

A silhouette of a person carrying a large water pot on their head, standing on a beach at sunset. The person is facing right, and the background shows a calm sea reflecting the colorful sky. The sky is filled with soft, pink and orange clouds, and the water is a deep blue with white reflections of the clouds.

THE BIG BOOK of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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through the eyes of
young journalists

Young Journalist Media Fellowship Programme

builds the capacity of young journalists of Pakistan to investigate water and sanitation problems and their relation to health, well-being and human development. The program provides an opportunity to young journalists to gain first hand knowledge through research and investigation to ensure responsible and accurate coverage of water and sanitation issues.

More specifically, programme aims to achieve following objectives:

1. Sensitisation of policy makers through in-depth coverage of water and sanitation related problems, success stories
2. Shape public opinion, creating awareness for behavioural change through success stories
3. Recognise and promote a community of young journalists in the area of water and sanitation through real time exposure in the field







The same body of water is used for bathing, washing and is also accessible to animals for direct consumption.



PHOTO CREDITS
Asif Jamali

Animals, humans drink from same pond in Kamber-Shahdaskot

By [Hafeez Tunio](#), Published in The Express Tribune, January 2nd, 2017

KAMBER-SHAHDADKOT: We are ready to provide a one-time meal but don't ask us for drinking water, says Qurban Chandio, who lives in a hilly area that falls in the Kirthar mountain range in Kamber-Shahdaskot district.

Potable water, which is a basic amenity that must be ensured for all residents by the state, is a distant dream for the locals of this area. Qurban lives in a makeshift shanty village in Karo Har area of Gabi Dero union council, which lies around 54 kilometres from Kamber town. As he travels around three kilometres on his donkey to fetch water, he doesn't seem perturbed by the fact that the pond from which he is collecting the water is shared by humans and animals. "All the wandering animals come here to quench their thirst," he says while scratching his head. "We also fill our utensils from the same pond for drinking purposes."

A few naked children bathe in the same pond from which animals and residents of the area quench their thirst. Meanwhile, a few women wash their clothes simultaneously as some sheep and cows drink from the pool. The fact that the same body of water — an accumulation of rainwater — is used for bathing, washing and is also accessible to animals for direct consumption raises questions on how safe the water is for humans.

According to Hawa Guramani of Sono Khan Chandio village, diarrhoea is a common disease among the children of the area. “This year, two children in our village had diarrhoea and vomiting and died on the way to the hospital,” he shares

Official apathy

Access to potable water is not the only problem looming large in the faces of people living in scattered villages, including Sono Khan Chandio, Seeta, Kehri and Shaallo. Donkeys and camels are the common means of transportation in the villages as not even a single road has been built in the neglected areas. The areas fall under the domain of provincial assembly seat PS-42 and National Assembly seat NA-206, from where chieftains of Chandio and Magsi tribes, Nawaz Sardar Ahmed and Nawaz Amir Magsi, respectively, have been elected.

According to local residents, politicians, elected representatives and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have neglected their regions in similar manner. An elderly woman, Hawa Guramani, walks barefoot. “If nothing else, drinking water should be provided to us,” she says. “I, along with other women of this area, have spent most of my life searching the sweet water wells and reservoirs as underground water is not fit for drinking.” The abject poverty that these people live in reflects from their faces.

“It takes around a half day to reach district headquarter Kamber, which is hardly a one-hour drive of a car if roads are built,” says a herdsman, Ghulam Mohammad Marfani. According to him, in cases of emergencies, they carry their loved ones on camels and donkeys to reach a nearby small town, Gabi Dero, wherefrom they get transport. “There is only one bus on this route, which leaves for Kamber early morning and comes back before sunset,” he says.

Since the land is barren, people’s source of income is mostly livestock. “We grow different kind of vegetables and crop when rain lashes this area,” shares Marfani. However, he adds, lots of animals and people, especially children, die in the area due to malnutrition and drought, which hits the area every year. “No one takes notice,” he laments.

Official version

When The Express Tribune tried to contact Nawab Amir Magsi, he did not attend the phone. Meanwhile, Nawab Sardar Ahmed Chandio, the most influential person of this area, counted a number of initiatives on his part. “We have included some roads schemes in the annual development plan and provided water to those areas where contamination level is high,” he said, adding that a few Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants have also been installed in nearby town so that people can get potable water.

“We have also started tanker service in some areas,” he said, adding that the right bank outfall drain, which carries the contaminated water from Balochistan, has created a mess by contaminating the underground water. “The drain’s poisonous water penetrates wherefrom it crosses,” he said. According to him, the water crisis has worsened due to lack of rains in the area.

Shamshir Bhutto, the deputy commissioner of the area, said that he has recently taken charge and will probe into the problems. His assistant said that the district government has installed solar panels in these villages to resolve electricity and drinking water issue. He added that water pumping wind mills will be installed and this scheme is in the process of approval.



PHOTO CREDITS
Mudaser Kazi

Accountable to the people: Tando Soomro village provides a model Sindh govt should take lessons from

By [Hafeez Tunio](#), Published in *The Express Tribune*, June 21, 2016

TANDO SOOMRO: In a province where everything appears to be going wrong, a small village is following a governance model that the Sindh government should take lessons from.

Tando Soomro village in Tando Allahyar district holds a public forum for its entire population in which the local landlord, Raees Imdad Ali Nizamani, goes over their expenses and revenues for the past year and takes suggestions for the budget next year. The money is raised entirely from voluntary contributions by the residents. Nizamani's purpose behind this exercise is simple: accountability.

Open kutchehri

The public forum to discuss budgetary allocations in Tando Soomro village is being held at a site that can easily be mistaken for a wedding banquet. The villagers walk down a red carpet and take their place on the various sofas, chairs and charpoys spread under the canopy.

The agenda today is to discuss ways to generate Rs9 million as annual budget for the village to resolve issues of basic amenities. Soon, the middle-aged Nizamani

“You will find some farmers who drive their own cars to the field when they come to cultivate the land”

*Landlor Mehboob
Nizamani*

wearing white cotton shalwar kameez enters the hall with a bunch of papers and starts a multimedia presentation.

“First of all, I am here to make myself accountable to you. Let us review the outgoing year’s budget and expenses,” says Nizamani as he reviews the funds allocated last year and presents a list of expenses with the names of a few defaulters. The village’s main livelihood comes from the 500-acre Asim Agriculture Farm where they grow mangoes, bananas and vegetable using modern technology.

Last year’s budget was mostly spent on street lights, municipal services in the village, a fumigation drive, drainage system, maintenance of government schools and dispensaries, security, filter plant and repair of pavements and roads inside the village.

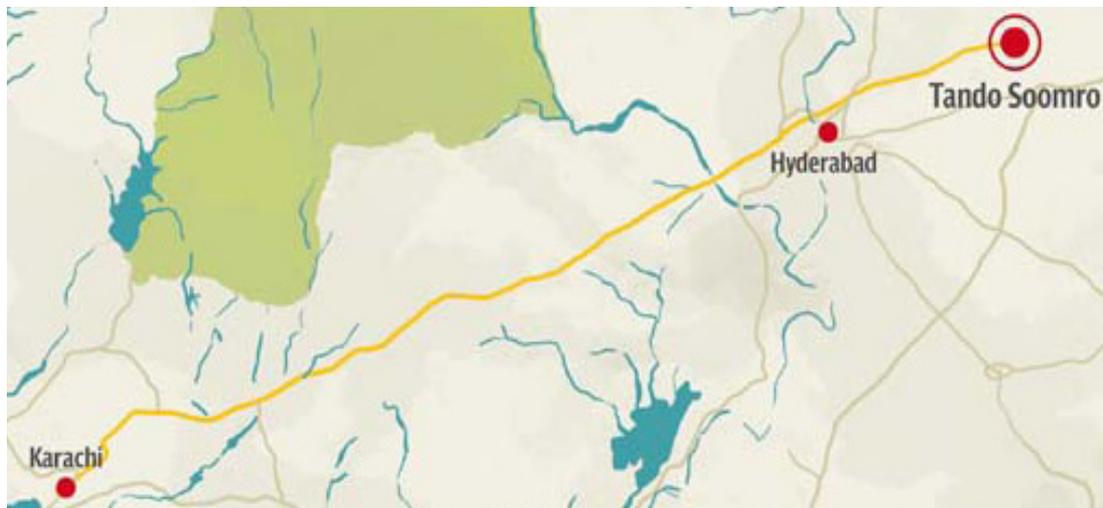
Once he is done with the presentation, he invites people to raise their objections. “I have presented each penny spent on the village. Let this forum know if anyone has objections,” he says only to receive applause from an audience of 300 people.

“During the outgoing year that ended in May, you people contributed a large amount of Rs10 million seemingly because we had to the build main road to our village,” he says, referring to the main thoroughfare that connects Tando Soomro to Tando Allahyar city. He then moves on to the budget proposals for the upcoming year. “We have now slashed our budget to Rs9 million. Do you agree?”

The crowd rises to their feet and nods their approval. “Qubool aa [We accept],” they shout in Sindhi. The meeting is dispersed as the residents make their way to the lavish buffet with ice-cream for dessert. The catering for this event was also accounted for in last year’s record.

Taking matters into own hands

According to the villagers, the idea to run the village affairs on their own came from Nizamani and a few of his like-minded friends after some dacoits attempted to kidnap the villagers in the 1980s. Since then, the young men of the village joined hands to raise money for security. That was a turning point for the village, which now comprises around 500 households for its 8,000 people.



“Most of villagers are growers who cultivate bananas, mangoes and vegetables,” says Khalid Ahmed Nizamani, a small-scale landlord who contributed Rs46,000 this year. “There is no hard-and-fast rule but everyone has to contribute for the village. Personal contributions range between Rs2,000 to Rs2 million,” he adds.

Governance model

The general body and the supreme council of the village are apex forums to make participatory decisions. Every villager who contributes funds for the annual budget becomes a member of the general body while the supreme council comprises 45 people who pay 80% of the entire budget.

“All the work is being done under a system and we have made different management committees to execute day-to-day work,” explains Nizamani, who contributes around Rs2 million every year being the ‘raees’. He points out that the members of the education, health, welfare and security committee work voluntarily without any remuneration. “Neither do we have any political affiliations nor do we accept any funds from NGOs and donors. We will do everything on our own for the welfare of our village.”

...the young men of the village joined hands to raise money for security. That was a turning point for the village...



Successful system

The system appears to be working flawlessly for Tando Soomro village where no garbage lines the streets. Every villager is bound to put his house trash in dustbins placed at every nook and cranny. There is an underground sewerage system, street lights and sanitary staff roaming on the streets.

“I can be held responsible if there is stagnant water after two hours of a heavy rainfall,” says Ghulam Qadir Khaskheli, aka Tiko Jamadar, who supervises the sanitary staff.

Even the minorities find a safe space where members of the Hindu scheduled caste enjoy the same rights as everyone else. “I paid Rs2,500 this year but no one has knocked at our door and forced us to contribute. It is totally voluntarily,” says villager Juma Bheel.

