of drinking water that complied with the state laws. The federal law was established for protecting the supplies of water from harmful contaminations. The federal state established this law in 1974 with collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The clean water policies are not very effective because the poor and people belonging to minority backgrounds lack access to safe water. Lacking access to safe drinking water leads to other potential risks including waterborne diseases like cholera, dysentery, typhoid and Guinea worm disease. The statistics reveal that 42 drinking water outbreaks were reported in 2013-2014 that 1006 illnesses, hospitalization of 124 people and deaths of 13 (Scutti, 2017). The facts shared by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) states that a larger population of African-Americans is affected by waterborne disease each year.

Level of government implementation

The safe water program develops best practices to effectively manage the water resources that improve techniques of local drainage systems and meets the flow conditions of the future. The funds from the state contribute to the development of the program (King County, 2016). The successful implementation of the restoration program depends on the contribution from land management, and ecological restoration remains effective since history. Restoration of the project projects in the US such as land restoration helps to treat the degraded lands and biological advancements lead to the minimization of destructed land. The water restoration plan forms the framework for future ecological programs as it involves the students and faculties across borders and one-time funds lead to improved ecosystems. The state projects restore the ecological capstones the volunteers’ include students that worked in teams for the restoration of aquatic and terrestrial lands (Gold, Ewing, Banks, Groom, & Hinckley, 2016). The attributes of ecosystem involve effective community structure, restoration of the indigenous species and development and stability of colonialization. The suitable physical environment leads to the reproduction of the population species (Clewell & Anderson, 2009). The protection plan also leads to the safety of the populations. Historically the programs contribute to the protection of natural water resources and using ineffective manner that leads to the advantage of masses.

How policy works

The government in the United States focused on building a public water system that contained at least 15 server connection for serving the population of America. The safe drinking water standards are applicable to water systems that ensure delivery of clean water to the American citizens. The community water systems are developed that are responsible for the provision of safe water to the residencies including neighbourhoods, homes, apartments, parks, small towns and condominiums. The state developed 20,000 non-transient non-community water systems that are responsible for serving over six-thousand people over the year. This also includes the construction of 89,000 transient non-community water system that serves the public for over six months. EPA ensures that this system works efficiently for the provision of clean and safe drinking water. The implementation of the policy confirmed that each year millions of American receive quality drinking water that prevents them from disease and contributes to their overall health. The water department ensures that the supplies water for household use is free from chemicals, pesticides, animal waste and naturally occurring substances. The functions of the state for the provision of sage water use properly maintained distribution system (Desilver, 2015). (Spade, 2011)

The SDWA policy is on treatment that ensures the delivery of safe drinking water at the tap. The approach stresses on the delivery of quality water that is free from contamination. “SDWA applies to every public water system in the United States. There are currently more than 170,000 public water systems providing water to almost all Americans at some time in their lives” (SDWA, 2004). These systems adopt adequate measures that stress on providing clean and safe water to the masses. The water system ensures the provision of high-quality water to the public.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for the implementation of wastewater standards. It established the structure for regulating pollutant discharges and making water clean in the United States. It is also responsible for maintaining the existing requirements for setting water quality standards and for making it free from contaminants in the surface water. EPA is also responsible for funding the construction of the sewage treatment plants that are established under the construction grant plants. The agency is also responsible for recognizing the need for the plants and addressing critical issues related to water pollution. “the [Environmental Protection Agency](https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/political-science-and-government/us-government/environmental-protection) (EPA). Under authority contained in the 1972 legislation, the EPA had primary responsibility for implementing the ambitious and optimistic goals of ensuring that all waters of the [United States](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-political-geography/united-states) be "fishable" and "swimmable" by 1983, 10 years after the act's passage” (Cotroneo, 2009). EPA has formed partnerships with other agencies that support the national water plan and also control the revolving fund. EPA-state partnership is the central body that generates funds for the public level program. In 1972 EPA incorporated amendments for addressing the issue of unsafe water and improving its access to the larger community.

