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## Water Supply Dilemma in Nigerian Rural Communities: Looking Towards the Sky for an Answer

PDF (Size: 473KB) PP. 598-606 DOI : 10.4236/jwarp.2011.38069

### Author(s)

H. T Ishaku, M. R Majid, A. A Ajayi, A Haruna

### ABSTRACT

Access to safe water supply has great influence on the health, economic productivity and quality of life of the people. But meeting this need is one of the major challenges facing the rural communities of Nigeria today. The purpose of this review paper is to determine whether water supply have contributed effectively to health, social, and cultural development of Nigerian rural communities. Over 70% of households in rural communities do not have access to improved water supply. They rely solely on self-water supply (free source) such as rivers, perennial streams, water ponds and unprotected wells which is susceptible to water borne diseases such as typhoid fever, cholera, dysentery, malaria parasites etc. These rural populations are engaged in farming activities with low income level living in small scattered settlements thus, making provision of piped water supply very difficult. Governments' interventions towards rural water supply have been through the provision of hand-operated boreholes and wells. These sources yield little or no water during the dry season and are prone to frequent breakdown; leading water crisis and shortages. This situation forces households especially the women and children to spend more time walking longer distances during the dry season to trot water for domestic purposes. Given the fact that the publicly operated water supply have not been able to cope with increasing demand, there is a need for a paradigm shift from the public monopoly of water supply to an innovative approach. Rainwater harvesting technology appears to be one of such alternative approaches.

### KEYWORDS

Nigeria Rural Communities, Water Scarcity, Dilemma, Rainwater Harvesting

### Cite this paper

H. Ishaku, M. Majid, A. Ajayi and A. Haruna, "Water Supply Dilemma in Nigerian Rural Communities: Looking Towards the Sky for an Answer," *Journal of Water Resource and Protection*, Vol. 3 No. 8, 2011, pp. 598-606. doi: 10.4236/jwarp.2011.38069.

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