Meanwhile, the education and health committees keep a strict eye on missing facilities at the schools as well as the basic health centre. “The government doesn’t pay attention to the maintenance of the buildings,” claims Jumoun, scheduled caste Hindu who works as general manager at Asim farms. “It is the village committee that provides all the facilities needed for the students and patients., which is why the paramedics and doctors come regularly and there is 100% attendance at both girls’ and boys’ schools.”

To address security concerns, the villagers have erected a 12-foot-high wall surrounding the village. It cost Rs20 million and was completed in over 18 months, says Nizam. He also boasts of their no-kunda policy for electricity connections. “There is 100% recovery [of electricity bills] from our village,” he says.

Giving back

Where Sindh landlords are notorious for perpetuating bonded labour, Nizamani has set a precedent by giving equal share to the farmers, 90% of whom belong to the scheduled caste. “You will find some farmers who drive their own cars to the field when they come to cultivate the land,” says another landlord Mehbood Nizamani, referring to a few farmers who work at Asim Agriculture Farm. Picture worth a thousand words: Take a look at Thatta through the lens of its young residents

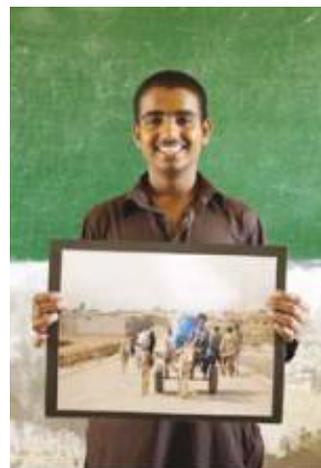


PHOTO CREDITS
Sibtain Haider

Picture worth a thousand words: Take a look at Thatta through the lens of its young residents

By [Hafeez Tunio](#), Published in The Express Tribune, July 2, 2016

GHARO: Every day after school, 13-year-old Laila goes around her village in an attempt to capture the lives of its people and the problems they face.

Her photographs feature mainly women who travel for miles every day in search of potable water and then work on the field for very low wages. By now she has over 2,000 photographs in her collection and she put 10 of these on display in a photo exhibition held last week in Noor Muhammad Thaeem Middle School in Thatta's Gharo town.

The exhibition attracted a large number of villagers, students, teachers and civil society members. Everyone was excited to see what the middle-school children have captured through their lens and how truly they have depicted life in Gharo.

Over 60 photographs showing various aspects of village life went up on display. The collection was a compilation of the works of eight students. According to the organisers, these students will work as citizen journalists in the future by sending their works to various media houses.

"These are the agents of change for the community," said Ayesha Javed, who works as communications officer at WaterAid, a UK-based organisation that organised the event.

"These are
the agents of
change for the
community"

Ayesha Javed

Javed explained that her team held a series of meetings with community leaders and school teachers before selecting eight students – four girls and four boys – for this exhibition. “We gave them digital cameras and UK-based professional photographers trained them on how to take photos,” she said. Javed added that these photos will be exhibited at national and international forums as well and they are hoping to arrange other training courses to enhance the capacity of these students.

Reaching out: Photographs portray Pakistan’s resilience

During the project, class-eight student Kulsoom took over 1,500 photographs. One of her remarkable photos shows a woman washing clothes and kitchen utensil using dirty water. “This woman had no idea about the consequences of washing clothes with contaminated water and many other villagers also indulge in the same practice,” she said, adding that she has focused on how women suffer while working in the fields and fetching water.

Before starting photography, these students were also trained about issues confronted by the people in their areas. Thirteen-year-old Mir Jahan, who studies in class eight, worked with young girls who don’t go to school and help their parents in the field instead. “I have made around 1,100 photos of these girls who are busy sowing the paddy crop,” she said, pointing to her photograph in which a minor girl is working alongside her mother in the field under the scorching sun.

Class-seven student Riaz Thaeem said that he followed a man for a few days who fills dirty water from a canal and supplies it to people in Gharo and other areas. “One can find many stray dogs and other animals in the canal from where this man fills the water,” he pointed out.

Meanwhile, Aqib, who studies in Noor Mohammad Thaeem village, has captured various crops near the village and the acute water shortage that has hit standing crops. One of his photographs showed a woman who is busy cutting fodder for animals in the field. “This woman does not only fulfil the need of her own buffalo but sells it to others as well,” he said, adding that this woman uses all her earnings to pay for her children’s education.

“This woman had no idea about the consequences of washing clothes with contaminated water and many other villagers also indulge in the same practice”

Kulsoom, class-eight student



PHOTO CREDITS
 Asif Jamali

Manchar Lake residents look towards one of their own

By [Hafeez Tunio](#), Published in The Express Tribune, August 11, 2016

KARACHI: Murad Ali Shah’s nomination as the Sindh chief minister (CM) has a special meaning for residents of Manchar Lake, one of Asia’s largest freshwater lakes, as the CM’s father and grandfather both were born at the edge of the lake.

The lake, which once boasted a unique culture wherein people resided atop the water in ‘boat villages’, is now completely contaminated due to the apathy of successive governments, compelling locals to migrate after residing on the lake for centuries. Their main source of livelihood – fishing – has been taken away from them due to the water’s contamination, along with their ability to use the lake water for washing and cleaning purposes.

“[Murad’s father] Abdullah Shah used to call himself a fisherman,” said Mustafa Meerani, a local social worker, while recalling the days when the then CM [Abdullah Shah] would visit the lake, situated around two kilometres from their native village of Wahur in Sehwan taluka.

According to Meerani, Murad’s ascent to the provincial throne has led people to attach high hopes for the lake’s revival and, thus, their source of livelihood. “There are still 20,000 people living on the lake and its embankments,” he claimed.

Official apathy

Recalling the lake's deterioration, he said, "It all started in 1996 with the federal government's Right Bank Outfall Drain (RBOD) project, which released effluent from Punjab and Balochistan into the lake."

According to Nasir Panhwar, an environmental expert who has worked on a feasibility report to revive Manchar Lake, the RBOD project was launched to dispose of the sewage from the two provinces into the Arabian Sea. "But the relevant authorities did not complete the project and preferred to release the waste in the lake instead," he explained.

He suggested the completion of the RBOD scheme to stop waste dumping in the lake as well as revival of the Aral and Danstar canals, which used to carry freshwater from the Indus to the lake, as remedial measures. "Both the canals are non-functional and full of silt," he claimed. "Therefore, the flow of freshwater from the Indus into the lake has stopped. It will not cost a lot, what is needed is intent."

Court orders

The former chief justice of the Supreme Court, Iftikhar Chaudhry, had taken a suo motu notice of the deteriorating situation at Manchar Lake and ordered steps for its revival in 2010 after a visit to the lake. In June 2015, the Supreme Court issued notices to the federal and provincial secretaries asking if the funds needed to install a treatment plant at Manchar Lake were released. An RBOD official told the court that the completion of the treatment plant was under way and at least Rs8 billion were needed for it. Meanwhile, the Sindh government's counsel had said that the delay in the release of funds was from the federal government, which did not give its share.

Then, Supreme Court Chief Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali, who was heading the bench at the Karachi registry, observed that Manchar Lake was losing its beauty and ecology, and life under water was being tarnished due to the release of toxic wastes. He had added that a large number of people who earn their livelihood from the lake were also being affected.

The initial estimated cost of the RBOD project [started in 2001] was Rs14 billion, but the revised cost has now reached Rs34 billion.

'We lived and died here'

Raza Memon resides in Bookab Town, at the corner of Manchar Lake. "Back in the day, the entire social life of people was inside the lake, which spread over 273 square kilometres. They used to be born and die on the lake [while residing in boat houses]," he said. "Only their burial would take place outside." He lamented that with each passing day this culture is dying. Out of hundreds of boats that used to house people on the lake, only around 60 are left now as most people have started living on the embankments due to the unusable water or migrated to other places in search of a better livelihood, he said.

"All eyes are on the chief minister now who is the only hope for the people of Manchar Lake," he stressed.

According to Qurban Mallah, a local fisherman, the CM, who has announced an education and health emergency, should implement this drive from Manchar Lake, where there is no school and dispensary for miles. "Thousands of people's livelihoods are related with this lake, from where no one can even drink a drop of water," he said, dejectedly. "The CM should take notice of the fact that people living at the edge of this great lake are suffering from thirst."



PHOTO CREDITS
A file photo of
a Dalit woman.
PHOTO: AFP

Shackles of caste: No end to discrimination against ‘achoot’

By [Hafeez Tunio](#), Published in The Express Tribune, April 4, 2016

“Menghwars, Bheels and Kolhis still cannot touch the well or the hand pump installed by a higher-caste Hindu or Muslim.”

SANGHAR: Forty-five-year-old Choko Bheel still remembers the day when his father was penalised for fetching fresh water from a well belonging to an upper-caste Hindu in Umerkot district.

Discriminated against by upper-caste Hindus and Muslims alike, Choko has set up a teashop in Sanghar exclusively for members of the Bheel community. His father was penalised 30 years ago but after that his entire family moved to Gujri, a small town of Sanghar district, where his shop also exists. The small hotel, famous for the Bheels, is never visited by any Hindu belonging to an upper caste or a Muslim. The Bheels, who belong to the scheduled caste and are considered ‘achoot’ [untouchables], gather at the hotel every day to have a cup of tea.

“The discrimination against us is not new,” says Choko, adding that people stare at them in an odd manner whenever they enter a regular hotel. “In every Muslim hotel, there is a separate glass or cup for scheduled caste Hindus like Bheels, Menghwars, Bagris and Kolhis. The hotel owners have prescribed rules for our people. If anyone wants to have a cup of tea, he has to wash the same after drinking and put it back from where it was taken.”

Hindu man pleads for recovery of family kidnapped 18 years ago

Choko explains that this discrimination was what compelled him to open his own

restaurant about five years ago. “No one from our community goes to a Muslim hotel,” he says. “We are forbidden from sharing the common utensils in restaurants run by Muslims and upper-caste Hindus, but we welcome them if they come to our small hotel.”

Around one dozen people belonging to the Bheel community are sitting at the hotel. Sharing their past experiences, a few say that they feel comfortable while sitting in their own restaurant after work. “Religious segregation is common in Thar, Badin and Sanghar, where a large number of scheduled caste Hindus live,” says Khemo Bheel, who grows sugarcane in the area. “We are separated based on our caste, not religion.”

‘Jinnah wanted Pakistan the right way’

Khemo talks about the tough situation they had to face during the floods of 2011. “In relief camps, we were not even allowed to drink a glass of water,” he says. According to him, Muslims were not the driving force behind this discrimination as it was started by their own upper-class Hindus. “What can we do?” he laments. “We are poor and consider it our destiny.” When asked about the elected representatives belonging to scheduled caste Hindu communities, he said he has not heard of anyone raising a voice for their rights. Karni Singh, a newly elected member of Tharparkar district council who belongs to the Thakur family of upper-caste Hindus of Thar, says the discrimination was started by the Hindu Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors and governors) and Vaishyas (agriculturalists, cattle herders and traders), who misinterpreted religion and considered these scheduled caste Hindus to be ‘Shudras’ (labourers and servants). Karni’s grandfather, Rana Chander Singh, was the chieftain of Pakistani Hindu Sodha Thakur Rajput clan.