Objectives of the policy

The objective of the Clean Water Act policy includes eliminating the discharge of chemical agents or pollutants that affects the quality of water. It is focused on providing safe and clean water for the residents of the United States. The regulatory objectives emphasize on the command and control for enforcing laws that remove the possibilities of misuse of water resources. the act also aims at devising effective water control standards that eliminate the opportunities of contaminating water. EPA has established the goal of zero-discharge that means eliminating any kind of chemical or toxic discharge that could undermine the quality of water.

Historical and political aspects of clean water act

Due to the increased number of deaths and diseases associated with unsafe drinking water the Federal Pollution Control Act was passed in 1948. It stresses on minimizing the generation of pollution that deteriorates the quality of water and the environment. With growing awareness and knowledge of the public, the state had to take practical actions for addressing the issue of unclean drinking water. The Clean Water Act amendment was passed on 1972 which emphasized on providing safe and clean drinking water to the residents. This act initially established the basic framework for the regulation of pollutant discharges and EPA remains the central agency that implemented such programs. This agency also identified the watershed standards for the industry that prevented them from discharging chemicals or toxins that could affect the quality of water. This policy initially worked to ensure that no pollutants reach the surface of the water. It further “made it unlawful for any person to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters unless a permit was obtained under its provisions” (EPA, 2016). The agency also focused on planning and managing resources inefficient way that eliminated the possibilities of misallocation.

The political aspects depict that the Federal state of America faced threats of controlling water pollution. The EPA received full support from the Federal state that stressed on catering the clean water needs of the country. There were three amendments in the Act in 1977, 1981 and 1988. The amendments of 1981 stressed on Municipal Wastewater Treatment Construction Grants Amendments. while the amendments of 1987 stressed on the Water Quality Act. These amendments reaffirmed that the federal interest assures the water quality in the country. Thee goals set forward in the act of 1972 emphasized on adoption of rigid command-and-control regulatory approach. A flexible approach was acquired that stressed on building a partnership between the federal state and agencies. The tribal government and municipalities were also part of the policy. The original act was revised in 1987 that focused on controlling the issues of water pollution in America. The state in collaboration with other agencies stressed on point-source pollution that focused on collecting discharges from the sources. The state later realized that the pollution was coming from the nonpoint sources that included pipes and outfalls (EPA, 2016). The clean water act protects the river because it followed the landmark case of Ohio's river Cuyahoga that was polluted and damaged by the industry. The political agenda was to protect American rivers from the pollution that affected the small stream and even the big rivers.

Social perspectives

The social aspects of the clean water act depict that the state focused on promoting society's welfare by providing access to clean and safe water. It promoted the health of the people by ensuring access to pollution-free water. It is also linked to society's welfare because it eliminates toxic or contaminated substances from the water. The social aspects depict the need for removing pollutants that minimize the presence of waterborne diseases, cholera and typhoid. The World Health Organization (WHO) reveals that 1.8 million people die from the waterborne disease each year. the adoption of the clean water act policy worked to ensure the maintenance of health and welfare of the society at large

Educational perspectives

The act provided education and awareness to the society about the significance of clean water. It provided guidelines to the industry for adopting adequate measures that restrict them from disposing harmful toxic agents, pesticides or pollutants to the surface water. The educational perspectives also emphasize on instructing the people about minimizing waste of water resources.

Short-term and long-term outcomes

Clean water act has short-term and long-term outcomes. The short-term outcomes of the plan include the provision of clean water to the residents, restricting the exploitation of water resources by industry or disposal of chemical wastes to the water surfaces. The long-term outcomes of the policy include the generation of direct funds raised for creating effective sewerage treatment plans. The reduction of pollution also improved the long-term sustainability of the agricultural essay. The long-term outcomes involve building water regulatory bodies that maximize the role of the water treatment plan with coverage increasing from 8 million people to 175 million (Wiszniewski, 2017).

Positive and negative consequences

The clean water act policy provided numerous benefits to the society such as access to clean drinking water. The facts indicate that “the Clean Water Act, billions of pounds of pollution have been kept out of our rivers and the number of waters that meet clean water goals nationwide has doubled with direct benefits for drinking water, public health, recreation, and wildlife” (Rivers, 2017). This act increased the opportunities for protecting water resources for future generations. The act is essential for ensuring the maintenance of good health and the promotion of quality life. this is also linked to the enhanced quality of life of the residents.

