



Deteriorating Water Quality

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According to the World Bank Report - Quality Unknown: The Invisible Water Crisis, heavily polluted water is reducing economic growth by up to a third in some countries.

Key Findings

- Water pollution **endangers economic growth:**
 - **When Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD)**– a measure of how much organic pollution is in water and a proxy measure of overall water quality – passes a certain threshold, GDP growth in downstream regions is lowered by a third.
 - In middle-income countries – where BOD is a growing problem because of increased industrial activity - GDP growth downstream of highly polluted areas drops by half.
- **Reasons** Behind the Lower Economic Growth
 - **Nitrogen** in water shortens people and shortens their lives.
 - **Salinity** in water leads to decreased agricultural yields.
- **Challenges to Water Quality:** Intensification of agriculture, land use changes, more variable rainfall patterns due to climate change and growing industrialization due to countries' development.
- **Solution:**
 - The first step to tackling the water quality challenge is recognizing the scale of it. The world needs reliable, accurate and comprehensive information so that new insights can be discovered, decision-making can be evidence-based and citizens can call for action.
 - Legislation, implementation and enforcement are also crucial to scrub the world's waterways of pollution
 - Wastewater treatment has a vital role to play – it is crucial for a country's health, food security and economy by helping remove pollution and debris.

Source: World Bank