“Now the situation is changing with each passing day,” says Karni, adding that many doctors and engineers belonging to the Menghwar and Kolhi community have proved that they are not lesser mortals. “These upper-class Hindus were thinking that their successors will always fill in their shoes, which is why they had devised the caste system,” he claims. “We are now witnessing a Brahmin boy working as a peon under a Menghwar doctor. We belong to an upper-class Hindu family but our cooks are Menghwar. Education has brought about a revolution in society and, in the next 15 years, there will be drastic changes.”

Nonetheless, MPA Poonjo Bheel disagrees with Singh. “I am a lawmaker of the Sindh Assembly but cannot drink water in a high-caste Hindu’s house in the same glass in Thar or Umerkot,” he says, adding that they have worked hard against this discrimination but it still prevails. “In upper Sindh, jirgas are held to settle bloody feuds whereas in desert areas we put all our efforts to resolve disputes on drinking water. Menghwar, Bheels and Kolhis still cannot touch the well or the hand pump installed by a higher-caste Hindu or Muslim.”





23% population still defecates in the open, says report

By [Sehrish Wasif](#), Published in The Express Tribune, March 12, 2017

SLAMABAD: A little less than a quarter of Pakistan's population or 23 per cent still defecates in the open, according to the latest Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) report by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef) and the World Health Organisation.

The report on safely managed drinking water reveals that Pakistan has missed the sanitation target and is still placed within the bracket of countries with 50-75 per cent coverage. The report is released every two years. The latest report highlights the data gathered during the last two years which has been issued in 2017.

The latest reports portray a bleak picture of Pakistan in terms of sanitation and highlights that due to open defecation the country continues to face major health and nutritional consequences. In Pakistan open defecation is one of the major contributors of stunting among children as the current prevalence rate of stunting is 45 per cent – which is worrisome.

According to the JMP report, in Pakistan just under half or 48 per cent of the population is using improved sanitation facilities, 6.0 per cent of population is using shared sanitation facilities and 23 per cent of the population is using other unimproved sanitation facilities.

While talking to The Express Tribune, World Sanitation Community Council (WSCC) country coordinator Tanya Khan said achieving the set target in sanitation is still a dream and a major challenge for Pakistan.

“It is only because improving sanitation has never remained on the priority list of the past and the present governments, which clearly depicts through minute investment by both the federal and provincial governments in this sector coupled with the misuse of available resources by the parliamentarians allocated for the said purpose,” she said.

Access to safe drinking water

According to the report, Pakistan is among the top 10 populous countries where around 1.7 million people rely on water delivered mostly by tankers. Moreover the study reveals that around 36 per cent of the country's population is using piped drinking water supply on premises meanwhile 55 per cent of the population is using improved drinking water sources, however 60 per cent of the population is using unimproved drinking water sources other than surface water and 3.0 per cent of the population is using surface water.

Earlier talking to The Express Tribune, officials of Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) said Pakistan is currently lagging far behind the globally set Sustainable Development Goals for improving access to safe drinking water.

“The pace at which Pakistan is improving its rate annually in access to clean drinking water will not let the country meet the set target by 2030,” said the official.

Pakistan risks running its water resources dry

By [Sehrish Wasif](#), Published in The Express Tribune, February 2, 2017

ISLAMABAD: A UN agency put Pakistani authorities on notice that current water shortages could have a drastic impact on the country if the problem is not addressed well in time.

A report compiled by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in December 2016 – a copy of which is available with The Express Tribune – said that the per capita designed live water storage capacity available in Pakistan is 121 cubic meters per person which is only higher than that of Ethiopia.”

Titled: ‘Development Advocate Pakistan: Water Security in Pakistan, issues and challenges’ it says: “Pakistan’s water profile has changed drastically from being a water abundant country to one experiencing water stress. Increasing demand for water and its erratic supply together are resulting in water shortages.”

Parliamentary panel: CDA urged to test water quality every three months

“Pakistan requires an increase of 14.2% in water availability to meet the requirement of population by 2025; however, the growing burden on water resources threats will add to Pakistanis’ wellbeing from unsafe or inadequate water supplies,” says the report.

Water demands continue to increase owing to a rise in population and a higher demand for multiple uses.

Describing water security as Pakistan’s most critical development challenge, the report says between 1990 and 2015, water availability had declined from 2,172 to 1,306 cubic metres per inhabitant.

Pakistan extracts 74.3% of its freshwater annually, thereby exerting tremendous pressure on renewable water resources, the report points out, adding,

despite remarkable improvements in the proportion of population using an improved water source and sanitation facility, 27.2 million Pakistanis do not have access to safe water and 52.7 million do not have access to adequate sanitation facilities.

“The repercussions on health are severe, as it is estimated that 39,000 children under the age of five die every year from diarrhoea caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation.”

The study warns that rapid climate change and global warming will have major impacts on increased crop water requirement. This will hamper productivity owing to changes in crop boundaries and reduced length of the growing season. “Thus, the chances of reduced water availability during dry years can be expected, extremes will be more frequent and severe, which will have negative impacts on productivity and sustainability of irrigated agriculture,” says the report.

‘KWSB not taken on board for high-rise buildings’

Khalid Mohtadullah, former member (water) Wapda, while sharing his opinion on the report, said in Pakistan, the increased storage capacity alone is insufficient to solve the problem. More efficient use of water needs to be targeted.

“The prevailing productivity per unit of water in Pakistan is among the lowest in the world,” he said.

A senior official of the science and technology ministry on the condition of anonymity told The Express Tribune: “Currently, it has become challenging for Pakistan to meet the increasing water demand, with an increasing population. Groundwater is also depleting with an alarming rate every year.”

Pakistan lacks plan to combat drought-like situation

By [Sehrish Wasif](#), Published in The Express Tribune, November 18, 2016

ISLAMABAD: The on-going dry spell across the country has caused a drought-like situation but, unfortunately, Pakistan lacks a comprehensive drought management plan to reduce risk of its impact on humans, crops, forestry and livestock.

Experts have termed the drought-like situation alarming and fear that if there's no rainfall by the mid of December, then Pakistan will face serious consequences –both in the short and long term.

Drought and water shortages

An official working in the water sector, who wished not to be named, said: “The issue of a drought-like situation is far more important than the Panamagate scandal.

“It is expected that it will have adverse impact on the economy, agriculture, forestry and people’s health. But it is being ignored both by the government and opposition political parties.”

The official said at present there is a need to have a proper water recycling system in the country to use around three million acres feet of water which is wasting every year.

“Currently, Pakistan does not have water recycling plants to help overcome the issue of water scarcity,” said the official.

Meanwhile, Dr Muhammad Ashraf, Chairman Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), told The Express Tribune, “The on-going dry spell is already affecting our winter crops and a slight delay in rains in rain-fed areas will have an adverse impact on it which will definitely affect our economy.

Pakistan’s decades of winning drought

“However, to overcome water shortage, people are massively using groundwater due to which its level is also declining at an alarming rate and if it will continue then time is not too far when people living in urban areas will face difficulty to consume water for drinking and other purposes at home,” he said.

Dr Pervaiz Amir, environmental, forestry and water expert, said, “Smog along with dry spell is affecting the country, but no one is taking it seriously. This situation is more devastating than a flood as it has long-term impact.”

“I, along with other women of this area, have spent most of my life searching the sweet water wells and reservoirs as underground water is not fit for drinking.”

Hawa Guramani

PHOTO CREDITS
PHOTO: INP



Most domestic water sources contaminated, says report

By [Sehrish Wasif](#), Published in The Express Tribune, October 2, 2016

“Most domestic water sources are tainted with chemical, microbiological and organic contaminants”

Expert

ISLAMABAD: Most domestic water sources are tainted with chemical, microbiological and organic contaminants, experts said in a report.

According to a fact-sheet on ground water quality, many sectors contribute to Pakistan’s water quality challenges and non-compliance of standards overwhelmed the efforts of regulatory authorities.

The report was conducted under the Australia-Pakistan Indus Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio (SDIP), a 12-year regional programme focused on the Water-Food-Energy connection in three large river basins in South Asia in collaboration with Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR).

Effluents: Less than 1% wastewater treated before release

A joint collaboration between Australia’s Commonwealth and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and PCRWR conducted a water quality monitoring programme in Ravi and Sutlej rivers.

“I, along with other women of this area, have spent most of my life searching the sweet water wells and reservoirs as underground water is not fit for drinking.”

Hawa Guramani

PCRWR sampled groundwater and drain water every month between August last year and July this year.

These monthly samples were analysed for chemical, trace metal and microbiological contamination. Samples in August last year (high flow) and January this year (low flow) were also analysed for organic pollutants in addition to other parameters.

Groundwater quality

“Most shallow ground water sources ... were contaminated with physico-chemical and microbiological contaminants, heavy metals and even pesticides,” the report stated.

The report also stated that shallow ground water near Kasur Nullah was found to be contaminated with heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants.

River water quality

The study also found that the water quality of River Ravi was more degraded than that of Sutlej River.

“The levels of dissolved oxygen, biological and chemical oxygen demand in Ravi River all failed to meet the water quality standards for effluent waste streams,” the report stated.

Tackling challenges: Use harvested rainwater, says experts

The study demonstrated that the contaminated river water also posed a serious threat to fish and other aquatic life while the microbiological contamination level, such as faecal coliforms, which was present in heavy amount, posed a serious health risk.

Drain water quality

The report pointed out that the River Ravi acts as a wastewater drain because it carries sewerage from Lahore and industrial waste matter generated from nearby industries.

“Not a single drain in the monitoring programme complied with the Pakistan National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS) for effluent waste streams,” it said.

PHOTO CREDITS
PCRWR warns
country will
approach absolute
water scarcity.
PHOTO: REUTERS



Pakistan may run dry by 2025: study I

By Sehrish Wasif, Published in The Express Tribune, May 30, 2016

SLAMABAD: The Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) has warned that the country will approach absolute water scarcity by 2025.

According to a report available with The Express Tribune, Pakistan touched the ‘water stress line’ in 1990 and crossed the ‘water scarcity line’ in 2005. If this situation continues, then chances are high the country will face acute water shortage or drought-like situation in the near future, the study predicts.

Water scarcity ‘biggest threat’ to Pakistan

To deal with the upcoming situation, there is a need to carry out research at various levels to find out the best possible solutions. “Unfortunately, the PCRWR has no funds to ensure sustainable research,” an official of the science and technology (S&T) ministry says.

The PCRWR is an apex body of the S&T ministry responsible for carrying out, coordinating, organising and promoting research in various aspects of water resources.

The official talking on the condition of anonymity said the PCRWR

“...chances are high the country will face acute water shortage or drought-like situation in the near future”

Sehrish Wasif

recently asked the government to create an endowment fund within the PCRWR for the purpose of research and development activities.

According to PCRWR documents, the objective behind the endowment fund is to avoid its dependence on the annual Public-Sector Development Programme (PSDP) and on recurring budget expenses on research. The council has sought Rs50 million for the government.