There are also some negative aspects of the clean drinking act such as it resulted in the disparity between blacks and whites. Access to safe drinking water reflects disparities in America. This is because the treatment plans are established mostly in white neighbourhoods. The water systems are also set in the white majority areas. This results in the disadvantage of the black or minority population in America. Facts also depict that having inadequate or limited access to clean water results in an increased prevalence of diseases among African-Americans. Waterborne disease, cholera and typhoid are more common among blacks due to lack of access to clean drinking water. Among low-income populations, the risks of such diseases are high. Evidence suggests "in the United States, nearly one in two adults and one in four children do not drink tap water on a given day, with even more dismal statistics among minority and low-income populations” (Patel & Schmidt, 2017). Such statistics indicate that the clean water act has created a disparity in the society among the black and white population.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders of the Safe Water Act include EPA, state, federal, interstate, tribal and other agencies that formed an association with each other. EPA is coordinating with each agency and state through its regional office for discussing the policy implementation and other related issues. One important aspect of is engagement goal that means creating a collaborative environment for all stakeholders. Building string engagement among bodies will protect and improve water quality. The stakeholders are responsible for taking policy-related decisions such as the implementation of the policy objectives. Transparent and consistent communications are established among member bodies and agencies.

The stakeholders are responsible for providing resources for the maintenance and implementation of the clean water act policy. These agencies are also supporting the act because they stress the adoption of adequate policy measures that eliminate the pollutants from the water resources. They also have a dominant role in the provision of the funds for managing the activities of maintaining efficient water systems.

Policy across populations

The white majority population is relying on safe bottled water due to their better socio-economic positions. The comparison of the population wise distribution indicates that more water and treatment plants are set up in the developed neighbourhoods containing a majority of whites (King County, 2016).

Policy addressing the issue

The policy does not address the issue by targeting the deprived population directly. The policy has not set any specific criteria for targeting the deprived black population. However, the general implementation of the policy depicts that it emphasizes on providing increased access to the safe drinking water by constructing water distribution systems.

Distribution of benefit

Wider benefits are availed by the whites in America because most of the water systems are set in developed neighborhoods. These neighborhoods contain majority of whites. This reflects that the majority of the whites belonging to middle and upper class have access to safe drinking water. The minority population such as blacks or Latinos who belong to deprived or poor households lacks access to the clean and safe drinking water.

The use of bottled water by the white population is against the agenda of the clean water act because it also threatens environment sustainability. Increased dependence of people on water bottle causes environmental problems including water waste, pollution, and climate change. Massive consumption of bottled water is unsafe for the environment and depicts the need for curtailing consumption. The main claim regarding bottled water reflects the concerns regarding fossil fuels used for the production of plastic bottles. Used plastic bottles contribute to environmental degradation due to the release of 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide. Consumption of bottled water also wastes valuable recourses as it wastes huge amounts of water. As the demands for bottled water constantly rose, depicting the need for reexamining consumption choice based on environmental concerns.

Massive consumption of fossil fuels supports the argument of environmental adversities related to bottled water. America remains one of the biggest consumers of bottled water, as the collective consumption constitutes 8 billion gallons of water. Fossil fuels deteriorate the environment due to the release of toxic gases such as carbon dioxide. Cotroneo (2009) mentioned that “the plastic bottles it comes in may not be so good for the planet: They consume massive amounts of fossil fuel to produce and transport, then pile up in landfills” (Cotroneo, 2009). The claims state that the overfilled landfills directly contributes to pollution that causes negative implications. Evidence reveals that plastic bottles release at least 38 chemicals generating long-lasting impacts. Facts also state that 38 million bottles end up in landfills becoming unmanageable waste. Carbon negative impact and deforestation are also negative implications of bottled water. Environmentalists argue that plastic bottles produce unnecessary waste while in the form of garbage they remain intact for hundreds of years (Cotroneo, 2009).

