

Water

Water may be unsafe for a number of reasons. It may contain bacteria and viruses that cause disease. It may be polluted by pesticides and fertilizer in runoff from crop irrigation or it may contain toxic chemicals from factories. Also water that was once fresh may become too salty for drinking or irrigation.

Climate change may increase water pollution in the future. Higher temperatures will increase the need for irrigation, which will carry more pesticides and fertilizer into freshwater source.

Fertilizer in fresh water is a problem because it encourages plant growth. When plants die and decay, the decay process removes oxygen from the water that fish and other animals that live there need to breathe. Irrigation also makes ground water salty. When the irrigation water evaporates, it leaves any salt it contains behind in the soil. In places near the ocean, underground water may become salty if too much is pumped out. If the water table sinks too low, it can be replaced by salt water that seeps in from the ocean.

Discussion question:

Describe three ways that the water supply in your village could become unfit for drinking.