The fund also aims to focus on water scarcity for agriculture and poverty alleviation by carrying out surveys at various levels without wasting time to obtain PSDP funds, the documents state.

Why Pakistan will soon become a water scarce country

The primary source of funds shall be from the income of the proposed endowment funds and the savings out of the research projects awarded by the international and national donors to the PCRWR with the seed-money of Rs50 million coming from the government.

“The funds will help continue and sustain research activities, which are the need of the hour in a country like Pakistan where rising population is decreasing per capita water availability,” the S&T official said.

The focal person for the S&T ministry, Mohammad Khalid Siddiqui, admitted a scarcity of funds at the PCRWR for which efforts were underway to convince the government to allocate a spare budget.

Published in The Express Tribune, May 30th, 2016.









PHOTO CREDITS
Asif Jamali

Bribes and shortages: Karachi's burgeoning water mafia

By Zulfiqar Kunbhar, Published in DAWN, November 11, 2016

“For industries, water is the raw material, but the government has raised the price many hundred times over, due to which even our export has suffered a lot”

Asad Nisar

As Karachi struggles to supply water to its population, a mafia is slowly replacing the government as a major supplier. Pakistan's most populous city has enormous water needs, with an estimated core population of over 17 million.

As an industrial hub with over 10,000 factories, the city also handles 95 per cent of the country's exports.

The huge demand means that the city is facing a massive water crisis that is increasing in severity with every passing day.

Machar Colony, one of the Karachi's many informal settlements, has been facing the paucity of water.

“I never witnessed such water scarcity in my life,” said Abdul Sattar, an elder living in the area. “Besides water shortage, quality is another issue.”

“Even after paying huge sums, the quality remains questionable,” said Sonu Khangrani of the Hisar Foundation, which works on water management issues.

It is not just the poor that suffer. “For industries, water is the raw material, but the government has raised the price many hundred times over, due to which even our export has suffered a lot,” Asad Nisar, president of the Sindh Industrial Trading Estate, told thethirdpole.net.

Leaky infrastructure, burgeoning population

Up to 80pc of the city's water is pumped to homes through a 10,000km network of pipelines, and the rest of the city is supplied through tankers.

One of the major sources of water loss is through leakage. Unfortunately, the low price at which the water is supplied by the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB), between Rs200 to Rs500 per month, means that there is not enough revenue to adequately renovate the aging system.

"The leakages are causing a loss of around 25pc of the total water available in the system, due to which we are unable to provide water to several areas," said Misbahuddin Farid, managing director of KWSB.

Khangrani agreed. "The underground water pipeline supply in the city has become outdated," he said.

"For the last 25 years no new pipeline has been installed despite the city's growing population."

"The way Karachi's population is increasing it is becoming very difficult to govern it. No matter how many schemes you bring in, the population keeps growing and new industrial units are set up," agreed Farid.

The fact that the KWSB supplies water for an additional two to three million people that live on the outskirts of the city adds to the strain.

Enter the water mafia

As the state run water supply fails, the water mafia steps in. Tankers supply 20pc of the water in the city, including to those who already have a KWSB supply to overcome the shortfall.

Read: 'Tanker mafia' behind Karachi's water woes

Quite often they will pay anywhere from Rs6,000 to Rs10,000 for a month's supply, or about 30 times the rate the government charges. But people are glad to pay, as they have little choice.

Belying general assumptions, the supply is sometimes bad in rich localities, and good in less well off areas. This is primarily because of the quality of already established infrastructure.

"We get water from tankers but sometimes the quality is not good. And despite paying a huge amount we have to wait for hours for a tanker," said Zubaida, a resident of Clifton Block 8, a posh locality of the city which does not get regular water supply from the KWSB.

However, in the commercial areas like Sadar Town, most residents receive KWSB water on a regular basis.

"We pay only an average of Rs250 a month and get two-hour water supply from KWSB every day and the water is not bad," said Mohammad Haroon, a resident area of a plaza located on M.A. Jinnah Road.

Of course, the slums have the worst of both worlds, having no established infrastructure, and their residents being worse off.

According to an Orangi Pilot Project study, those living in unplanned settlements of Karachi pay 13 times more than those residing in affluent localities.

From illegal hydrants to illegal tankers

Illegal water hydrants are built to siphon off the water from the main supply. Over 10 million gallons per day (MGD) is stolen from the system through these means.

“Unofficial tankers steal water worth Rs57 billion annually from illegal hydrants in Karachi”

Khangrani

A fleet of illegal water tankers then transports the stolen water. These are the people who have set themselves up as unofficial and unregulated water suppliers using tankers.

The frustrated authorities of the provincial government of Sindh have launched many operations against these illegal hydrants and they demolish the facilities. Undeterred, the water smugglers lie low for a few days and then continue with their nefarious business.

“Unofficial tankers steal water worth Rs57 billion annually from illegal hydrants in Karachi,” claimed Khangrani.

But despite successive operations by the Sindh government, their success was partial. Corrupt police officials allegedly warn the water smugglers in advance of operations. Nevertheless in a recent operation, the KWSB succeeded in dismantling illegal water hydrants in some areas like Malir and Landhi.

“Despite all hurdles we are trying to make this drive successful. In some areas on the outskirts of the city – like Manghopir and Northern Bypass – the people of the area erect water hydrants very quickly.

Unfortunately, although the police in the area know of the problem, they do not act. This is one of the main reasons we are not succeeding,” said Farid.

Read more: [Tanker operators blame water crisis on govt officials](#)

He asserted that many First Information Reports (FIRs) had been registered against offenders in different parts of the city, but these had not been acted upon, nor had the cases been pursued to their logical end in the courts of law.

Is the tanker fleet a problem, or a solution?

The president of the All Karachi Water Tankers Ittehad, Mohammad Tariq Sadozai justified the presence of the tankers in the city, saying that the quantity of water required for the city is available in the system, but KWSB is unable to provide that water to the citizens.

“Therefore, we are here to help citizens to get water. We do not run the hydrants, we are just transporters and we ensure to take water from the hydrants and supply it where it is required, most of the hydrants are run by influential people, and are supported by KWSB,” he alleged.

The huge price difference was, he said, because of the price the hydrant people set. Sadozai suggested that since the authorities have singularly failed at shutting down these hydrants, it might be better to legalise them, and for KWSB to take a portion of revenue.

“...Sindh government should figure out a way to take the water tanker service into its fold and make it a commercial commodity and regulate it officially”

Noman Ahmed

Hydrant owners have their own justifications. An owner told thethirdpole.net on condition of anonymity that since the KWSB is unable to supply the required water, the demand is there. This is acted upon by influential people who have set up the illegal water hydrants.

“We arrange water, pay bribes so that these hydrants run smoothly and all this we do to ensure that every citizen gets water,” he said.

Regional problem

These water problems, from lack of supply, to illegal water hydrants, the water mafia, and claims of public service by those operating them, is not just a Karachi problem.

New Delhi, India’s capital city, suffers the exact same problem. Not only that, Delhi’s water mafia too justifies its practices by pointing to the state’s failure to properly supply water to those in need – especially those in unregularised colonies without proper infrastructure.

To India’s east, the capital city of the state of West Bengal is slowly turning from being water-rich to water-poor because of similar leaky infrastructure, and proliferation of illegal stand-posts (as water hydrants are called in Kolkata).

For all of these cities, the costly tangle of old, badly maintained water infrastructure, corruption in politics, and a staggering increase in demand as the urban areas have expanded, have led to similar problems.

Nobody has found a solution yet, but some are starting to echo the sentiments of the water tanker fleet, suggesting that the best way to deal with this huge extra-legal supply is to regularise some of it, while using its revenue to repair and build up the infrastructure.

Noman Ahmed, an author and urban planner suggested that the Sindh government should figure out a way to take the water tanker service into its fold and make it a commercial commodity and regulate it officially. That way at least some of the illegality would be curtailed as the city struggled to provide access to clean water for its citizens.

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PHOTO CREDITS
Asif Jamali

The water this desert doesn't want

By Zulfiqar Kunbhar, Published in TFT, December 30, 2016

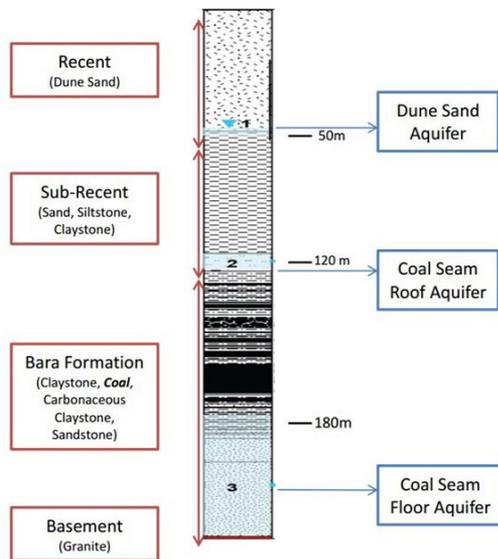
“...China is exporting its coal technology to Pakistan even though it's been globally rejected and has led to China's own massive pollution problem”

Zulfiqar Kunbhar

It takes an exceptional circumstance for the women of Thar to camp out with men from other tribal communities. But outside the Islamkot press club these divisive traditions have taken a backseat for a unifying cause: to protest the Sindh government and a company's joint decision to build a reservoir at Gorano to store what they say will be toxic water drained from coal mining. Take it some place else, they say.

Sita Bai, in her 30s, is one of those women, who is protesting with people from 12 villages around Gorano outside the press club. It is her 70th night there—a record not just for the length of the protest but also because the women have left their homes to do it. “It will inundate our entire area, which has been suffering a drought for many years,” she says, referring to their fears of the effect a reservoir will have on their ancestral village.

Sindh's Thar desert, that lies along the Indian border, has reserves of around 175 billion tonnes of lignite coal. They have been divided into 12 blocks and the Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC), a joint venture with the Sindh government, has started excavating in block 2. SECMC plans to excavate two billion tonnes of coal and build a 660 megawatt power plant, which is expected to send power to the national grid by June 2019. This is part of a bigger initiative as Thar's coal excavation has been included in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Chinese are helping mine the reserves. The criticism has been that China is exporting its coal technology to Pakistan even though it's been globally rejected and has led to China's own massive pollution



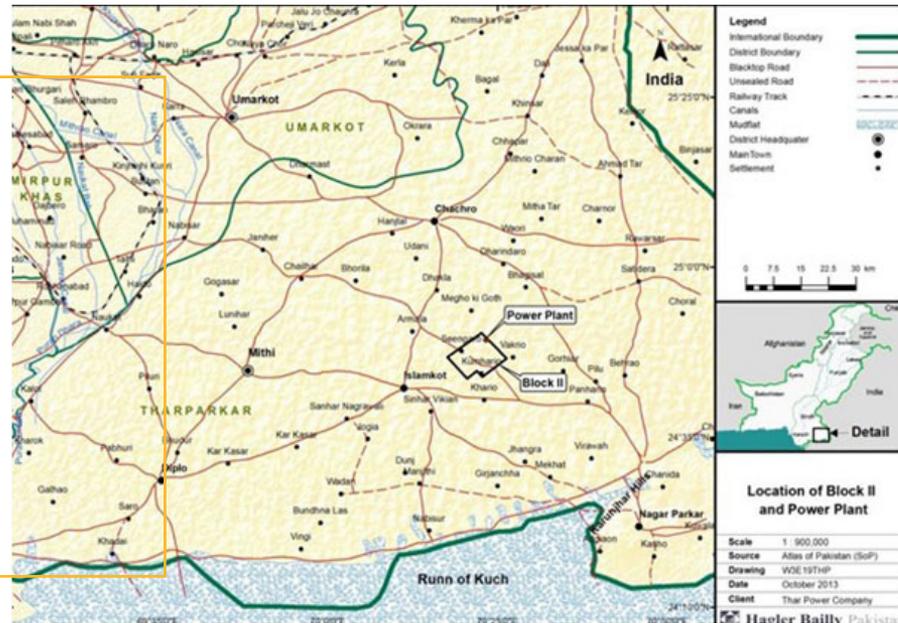
problem. Some global brands, like Ikea, for example, have refused to do business internationally with companies that use coal energy.

