

Research Article



The quality of lifestyle and the drought of Zayande-Rood: Interpretive understanding of the lived experiences of Isfahan citizens of the water

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Abstract

Introduction

Water scarcity and drought have become critical issues in many regions, particularly in arid and semi-arid areas like Isfahan, Iran. The drying up of the Zayandeh Rud River, a vital water source for the city, has significantly impacted the social and environmental quality of life for Isfahan's residents. This study explores the lived experiences of Isfahan citizens regarding the decline in their socio-environmental lifestyle quality due to water scarcity and the drying of the Zayandeh Rud River. By employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research aims to understand how citizens perceive and adapt to these environmental challenges, focusing on their emotional well-being, leisure activities, and environmental concerns.

Materials and Method

The study adopted a qualitative research design using interpretive phenomenology. A purposive, heterogeneous sampling method was employed to select 27 Isfahan citizens aged 30 and above. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to gather participants' lived experiences regarding water scarcity and the drying of the Zayandeh Rud River. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data, and the validity of the findings was ensured through credibility, dependability, and confirmability criteria. The research focused on understanding the emotional, social, and environmental impacts of the water crisis on citizens' quality of life.

Results and Discussion

The findings revealed three overarching themes:

Dissatisfaction with the Decline in Socio-Environmental Quality of Life: Participants expressed a lack of happiness and emotional well-being due to the water crisis. They reported increased stress, dissatisfaction with air and water pollution, and frustration with the government's inability to address the river's drying.

Changes in Lifestyle: The water crisis has altered how citizens spend their leisure time. Many have shifted to virtual spaces, indoor activities like reading and watching TV, and underground gatherings, particularly among the youth. Traditional recreational activities, such as walking along the riverbank or boating, have significantly declined.

Increased Environmental Pollution: Participants noted the spread of unpleasant odors, rising air pollution, and reduced humidity levels, all of which have negatively impacted their daily lives and health.

The study highlights the profound impact of the Zayandeh Rud River's drying on the socio-environmental fabric of Isfahan. The river's absence has not only diminished the city's aesthetic appeal but also disrupted the



emotional and social well-being of its residents. The findings align with previous research, emphasizing the interconnectedness of environmental health and quality of life.

Conclusion

This study underscores the significant socio-environmental challenges faced by Isfahan citizens due to the water crisis and the drying of the Zayandeh Rud River. The findings reveal a decline in emotional well-being, changes in leisure activities, and increased environmental pollution, all of which have collectively lowered the quality of life. The research calls for integrated urban planning that prioritizes the preservation of natural heritage, such as the Zayandeh Rud River, to enhance the quality of life for residents. Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts from policymakers, urban planners, and environmental experts to ensure sustainable water management and improve the socio-environmental conditions of Isfahan.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest regarding the authorship or publication of this article.

Data availability statement

The data and results used in this research will be available through correspondence with the author.