Social theory and inequalities

The social theory of race depicts that the minority population suffers the consequences of policy injustice. Welfare policy reflects, “an additive approach, which assumes gender and race/ethnicity are distinct and independent, suggests that female state legislators regardless of race/ethnicity will mitigate the more restrictive and punitive aspects of welfare reform, much like their African American and Latino counterparts do” (Reingold & Smith, 2012). The welfare of the clean water act is more focused on facilitating the white population only. The policy causes inequalities because no proper framework is adopted for building effective water systems for blacks or Latinos in America (Lee, 2000). The administrative laws are acting for promoting inequality among blacks and whites. the policy adopted by the state reflects that the power is “exercised mainly as a means of deduction a subtraction mechanism, a right to appropriate a portion of the wealth, a tax of products, goods and services, labor and blood, levied on subjects” (Spade, 2011). This indicates that the state and the administrative power is working in a specific way that supports one group of society.

Another factor that exhibits inequality is the fact the majority of blacks earn low incomes that eliminates the possibilities of living in developed neighborhoods where they can have access to clean drinking water. Facts reveal that “the top 1% of households held 33.4% of all wealth; in 2013 their share was 36.7%” (Desilver, 2015). This explains that as only fewer wealthy have access to money they can invest in clean drinking water. This expands inequality among the population that undermines the access of poor to safe water.

Gaps in data

No clear data prevails that explains the decline disparity or inequality in the provision of safe water to the citizens. This indicates the need for conducting further research for identifying the shortcomings of the policy. It requires obtaining data on the overall decline of waterborne and related diseases and recognizing its differences among black and white population.

Resources and capacity of policy

Due to prevalence of disparity among black and white population depicts the need for investing further for installation of adequate treatment plants. There is need for implanting more water systems at the black neighborhoods. The resources can be used for providing education and awareness to the population regarding safe water. This program will offer education on hygiene for children, pregnant women and people of poor or deprived households. The state can also adopt adequate steps for providing awareness to the population about saving water. They can provide information on refraining from misuse of water.

Cost and benefits from budgetary perspectives

It was estimated in 1990 that the cost required for the clean water act would be $45 billion annually. The cost was managed efficiently for improving water resources and implantation of systems. The costs increased every year with the time due to the increase in population. The overall analysis of the water act depicts that the federal state and EPA is investing $140 each year on a single resident of the US. the examination of the benefits depicts that the policy offered many benefits. Iowa State University obtained water quality measurements of 50 million by monitoring 240,000 sites. The analysis of the measurements indicates that 25 million showed improvement in oxygen concentration. The positive outcomes also include a decline in coliform bacteria. The study also depicts an increase in the number of rivers for safe fishing by 12 per cent. There were also observations that confirmed a reduction in water-related diseases. The overall cost-benefit analysis indicates that investing in the clean water act is efficient because it eliminated harmful agents and enhanced the quality of water (Frazer, 2018). The research also revealed that the clean water act didn't exceed costs. However, it also suggests that it is not appropriate to compare the benefits on the basis of the dollar amount because it leads to wider welfare for society and the people. The benefits of the clean water act can also be identified by considering the reduction in the waterborne diseases at the regions where people have access to safe water.

The analysis of the benefits also depicts that the adoption of treatment plan has improved the quality of water. The examination of the samples depicts that treatment plants eliminated pesticides and harmful agents from the water. The increase in oxygen content depicts that overall improvement in the quality of water is observed. The findings this reflects that the adoption of clean water act is effective for controlling health related issues such as diseases.

Conclusion

This act increased the opportunities for protecting water resources for future generations. The act is essential for ensuring the maintenance of good health and the promotion of quality life. This is also linked to the enhanced quality of life of the residents. The majority of blacks earn low incomes that eliminates the possibilities of living in developed neighborhoods where they can have access to clean drinking water. This indicates that the state and the administrative power is working in a specific way that supports one group of society. Although clean drinking water offer many benefits but it needs to address the issue of disparity by providing access of safe water to the poor and deprived population. There is need for implanting more water systems at the black neighborhoods.

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