SECMC is going to have to use open pit mining because the coal is buried inside layers of water or aquifers (see image). That water needs to be drained, which is why the company plans to build an effluent disposal reservoir in an area near Gorano, which is about 29km from Islamabad. But now the people who live around here have joined together to protest.

First, the locals dispute the choice of the site at Gorano. Twelve of them filed a petition at the Hyderabad high court on June 30. They took the plea that the mining company had acquired the land under an urgency clause specified in Sections 4, 6 and 17 of the Land Acquisition Act of 1894. This part of the law says that the mining authority can acquire land but only after seeking permission of the land owner. The petitioners say that their permission was not granted and they were not granting permission either. On Dec 6, the judges tasked a committee with looking into the project in two months. The next hearing is on January 19.

The villagers also say that the plan for the reservoir never included an assessment of the socio-environmental impact. They fear that the water will be toxic and will ruin their environment. “Even though it is a desert the selected site is not barren land,” says Leela Ram Advocate, a resident of Gorano who is leading the protest. “It transforms into lush greenery when it rains. There are pasture lands at the site, which provide fodder to livestock, the only source for the residents of the desert.” The area has forest cover as well, which the villagers fear will be affected if the groundwater is interfered with. They also say that if this toxic water is extracted and dumped elsewhere it will ruin any place it is kept.

This is part of a bigger initiative as Thar's coal excavation has been included in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Chinese are helping mine the reserves. The criticism has been that China is exporting its coal technology to Pakistan even though it's been globally rejected and has led to China's own massive pollution problem. Some global brands, like Ikea, for example, have refused to do business internationally with companies that use coal energy



Civil society activists concur. “The reservoir is not feasible environmentally,” says Ali Akbar Rahimoon, a member of the Thar Voice Forum.

A hydrological survey would be needed to work through these issues. But journalist Sohail Sangi, who has worked on issues in Tharparkar, says that none has been done on how they will dispose of the water. He also wants to know if the underground water is public property or the company's.

According to SECMC's figures, a total of 30 to 35 cusecs of effluent would be disposed off in to the reservoir for two and a half years and the 'mine' water would not be toxic or hazardous. “The water is not at all poisonous,” said a statement from SECMC's CEO. “It is only groundwater without any industrial effluent [and] is brackish in nature. Brackish water will not be stored in the reservoir permanently, but temporarily for three to four years.”

Locals are also worried seepage from the reservoir will affect their underground water by turning sweetwater wells salty. Water is such a precious commodity for the drought-hit Tharparkar that people lock their tanks to protect their supplies. In the absence of piped water, wells are the only source of drinking water. The people's fears are based on information that surfaced in assessments that said that the Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) level of this underground water would be around 5000ppm, much higher than the WHO standard that sets the maximum contaminant level for TDS at 1,000 ppm. TDS is directly related to the purity of water, the quality of water purification systems and it is used to determine how safe water is for consumption by humans, animals or for farming.

The story of Thar's coal

Coal was first discovered in Thar by chance in 1991 while drilling for water. By 1994, American mining company John Boyd confirmed there were about 175 billion tons of coal. The Sindh government divided it into 13 blocks each with 2b tons of coal reserves. From 2003 to 2008, several foreign firms were involved in feasibility studies, exploration and plans to set up open-pit mines. They included lignite mining and power generation company RWE Germany, China's Shenhua coal and mineral mining company, Hong Kong-based businessman Gordon Wu. In 2008, the Sindh government opened International competitive bidding for block 2. Engro was selected as a joint venture partner leading to the formation of the Sindh Engro Coal Mining Co Ltd (SECMC) in 2009. Source: Business Recorder

"Seepage would affect wells coming inside the covered area of the reservoir and outside," argues Rahimoon. "For instance, nine water wells fall within the construction site and 26 are in nearby areas." Leela Ram added that they did not agree with the company's statement. "Seepage is definite as Thar's sand dunes are not capable of bearing the seepage no matter how much pitching is done," he said. Pitching refers to building up embankments with stone.

And what if the wastewater is dumped near their homes? An estimated 15,000 people live in the surrounding areas. The company has said, however, that the residents will not need to leave because of the reservoir. But at the same time it promises to settle any locals if the need arises. "Not a single family will be migrated or relocated due to the construction of the Gorano reservoir," said the CEO's statement. "But in any case, if someone is forced to migrate, the company will make all the necessary arrangements for their relocation and continuation of their livelihood."

For women like Sita, this rings alarm bells. "The displacement would mean losing the land we have lived on for centuries," she said. "We would also lose our ancestral chaunra, (a cone-shaped homes made of straw and wood)." Usman Hajjam, a 70-year-old dweller of another affected settlement Suleman Hajjam village thinks that the displacement would mean loss of livestock which is their major source of livelihood.

The villagers are also asking about the actual size of the reservoir. According to SECMC, the reservoir is being built on 1,500 acres out of



PHOTO CREDITS
Asif Jamali



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Asif Jamali

which 532 acres are private property and the rest is communal grazing land. The Thar Land Grant Policy 1930 permits people to use this land. “Initially SECMC claimed that the reservoir would be constructed on 2,700 acres but now it is saying that the covered area of the reservoir will be 1,500 acres,” Rahimoon added.

For whatever it is worth, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has reiterated the government’s stance that they cannot change the site because there was no other choice when it came to dealing with the water. He called the migration and displacement of people from the area affected by the development “a natural phenomenon”, Dawn reported.

The company has engaged at some level with the locals. For instance, Shamsuddin A. Shaikh, the chief executive officer of the coal mining company, admitted to them making some mistakes. “We might have made some minor mistakes before carrying out the construction work of the reservoir, but we cannot change it now,” Shaikh stated while requesting protesters to end their protest “in the national interest.” A newly appointed spokesperson, Mohsin Babar, told The Friday Times that the protestors had been “misguided” by other people. “Some of them are even parting ways with the protest,” he claimed. He did not, however, mention any more details.

The villagers are also worried that the reservoir would lead to a loss of plant life. A total of 137 plant species have been reported from the Tharparkar area, says Hagler

“Initially SECMC claimed that the reservoir would be constructed on 2,700 acres but now it is saying that the covered area of the reservoir will be 1,500 acres,”

Rahimoon

Bailly Pakistan that conducted an environmental and social impact assessment of Thar Coal Block II. These include trees that are a source of income in their lives. The trees are helpful during the drought conditions when rains are scattered and the ground water levels are down. During that time, the livestock becomes highly dependent on trees. “One of the most serious environmental issues is that, at present the felling of the Rohiro tree is banned under the Article 144,” said Rahimoon. “Also, according to the UNDP and Environment Ministry, the gugrall (*Camiphora mukul*), phoge (*Clligonum polygonoides*), rohiro (*Tecoma undulata*), Peeloo (*Salvadora persica*), Kandi (*Prosopis cineraria*) and Kombhat (*Acacia Senegal*) are threatened species.”

The protestors wanted to clarify that they are not opposing the project as such. They are just concerned with the location and their villages. “We proposed four alternate sites which are 5km away from the Rann of Kutch, the Ramsar Site,” says Leela Ram. Protestors say that trying to build the reservoir at Gorano is a bad choice as the village is surrounded by dunes on three sides. The ideal site, they said, is more towards the salt marshes 15km south from Gorano. And indeed, this seems to have been considered an option at one point

as a possibly older Engropowergen document on the project says: “Effluent / Groundwater from Thar Block-II Projects will be disposed in the Salt Lakes in or near the Rann of Kutch Area.” CEO Shamsuddin Shaikh told The Friday Times, however, that when they compared Gorano with eight other sites based on a certain criterion, this one was “selected purely on engineering and scientific grounds after meeting all legal and administrative prerequisites.”

As with such development projects that pit nature against ‘progress’, sides have been taken. Few dispute that Pakistan is short on energy and the government has to tackle the energy crisis. Thar’s coal has long been seen as a solution. In the Gorano reservoir case, the villagers await the court’s outcome on the petition and press forward with their protest. Wellwishers have come forward. Renowned Sindhi singer Saif Samejo visited them and even composed a song for their cause: “Bhora Manrhone” (The simple people). “My song is dedicated to the people of Gorano,” he told The Friday Times. The lyrics are emotional: We are naïve, we are innocent. We are coy, we are trusting... We never intervene in each other’s affairs. Now there will be no turns for water...”

“For females, there is no public washroom facility in whole market. During my routine stay here for almost eight hours, I cannot go to toilet, as I have no other choice”

Sakina

The sanitation woes of Karachiites

By Zulfiqar Kunbhar, Published in Daily Times, April 23, 2016

KARACHI: In the routine hustle bustle of Murad Khan Road near Khori Garden Market, Sakina is the only female roadside vendor, selling “pulse-made ‘paapar’”. She does not face any difficulty carrying her roadside business but feel hardship when it is time of call of nature. She has to bear and wait until work is finished and it is time to return back home near Light House area.

“For females, there is no public washroom facility in whole market. During my routine stay here for almost eight hours, I cannot go to toilet, as I have no other choice. As the result I would have to hold,” Sakina told. “In this backdrop I would have to drink less water,” she added.

According to experts, provision of safe, clean and comfortable public toilets is critical to citizens’ health. “Women, in response to lack of toilet provision, are likely to ‘hold on’ resulting in urine (and pathogen) retention, and bladder distension increasing the propensity for continence problems,” said Dr Nuzhat Faruqi, a urologist and assistant professor at Aga Khan University, Karachi.

“The elderly and people with disabilities may simply not go out to answer the call of nature. Those toilets that are available may be unusable. At times, people stop drinking water hours before they travel which also imposes a risk of urinary infection and stone formation,” Dr Faruqi maintained.

Not only Sakina, but also other female customers face same difficulty and feel embarrassment to meet call of nature. “I wish city authorities could take serious note of it,” she lamented.

But little does Sakina know that newly-started Karachi’s Rs 16.85 billion Green Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, which comes in her route, would not possess adequate toileting facility. Little she is aware of the fact that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during ground-breaking ceremony of the project had said, “The BRT will make life easy for residents of the areas it passes through.”

