

Water crisis in algeria



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Algeria is one of the countries located in the Northern part of the African continent. Lying in the sub-Saharan region of Africa, Algeria experiences both semi-arid and arid climate throughout the year. The inadequate rain amounts in the region and lack of permanent water sources, such as rivers, has put Algeria among the 17 most affected countries in Africa. This is as far as the availability of fresh domestic water is concerned.

The Belgian Technical Corporation reported that Algeria had water availability of 500 cubic meters per capita. This is half of the standards set by the United Nations Development Program, fixed at 1000 cubic meters per capita. The above findings are more alarming when it is noted that Algeria had water availability of 1500 cubic meters per capita in the year 1962. A statistical projection of the data indicates that the figure, which stands at 500 cubic meters currently, will drop to 450 cubic meters in the year 2020. This is such a low figure that if the crisis is not dealt with urgency, the citizens of Algeria will suffer significantly. The whole situation is made worse by the fact that the distribution of the inadequate sources of water is not uniform throughout the country. The little seasonal rains experienced in Algeria are inadequate and do not come annually. This makes it worse since the little tapped water need to be preserved for more than a year.

Apart from the aforementioned problems leading to the acute water shortage, there is a problem of bad management of water resources. This leads to poor use of the little available water and lack of prioritization of basic water uses. There is also a problem of insufficient infrastructure. This hinders the transportation and storage of water. The little water tapped may get lost in evaporation and percolation into the soil in the process of storage

and transportation. Pollution and lack of maintenance also increases the gap between the demand and supply of water. All these factors affect both the supply of drinking, agricultural, and industrial water.

Nevertheless, it should be considered that it is not the entire population of Algeria that shares the crisis of water. The BTC report indicates that 87% of the Algerian population has access to fresh clean water. However, the bulk of this percentage is urban dwellers. About 14 million of the rural dwellers face acute shortage of water. To save these millions of people who have inadequate sources of water, it is important to analyze the major causes of this crisis.

The main cause of this crisis is the unreasonable resource allocation for water. This might be as well looked at as a political issue. The government of Algeria has in many cases failed to correctly estimate and allocate funds that can sufficiently tackle and solve the water crisis. Little funds have been allocated in the sector to cater for a short-term solution, thus making the water crisis persist and become even more severe with time.

The second immediate cause is the supply network in the country. After having served the nation for decades, the water supply network in Algeria is currently a total failure. The reasons for this include the increase in population and a system breakdown. As the population of Algeria grows, the water supply system becomes technically unable to supply water and cater for the entire population of the country. Failure to improve the system has led to an increase in the number of population that is inadequately supplied with water to almost 14 million Algerians. The ageing supply network has

occasionally led to system breakdown, thus failing to deliver water to the targeted population. This problem can only be solved when the entire system is overhauled and replaced with complete and efficient water network infrastructure.

Another cause of the water crisis in Algeria includes the uncontrolled connections in the water system. This is a case where outlets of the major supply are not well managed, thus leading to an unequal water distribution system. Those close to the water supply system use excess water uncontrollably leaving inadequate amount of water to those at the other end of the supply system. This problem generally affects the rural dwellers, as indicated by the BTC report, that majority of urban inhabitants can afford clean water while the rural dwellers have the major water crisis.

To overcome this problem, the immediate remedy is the financial approach. The Algerian government planned and allocated 18 billion USD to complete a total of four thousand water desalination projects in the country between 2008 and 2011. It is further worth noting that all these projects are rural-based, thus targeting the 14 million citizens who are facing the problem of water shortage.

The desalination plants were also aimed at supporting the oil companies in the country. This is a related project since oil energy is equally vital in the water desalination process. Apart from the desalination plants, the government has also embarked on building of the most modern Reverse Osmosis plants. These are expensive, but have a massive output rate, and their efficiency is in the production of clean water. The water produced under

this method is readily used in areas that demand pure water, such as pharmaceutical industries.

Conclusion

The global water crisis is real. Measures have to be identified and put in place before the matter gets out of hand for the future generation. Basic water needs of humanity should be recognized to prevent the idea of one class of people having the commodity in excess, while another class suffering due to an inadequate supply of water. Malaria, typhoid, and other water-related diseases should be equally controlled in all regions. Formal negotiations should be conducted to end water-related conflicts. This goes in line with the identification of basic water needs that should be met for the entire global population before other needs are put into consideration. There also ought to be the efficient methods through which water is put into use. This ranges from small gadgets, such as taps, to large irrigation machines. They all should ensure that water is not wasted during its use.

In Algeria, most of the above recommendations will be applicable. Water preservation by way of prudent planning, administration, and technologies provides great expectations. The Algerian government has taken a major step in the fight against the water crisis by allocating USD 18 billion to fund 4,000 rural projects, and there is still much to be done. Among the recommendable approaches the government ought to target is the complete overhaul and replacement of the current water supply system. A system that will adequately serve water to the entire population of Algeria is still desired. There should also be proper water management systems to control water

usage. The systems should efficiently determine the amount of water being channeled to every sector and region. This will enable the curbing of discrimination where the rich get access to the commodity leaving behind the poor individuals who are unable to afford it. It will also prevent the unnecessary and excessive waste of water.

Basic water uses should be prioritized. It is not logical to serve industries with clean water while the rural population of Algeria is perishing from the diseases caused by the lack of clean water. Upon the building of the desalination plants, the government should go ahead and allocate funds for the improvement of the infrastructure. The targeted infrastructure should include pipes, reservoirs, and dams. This will ensure proper storage and distribution of water to the entire country.

The Algerian government should also invest in water recycling plants. This will ensure that the used water is kept for further application. Apart from desalination, the government should also search for alternative sources of water, as in the study case of Jordan in the Middle East. Other alternative sources include aquifers.

When these and other measures are put into consideration globally, everyone on this planet, including the Algerians, will have access to clean fresh water. However, the failure of taking into consideration the measures that will enable the curbing of water crisis will worsen the situation and make it spread to the non-affected countries.