The federal government funded Green Line project, which would cater to almost 300,000 commuters a day had initially been planned from Surjani Town to Gurumandir but now it has been extended up to Merewether Tower.

According to constructors EA Consultants (Pvt) Ltd, responsible for building and execution of this project for Karachi Infrastructure Development Company Limited (KIDCL), out of original 22 passenger service stations between Surjani Town and Gurumandir, not all service stations would have public toilet facilities due to issues pertaining to availability of space, provision of water and sewerage networks.

Zahid Farooq, an urban planner links complete success of this project in case of all facilities including provision of public lavatories. “If project management is facing problems in terms of finding space, water connection or drainage, it should make it technically possible,” he said. “Provision of public toilets should be included at all stations. It counts the success or create vacuum in public projects,” official of Urban Resource Centre said while demanding provision of separate male-female lavatories.

Not too far away from Sakina’s open sky business, there is an ‘Only For Men’ public toilet, one of city’s oldest public lavatory. However, upon visiting, the place was presenting a filthy look, and Rana Masih, in charge of Khorī Garden Public Toilet, was seen resting on concrete blocks structure, with an eye on the visitors for collection charges.







With around 22 million people, Karachi produces up to 12,000 tons of solid waste every day, almost all of it ends up in the sea.

PHOTO CREDITS
Amar Guriro

Catch-22: Karachi's marine pollution shows catastrophic results

By [Amar Guriro](#), Published in DAWN, April 23, 2016

A team of five exhausted fishermen has just returned from a three-day tiring journey of the Arabian Sea. After anchoring their wobbly 30-foot boat at the fishing jetty of Karachi's historical fishing settlement, Ibrahim Hyderi, they start unloading nets and emptying the plastic baskets. Finally they pile up their catch, which comprises small fish. The three nights of labour will earn each fisherman Rs3,000, as only fish meal factories will buy it for less than the market rate.

"There are no fish near the shores and we have to travel into open sea to find the catch," says Abass Mallah, the 40-year-old captain of the boat.

Also read: Youth shot dead in Ibrahim Hyderi

The residents in this oldest fishing village are running out of luck as they have to find ways to survive with the growing pollution from Pakistan's largest city. These days they need powerful motorboats, bigger fishing nets and extra men to sail into the open sea and spend several days in search of fish.

"Dumping of garbage and pouring sewerage water into sea has badly affected fish," says Saleh Muhammad, a fisherman from the village.

Just a few yards away from the fishing jetty, heaps of rubbish have been dumped on the beach. According to locals, influential people have started inviting rubbish trucks to



PHOTO CREDITS
Amar Guriro



The drains to the sea are full of black water frothing with chemicals.

PHOTO CREDITS
Amar Guriro

come and dump municipal waste into the sea. They hope then to lay claim to the adjacent land, and sell it at a large price.

Just outside the village, there is a huge drain. It pours forth smoky black water, layered with white foam, into the sea. This effluent comes from the city. There are six industrial zones in Karachi with around 10,000 industrial units that manufacture everything from textiles to chemicals and paints. The most polluting, in terms of chemical waste, are the tanneries.

The authorities admit that solid waste and toxic industrial effluents are dumped into sea, untreated. Sindh Minister for Environment, Sikandar Mandhro, says that he is aware that the wastewater and solid waste is dumped into the sea. “This is not new phenomena, we have chalked out a plan to solve the issue on a permanent basis,” he said.

Authorities estimate that Karachi produces around 500 million gallons per day (MGD) of wastewater. Around one fifth of water comes from these industries, while the rest is the domestic or municipal sewerage. “Almost the entire sewerage and industrial waste water goes into sea without treatment, which has brought a natural disaster, as we are losing our fish catch and also it is affecting marine life. We are working to resolve the issue,” admits Mandhro.

According to the law, the owners of industrial units are responsible for treating industrial waste and disposing of the wastewater properly without harming the environment. “There was no law to punish the polluters in the past, but now we have introduced new laws and will soon ensure that every industry treats its waste,” says Mandhro.

However, factory owners have different ideas. “Most of the industries were built five or six decades ago and now they have no space to build treatment plants inside the factories,” says Syed Sadiq Ahmed, an owner of a small factory in Korangi Industrial area. He says the government has a plan to treat the industrial wastewater but nothing yet has been done. “A huge treatment plant was started in Korangi Industrial area, but is no longer functional,” he adds.

There are no designated landfill sites in Karachi, therefore the rubbish or solid waste, which includes plastic, is thrown directly into the sea or dumped in rainwater steams or nullahs and ultimately are washed into the sea after monsoon floods. According to data collected by the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (Sepa), there is also the waste



from, the huge local cattle colony, which houses around a million animals, a mix of cows and buffaloes. The waste produced by them is also dumped in the sea.

Pakistan's only two functional ports – Karachi Port and Bin Qasim Port – are also located on these shores, which also contribute to the pollution. The Karachi Port Trust (KPT) authorities claim that they are working day and night to keep the sea clean, but the Pakistan Game Fish Association has termed the port as, “possibly the most polluted port in the world”. Oil spills from the ships in the vicinity are common, and the Tasman Spirit oil spill in 2003, was one of the world's worst. The Greek oil tanker carrying 67,500 tonnes of crude oil broke ran aground near the Karachi port, killing thousands of fish and birds in the area. The impacts of the spill still linger.

Read more: [Oil spill may affect marine life for 500 years](#)

Ecologists are worried about the increasing marine pollution. Nadeem Mirbahar, a renowned ecologist and coordinator at the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Pakistan, says pollution has badly affected the fish catch and marine life. “Along the Karachi coast, locals sometimes find corpses of endangered green turtles and other cetaceans, which died because of the pollution, especially due to throwing of plastic waste into the sea,” says Mirbahar. He further adds that several species of fish have disappeared from the waters of Arabian Sea due to pouring of industrial waste.

12m urban dwellers in Pakistan living without proper sanitation, reveals report

By [Amar Gururo](#), Published in Daily Times, November 16, 2016

KARACHI: Around 12 million urban dwellers in Pakistan are living without proper sanitation and 48,000 of have no choice but to defecate in the open using roadsides, railway tracks and even plastic bags dubbed 'flying toilets', disclosed a report 'State of the World's Toilets: Overflowing cities' issued by WaterAid ahead of World Toilet day that has to be observed on Saturday, November 19.

The report added that the India, world's fastest growing economy, ranks top for having the greatest number of urbanites, 157 million people, are living without safe and private toilet and where 41 million urban dwellers practising open defecation.

The report which looks at the problems of urban sanitation, states that 2.3 billion people around the world don't have access to a safe toilets and almost 900 children die every day from diarrhoea caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation.

"However Pakistan is making progress in helping its urban population gain access to a toilets," said the report, adding that since 1990 the proportion of urbanites living without sanitation has halved, and it now also ranks seventh in the world for the country making the most progress in reaching urban populations with toilets.

The high population density of urban areas means that diseases are spreading fast in the absence of good sanitation. One child dies every two minutes from diarrhoeal diseases caused by dirty water, poor sanitation and hygiene. Globally 159 million children under five have their physical and cognitive development stunted; many of such cases are caused

from repeated bouts of diarrhoea attributed to dirty water, poor sanitation and lack of hygiene.

The report quoted a case study from Karachi's Orangi Town - among Asia's biggest slums and stated that the slum was deprived of basic services for many years until, in 1980, local people set up an organisation called the Orangi Pilot Project to help citizens improve their streets, connect

their houses and lanes to city utilities, and install 72,000 household toilets. The organisation has laid around 1.3 million feet of sewer lines and one man, Muhammad Abdul Qadir, estimates he was involved in 75 percent of that work. "Now, the wastewater flows directly to the main sewerage line. So, a lot of people have benefited and are at ease now .

The report also added that the Pakistan's towns and cities are growing so fast that by 2050 it is estimated that more than half of the population will be urban. Today, there are nine cities with populations of over 1 million people. While Pakistan has made considerable progress, stark inequalities still remain, and the poorest are still being left behind. The inability of urban areas to provide enough employment, housing and services to newcomers from rural areas pushes up slum growth rates and inflames tensions between different ethnic and social groups.





PHOTO CREDITS
Missing

Will Pakistan ever become polio free?

By [Ashfaq Yusufzai](#), [Hasan Mansoor](#), [Amar Guriro](#), [Naseem Salahuddin](#), [Laila Rizvi](#), Published in DAWN, January 25, 2017

Pakistan: The Last Bastion Of The Poliovirus

In Pakistan, polio cases have decreased by over 99pc since 1988, from an estimated 350,000 cases then, to 54 in 2015, and 19 reported in 2016.

With the last population census conducted in 1998, the hurdles in estimating the number of children requiring vaccinations are significant.

Oftentimes, while walking through the streets of Pakistan's cities, small towns or villages, one comes across a man or woman dragging a limp leg or foot, or a shrunken arm hanging loosely by the side.

Some are permanently incapacitated; others may have struggled through a lifetime of trials and tribulations to attain a place in society.

Their untold challenges have taken up a new perspective ever since Pakistan attained the dubious distinction of being the last bastion of the poliovirus.

In Pakistan, polio cases have decreased by over 99pc since 1988, from an estimated 350,000 cases then, to 54 in 2015, and 19 reported in 2016.

However, Pakistan's polio eradication programme has come under international scrutiny given its position as the main driver for curtailing the global wild poliovirus spread in recent years.

...the polio eradication initiative faces several challenges on the ground.

Being one of the biggest partnerships at the global level, the polio eradication initiative faces several challenges on the ground.

Most importantly, the last population census was conducted 19 years ago; hence there are continuous and significant hurdles in estimating the number of children requiring vaccinations.

This affects proper planning and resource allocation for immunisation activities. If there are no proper targets, then, it becomes impossible to assess whether the reported coverage reflects the actual number of children needed to be reached in a geographic area.

To add, financial and organisational deficits, as well as conflict and insecurity have contributed to the persistent failure of immunisation campaigns countrywide.

Poliovirus causes disease only in humans, and affects vulnerable children. It spreads person to person via fingers carrying contaminated faeces. Once it enters the body, it multiplies inside the gut.

Two to three weeks later, the child gets a fever, headache, sore throat, vomiting and abdominal pain — symptoms that resemble a nonspecific acute viral infection.

The diagnosis may go unrecognised, or it can be made precisely if specimens are sent to a special laboratory for isolation of the virus from the throat or faeces, or through a specific blood test.

This is normally not required, as 95pc of children recover completely within a week

or two, and there may not be need to confirm a diagnosis of what seems like an innocuous self-limiting viral infection.

The recovered child, however, continues to excrete the virus from the throat and in the stool for at least several weeks to months, and can infect food and water in unsanitary conditions, thus perpetuating the infection.

Five per cent of children, however, do not recover; rather, they progress to viral meningitis, and may recover slowly.

The unfortunate 0.1pc of all polio victims develop paralysis over one to two days, affecting different groups of limb muscles. The paralysis is irreversible, and the child grows into adulthood with permanent loss of limb function.

Others may suffer even more severe involvement of the nervous system, and can die from polio.

Historically, polio has been known to cause outbreaks in many countries, resulting in disability among children and young adults.

Treatment modalities were mainly anecdotal, ranging from herbs and serums to hydrotherapy and physiotherapy to kill pain, and even placing critically ill patients in the Iron Lung for months to years to help them breathe.

Obviously nothing worked, until the day dawned on vaccine development for prevention of the disease. In the mid 1950s, two scientists, Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin, developed the polio vaccine.

Salk developed the inactivated poliovirus



Contracting polio in childhood can cause paralysis which is irreversible with permanent loss of limb function.—
White Star

vaccine (IPV), consisting of an injected dose of killed poliovirus; Sabin developed an oral polio vaccine (OPV) using live but weakened (attenuated) virus.

Both vaccines have their advantages and fallbacks, but IPV alone has been extremely successful in eradicating poliovirus in developed countries. OPV, used in developing countries, has also proven effective in inducing protection against poliovirus, although some children may fail to develop immunity.

Sequential administration of OPV and IPV has led to almost complete eradication of this once dreadful disease.

In January this year, Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah admitted that eradicating the poliovirus was a major challenge for his government.

The question is why repeated polio campaigns have resulted in poor routine immunisation drives.

If one examines the results of the Sindh immunisation campaign launched in September and December 2016, the target was set at 2.2 million children in Karachi and 6.1m in the rural areas of the province.

But in the city, around 2.6pc of all children were unavailable at the time of immunisation, while parents of 1.7pc refused the vaccine.

Several mitigating factors have created serious inequities in immunisation coverage countrywide. Because polio eradication is mistakenly seen as the responsibility of the Expanded Program on Immunisation (EPI), polio campaigns are perceived as health department initiatives.

However, given an inadequate health infrastructure and service delivery system, and lack of inter and intra provincial collaboration and coordination within various health

...in Pakistan, families are mostly 'reactive' and not 'proactive.'

programs, it is not surprisingly, then, that a low uptake of vaccinations among children less than five years age has been consistently recorded.

Possibilities of using multiple polio campaigns to push forward the routine agenda have not been adequately explored.

Polio teams visiting households can collect dropout and defaulter data and share the latter with local vaccinators.

In subsequent visits, they must follow up and check up on how many defaulters have been covered by vaccinators. This would prove an excellent data source to assist health management task forces to track outreach vaccination activity without needing any extra resources.

Creating sustained community ownership works, as proven in Bangladesh and India where communities took to the streets to advocate for polio eradication programs and supported service delivery.

In Pakistan, families are mostly 'reactive' and not 'proactive.' So the community might know that polio drops are beneficial, but how many child caretakers actively seek immunisation for their children — especially in low-income neighbourhoods when vaccination teams do not come to their doorstep.

So, despite massive funding, the question arises: how effective are current social mobilisation campaigns in changing behaviour and thinking?

Lady health workers can be brought on board to educate communities on the

importance of vaccinating their children.

Also, the role of community service organisations (CSOs) active in areas where the health infrastructure is practically nonexistent is a significant factor if the poliovirus is to be eradicated with success in rural Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

These are the areas where pockets of missed children are also expected to be found. CSOs also need to be involved at provincial, district and sub-district levels from the planning phase.

This would also provide much needed additional resources for the government in short supply of vaccinators.

If CSOs are given this responsibility, and then held accountable to ensure that their areas are covered during polio campaigns and during routine immunisation, the chances of identifying children who might have been missed increases. Pakistan must save its children.

It must make its last ditch effort to achieve the goal of becoming a polio-free nation in 2017, and celebrate the end of the era of the poliovirus with the world two years after the last case is detected.

The world's eyes are set on Pakistan.



PHOTO CREDITS
Amar Guriro

Once world's fifth largest delta is without a drop of water

By [Amar Guriro](#), Published in Daily Times, August 20, 2016

KARACHI: Between the several scattered makeshift huts in this small remote village in Thatta district, Slama Khaskheli is lucky enough that she has access to drinking water at her door step. A hand pump donated by a philanthropist. The quality of water is in question, but at least she can get water whenever she wants.

But few kilometers away from the Khaskheli's village, there is another small fishermen hamlet, Allah Dino Patel, located near Kharo Chhan Creek, one of seventeen creeks of the River Indus Delta in Thatta district; the residents have to walk four kilometers every day to fetch water from a hand pump.

Though, the water is brackish, but eve after walking so long they can at least find water for their daily use.

But like residents of this villager, everyone is not fortunate to find water in this region facing acute water shortage. Apart from age difference, women pay the burden of water crisis.

One can see minor girls at different locations carrying tins and pitchers are walking almost for the entire day to find new water sources. They were seeing their mothers, sisters and other women doing it. It's what these girls grown up with; it's what they will die doing. This is the region where Indus meets Arabian Sea. Upstream diversion of river Indus water due to construction of dams and barrages on Indus has reduced the river

“There is no water source even in Keti Bunder, some people bring water through tankers to Keti Bunder and then it is transported through boat.”

Subhan Dablo, a resident of the island

flows drastically. Most of the creeks, where Indus was flowing in the past are now lying dry.

There are several small islands, where the residents have not even land to walk in search of water.

Like, remote deltaic island, locally known as Tipan Island, located at around two hours of boat journey from the Keti Bunder town, the last human settlement on River Indus, water is a precious commodity.

These deltaic islands, scattered along estuary of River Indus near Arabian Sea, are surrounded by water, even the land on these islands is submerged twice a day with tidal currents.

There is no freshwater source and communities have to import water from land. Three times a week, a boat, carrying water arrives on this Island.

“There is no water source even in Keti Bunder, some people bring water through tankers to Keti Bunder and then it is transported through boat,” said Subhan Dablo, a resident of the island.

Residents have to spend more than half of their total income on drinking water.

Like other deltas in South Asia, in River Indus Delta too, the faces of those people are overwhelmingly the faces of women. As men travel to the mega cities to find possible ways to livelihood, women now make up the majority of the problems related to water shortages.

Recently, the UK-based international charity, WaterAid released that around 16 million people in Pakistan do not have access to clean drinking water. “At least 84 percent to 89 percent of the country’s water sources are substandard for human consumption, due to which about 53,000 children die of water borne diseases like diarrhea,” stated the report, adding that in every over 3 million people suffer from water born diseases in the country. Recently appointed chief minister of Sindh has made so many promises, but none of them is covering provision of clean water to the people of Sindh who are suffering with either acute water shortage or have worst quality of water.





پاکستان میں بڑھتی پیاس!

وطن عزیز میں پینے کا پانی صحت کے لیے خطرناک ترین ہو گیا ہے۔

گوئیلا گل

پاکستان کونسل آف ریسرچ ان واٹر ریسورسز کی جانب سے کئے گئے ایک دوسرے کے مطابق پاکستان کے صرف 15 فیصد شہری اور 18 فیصد دیہی علاقوں میں پینے کے صاف پانی کی سہولیات موجود ہیں۔ آلودہ پانی بہت سی بیماریوں کی جڑ ہے اس کی وجہ سے ہپاٹائٹس، ٹائیفائیڈ، ڈائریا، گیسٹر وسمیت پیٹ اور گلے کی بہت سی مختلف بیماریاں تشویش ناک حد تک عام ہو رہی ہیں۔ صاف پانی صحت مند معاشرے کی اولین اور بنیادی ضرورت ہے، لیکن پاکستان میں پینے کے پانی کے حوالے سے کچھ تلخ حقائق کے منظر عام پر آنے کے بعد اب یہ نعمت ملک کے بیشتر علاقوں میں صحت کے لئے غیر محفوظ تصور کی جا رہی ہے۔ پی ایس آئی آر (پاکستان کونسل آف سائنٹیفک اینڈ انڈسٹریل ریسرچ) میں سینئر سائنٹیفک آفیسر جہانگیر شاہ کا کہنا ہے کہ پاکستان میں پینے کے لئے دستیاب پانی، صحت کے لئے مضر ہے اور اس کی وجہ سے بہت بیماریاں پھیل رہی ہیں۔ ان کا کہنا ہے کہ ملک میں موجود پینے کے پانی کا نظام بہت پرانا ہے اور یہ کافی حد تک آلودہ ہو چکا ہے، کثیر تعداد میں جو اینٹ اور پرانے اور زنگ آلودہ پائپ لائن کی وجہ سے بیکٹیریا اور دوسرے جراثیم آسانی کے ساتھ اس پینے کے پانی میں مل جاتا ہے، ملک میں پانی کے اسٹوریج یا ٹینکیوں کی صفائی کی طرف کوئی توجہ نہیں دی جاتی۔ مضر صحت پانی کے استعمال کے بارے میں ان کا کہنا ہے کہ ایک اندازے کے مطابق تقریباً 80 فیصد بیماریاں آلودہ پانی کی وجہ سے جنم لیتی ہیں، اور اس میں 40 فیصد بچوں کی اموات، جن کی عمریں پانچ سال سے کم ہیں، وہ بھی اس آلودہ پانی کے وجہ سے ہوتی ہیں۔ اس حوالے سے پی ایس آئی آر کے نمائندے کا کہنا ہے کہ آلودہ پانی اس پینے کے پانی کو کہا جاتا ہے جو کیمیکل (کیمیائی) اور بیکٹریا یا جراثیم (جراثیم) سے پاک نہ ہو۔ اس ادارے نے ملک کے مختلف حصوں کے پانی کے نمونوں کا معائنہ کیا ہے، جس میں اکثر علاقوں میں موجود پینے کا پانی غیر معیاری ہے، بیکٹریا اور جراثیم کے علاوہ بھی کچھ علاقوں میں اگر پانی میں فاسفورس کی مقدار زیادہ ہے تو کچھ علاقوں کا پانی سخت ہے، جس میں میکینیشم اور بیکٹیم وغیرہ کے نمکیات شامل ہوتے ہیں۔

پینے کے پانی کے آلودہ ہونے کی دوسری وجوہات کے بارے میں بات کرتے ہوئے ان کا کہنا تھا کہ پاکستان میں اکثر ڈسٹری بیوٹن لائنز کا زنگندہ نالیوں یا نہروں سے ہوتا ہے۔ دراصل ہمارے ہاں پانی کی ڈسٹری بیوٹن پائپ لائن میں

پانی کی جنگ!

2025 تک ایک ارب 80 کروڑ افراد پانی کی کمی کا شکار ہوں گے۔

گوئیلاگل

دنیا کی 6 ارب سے زائد آبادی کیلئے پانی کی طلب روز بروز بڑھ رہی ہے اور کرہ ارض پر موجود میٹھے پانی کا 54 فیصد یہ آبادی استعمال کرتی ہے، اگلی عالمی جنگ میٹھے پانی پر ہوگی۔ عالمی ماہرین کہتے ہیں کہ اس وقت میٹھے پانی کا 70 فیصد زراعت، 22 فیصد صنعتوں اور 8 فیصد گھریلو ضروریات پر استعمال ہو رہا ہے۔ 1.4 ارب لوگ دریاؤں کے قریب رہتے ہیں اور پانی کا زیادہ استعمال کرتے ہیں۔ یورپ کے 60 فیصد شہروں میں پانی کا استعمال اتنا زیادہ ہے کہ جس شہر سے یہ پانی زمین میں جذب ہوتا ہے۔ ایک ارب 80 کروڑ افراد 2025 تک پانی کی کمی کا شکار ہوں گے اور دنیا کی آبادی کا دو تہائی حصہ انتہائی کمی کا شکار ہو جائے گا۔ دنیا بھر میں 88 فیصد اموات کا سبب آلودہ پانی ہے۔ آج بھی 2 ارب 50 کروڑ افراد کو صحت و صفائی کی سہولت میسر نہیں اور اسی سبب سے ہر 20 سیکنڈ میں ایک بچہ اس دنیا سے رخصت ہو جاتا ہے۔

پاکستان میں 93 فیصد پانی زراعت، 4 فیصد گھریلو جبکہ بقیہ صنعتوں میں استعمال ہوتا ہے۔ گلوبل چیلنج امپیکٹ سٹڈی سنٹر کی تحقیق کے مطابق آئندہ 50 برسوں میں مغربی ہمالیائی گلیشیر زمین کی واقع ہوگی، جس سے دریاؤں میں پانی اور بھی کم ہو جائے گا۔ آنے والے وقتوں میں پاکستان کے بھارت کیساتھ ساتھ افغانستان سے بھی آبی تنازعات میں اضافہ ہوگا۔ افغانستان کے دریائے کابل پر ہم بالائی اور زیریں علاقے میں ہونے کے باعث پاکستان کے مسائل میں اضافہ ہوگا۔ بھارت کیساتھ سندھ طاس معاہدہ نامی سے دوچار ہے۔

بھارت نے اپنے چھوٹے ڈیمز اور بیراجوں کی تعمیر و مرمت سے 285 ملین ایکڑ پانی جمع کرنے کیلئے اپنا 40 فیصد کا مکمل کر لیا ہے جبکہ پاکستان نے یہ کام صرف 10 فیصد ہی کیا ہے۔ اگر یہی صورتحال رہی تو آئندہ سیزن میں گندم کی فصل کے متاثر ہونے کا بھی اندیشہ ہے۔



گندے پانی سے شہری پیٹ، معدے، السر، انتریوں کی سوزش، پھیپھائیس اور کئی دیگر بیماریوں میں مبتلا ہو رہے ہیں۔

حکومت کو اس معاملے پر فوری توجہ دینی چاہیے اور صاف پانی کی فراہمی کا انتظام غریب اور متوسط درجے کی آبادیوں میں فوری ہونا چاہیے چونکہ گندا اور مضر صحت پانی پینے سے یہی طبقہ زیادہ متاثر ہوتا ہے کیونکہ خوشحال افراد تو پیکڈ پانی استعمال کرتے ہیں۔ حکومت سا پانی کی فراہمی کے لئے واسا کو مطلوبہ فنڈز فراہم کرے تاکہ واسا نئے ٹیوب ویل لگا کر شہریوں کو صاف ستھرا پانی فراہم کر سکے۔ اس کے علاوہ سیوریج اور نکاسی آب کے انتظامات میں بھی بہتری لاسکتے تاکہ شہر میں ماحول خوشگوار اور بہتر ہو سکے اور شہری بیماریوں سے محفوظ ہو سکیں۔

بہت سی جگہوں پر لہجہ ہیں یا سوراخ ہیں، تو اس میں اکثر اوقات بارش یا پھر سیوریج کا پانی داخل ہو جاتا ہے اور اس کو مزید آلودہ بنا دیتا ہے۔ تحقیق کے مطابق ملک کے اکثر اضلاع اور تحصیلوں میں پانی صحت کے لئے غیر محفوظ اور مختلف بیماریوں کے جراثیم سے آلودہ پانی بہت سی بیماریوں کی جڑ ہے اس کی وجہ سے پیمانائٹس، ٹائیفائیڈ، ڈائریاگیسٹر و سمیت پیٹ اور گلے کی بہت سی مختلف بیماریاں تشویش ناک حد تک عام ہو رہی ہیں۔ ماہرین کے مطابق چونکہ چھوٹے بچوں میں قوت مدافعت کم ہوتی ہے تو اس لئے وہ جلد ہی بیماریوں میں مبتلا ہو جاتے ہیں، لہذا بچوں کے معاملے میں بہت احتیاط سے کام لینا چاہیے۔ ملک میں موجود پینے کے پانی کا نظام بہت پرانا ہے اور یہ کافی حد تک آلودہ ہو چکا ہے۔ پینے کے پانی کے استعمال کے بارے میں ماہرین کہتے ہیں پانی کے استعمال کا آسان اور بہتر طریقہ یہ ہے کہ پانی کو بال کر استعمال کیا جائے، اسی طرح کرنے سے ہم خود اور ہمارے گھر والے 50 فیصد سے زیادہ بیماریوں سے چھٹکارہ حاصل کر سکتے ہیں۔ ماہرین کہتے ہیں کہ ہر انسان کو روزانہ 2 سے 4 لیٹر پانی کی ضرورت ہوتی ہے جس میں خوراک میں شامل پانی بھی شامل ہوتا ہے۔ دوسری جانب ایک اور تنظیم کی رپورٹ کے مطابق صوبائی دارالحکومت میں زیر زمین پانی کی سطح ہر سال 6 سے 10 فٹ گر رہی ہے۔ شہر کے بیشتر علاقوں میں چھ سو فٹ نیچے تک بھی پینے کا صاف پانی دستیاب نہیں۔ زیر زمین پانی کی سطح کم ہونے سے متعدد پرانے ٹیوب ویلوں سے گند پانی شہریوں کو فراہم کیا جا رہا ہے۔ ایسے ٹیوب ویلوں کو تبدیل کرنے کے لئے واسا کو کروڑوں روپے درکار ہیں تاہم گزشتہ طویل عرصے سے اس ادارے کو اس ضمن میں فنڈز فراہم نہیں کئے جا رہے حالانکہ محکمہ کے پاس انجینئر ز اور ماہرین کی خاصی تعداد موجود ہے جو اس صورت حال سے نمٹنے میں اہم کردار ادا کر سکتے ہیں۔ اس صورت حال میں واسانے ٹھوس اقدامات کا فیصلہ کیا ہے اور ایک نئی کنسلٹنٹ سے رواں سال اس ضمن میں فریٹیٹی رپورٹ تیار کرنے کو کہا ہے۔ اس رپورٹ کی تیاری کے بعد واسانے ضمن میں اقدامات کرے گی۔ واسا حکام کے مطابق ان کو طویل عرصے سے کسی میگا پراجیکٹ کے لئے فنڈز نہیں دیئے گئے جس کی وجہ سے وہ کئی اہم منصوبوں پر کام شروع نہیں کر سکے۔ واٹر ٹریٹمنٹ پلانٹس اراضی ہونے کے باوجود برائے تواء چلے آ رہے ہیں۔ حکومت نے صاف پانی کمپنی کو اربوں روپے جاری کرنے کا فیصلہ کیا ہے جو موجودہ ادارے واسا کی موجودگی میں ناقابل فہم امر ہے۔ حکومت نے جو ہر ٹاؤن اور تاجپورہ میں آرسینک فری ڈرنکنگ واٹر کا پائلٹ پراجیکٹ منظور کیا ہے جس کی ایک ارب 63 کروڑ روپے ہے۔ خیال ہے کہ یہ منصوبہ نئی کمپنی کو دیا جائے گا۔ پنجاب حکومت جو گڈ گورننس کی دعوے دار ہے اس کے ادارے کی طرف سے شہریوں کو گند پانی فراہم کرنا نہایت تشویش ناک بات ہے۔

Amar Guriro

Environmental Journalist

Coordinator Washmedia-South Asia

Amar Guriro is a print media journalist, a blogger, photographer, multimedia producer and a professional fixer based in Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan.

He is regional president of WashMedia-South Asia. WashMedia-South Asia is a forum of journalists from across South Asian countries, including Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka working on water and sanitation. He is IVLP fellow and also a media fellow of the UK-based NGO Water Aid Pakistan's media fellowship program since 2009.

He has contributed to several national and international publications, including BBC – Urdu, TheTimes (English), Himal SouthAsian, Nepal (English), Indian Marathi language paper Lokmat and also for Pakistani local and national newspapers. He can be reached at: amarguriro@amarguriro.com

Myra Imran

The News, Islamabad

Myra Imran works as a staff reporter for The News in Islamabad and is an award-winning journalist. She is Joint Secretary for National Press Club, Islamabad.

Myra reports on human rights issues including water and sanitation. Her expertise is on women issues. In 2010, the Supreme Court ordered legislation on acid crime following one of her stories on an acid burn victim who managed to take her case to the higher courts despite social odds.

Myra has done several interviews for her paper besides covering extensively the activities of civil society in Pakistan. She has also reported for Radio Pakistan and has been on several television talk shows. She handles gender section of website JournalismPakistan.com. She was declared 'Media Woman of the Year' by the Excellence Award Foundation and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in 2009. The following year, she was presented the 'Benazir Women in Leadership Award' by the Ministry of Human Rights. In 2010 she directed a documentary on the post-earthquake situation in Balakot, one of the worst affected areas in the October 2005 earthquake. She has participated in several panel discussions and has spoken as guest speaker on the role of media in national and regional conferences. Myra is a US government's International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) fellow and has attended hands-on training on social media in Denmark. She is on the visiting faculty of International Islamic University.

Imrana Komal

Daily Express, Multan

Imrana Komal is a print media journalist; she works with the national Urdu daily Express, Multan. Imrana covers different issues, but her focus is to cover issues around women. She is extensively writing WASH issues faced by women of southern Punjab. She is the author of a book and also travelled extensively for trainings around journalistic practices.

Hafeez Tunio

Express Tribune, Karachi

Hafeez Tunio works as a reporter for The Express Tribune, Daily English newspaper affiliated with The International New York Times. Hafeez covers politics, environment, water and sanitation, human rights, minority and women issues. He says he wants to write on environmental issues, because he loves nature - in spite of what it did to him.

Aoun Sahi

The News on Sunday, Islamabad

Aoun Sahi is a print media journalist based in Islamabad, Pakistan. He is working with The News on Sunday, the weekend magazine of The News International, since 2003 as reporter. A Daniel Pearl and Alfred Friendly Press fellow 2010, Sahi worked with The Wall Street Journal as reporter for six months as part of fellowship. He is also WaterAid Pakistan's media fellow since 2010. He covers crime, environment, water and sanitation, militancy, politics, security, and social issues.

He has also contributed to Newline, Agence France Presse, Inter Press Service and Western newspapers such as the Los Angeles Times, Sunday Times, Wall Street Journal and Washington Post.

Gonilla Gill

Daily Dunya, Lahore

Gonilla Gill is working as "Social Reporter" for the Urdu newspaper "Daily Dunya". She is Fellow of Asian Journalism Fellowship program of 2012 in Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University – Singapore. During her professional career Kamran Michael Provisional Minister for Minorities and Human Rights presented her a Gold Medal on behalf of Saawan International magazine for her best reports on minorities, women and child rights and human rights.

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