

Conservation and Utilization of Water in Pakistan in the light of Sērah

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Abstract: Natural resources are the basic and physical need of human beings. Since human beings have started polluting these resources in the name of development new problems have arisen in the world and so as in our country. Islam is a complete path of life and how we can conserve and utilize these resources in the light of Sērah is the main theme of this article. Water is one of the basic necessities of life. In the Holy Quran the Almighty describes water as the "origin of all life"¹ Thus, every drop of water carries within it the echoes of the divine act of creation. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) left us with invaluable lessons in water conservation through his own life practices. One of the profound lessons he conveyed was, "Do not waste water, even if you were at a running stream."¹ This statement underscores the significance of water conservation in all circumstances, even when water seems abundant.

Pakistan is one of the blessed countries which is gifted with the freshwater resources. The per capita water availability in Pakistan that was 5300 m at the time of independence has reduced to about 1000 m mainly due to increase in population and mostly due to inefficient use of it¹. This is the level where a county is considered water scarce. Keeping in view the current scenario of water scarcity in Pakistan this article is a research document about the situation of water availability in Pakistan. How we can use our resources efficiently? What sort of programs we can start in our country for water conservation, and a look over the methodologies and technologies adopted by different water scarious countries for water conservation

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INTRODUCTION

Life, a journey that commences with a single, precious drop of water, and from that moment on, it relies on water for its survival. This connection between life and water is incredibly strong.

In the records of Islamic history, we find Bibi Hajar (RA), who ran seven times between Safa and Marwa, desperately seeking water for her beloved son, Ismail (A.S). With divine intervention, a spring gushed forth at the mere touch of Hazrat Ismail's (AS) foot toe, a testament to the miraculous blessings bestowed upon water.¹

In the heart of the Sinai desert, a place of arid desolation, Almighty Allah guided Hazrat Musa (AS) to strike a rock with his staff. The result was nothing short of miraculous—twelve springs rushed out, quenching their thirst and affirming the life-sustaining power of water.

On the Day of Judgment, when shelter and solace will be scarce, we find solace in the promise of Abba e Kawser, a Holy drink bestowed upon the faithful.

Beware of the profound impact of a single drop of water, shed by an oppressor; it holds the power to shake the very throne of our Lord

REFERENCES OF QURAN AND HADITH

The term for water in Arabic, "ma'," appears sixty-three times in the Quran. The Quran describes our Lord's throne as situated upon water, and Heaven is described as "Gardens under which rivers flow."² This suggests that, after humanity, water is considered the most valuable creation in the Quran. The life-sustaining property of water is emphasized in the verse, "And Allah has sent down rain from the sky and given life to the earth after its death."³ Water is not only life-giving but every life is itself made of water "We made every living thing from water".⁴

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1. M. Ashraf (2015). Importance of Water in the Light of Quran and Sunnah and Ways of its Saving. PCRWR Islamabad, page 6
 2. Al-Quran:47/ 12.
 3. Al-Quran: 16/65.
 4. Al-Quran: 21/30.

WATER AND CLEANLINESS

Water is the vessel through which Muslims cleanse themselves, not only physically but also spiritually. The ritual ablution, known as wudu, symbolizing the purification of the body and soul before communion with the Divine. The Prophet states that those who do it well for their prayers will come on the Day of Judgment with light on their faces and ankles.

The Prophet ﷺ also said, ‘Cleanliness is part of faith, for Muslims, and Qur’an stresses: [God] loves those who purify themselves.⁵ Water is described in the Qur’an as a means of physical, psychological and spiritual purification and uplift as Quran states: “And He sent down rain from the sky to purify you, free you from Satan’s whispers, strengthen your hearts, and make ‘your’ steps firm.”⁶

WATER AND EQUITY

For Muslims, the pursuit of social justice, or equity, is a fundamental principle of Islam, and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) exemplified this in his teachings like "None of you will have faith till he wishes for his brother (Muslim) what he likes for himself"⁷. This clearly extends to the necessity for an adequate supply of fresh water for everyone. Muslims are prohibited from hoarding excess water; instead, they are encouraged to share it with others. The Prophet ﷺ stated that on the day of resurrection, Allah will ignore "a man [who] possessed superfluous water on a way and he withheld it from the travelers"⁸. The Quran further reproaches against unjust distribution and said: “so that wealth may not merely circulate among your rich.”⁹. In fact, water is recognized as a crucial assets in which every person has the right to a fair distribution.

RIGHTS ON ENVIRONMENT

5. Al-Quran:9/108.

6. Al-Quran:8/11.

7. Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Bad’ al-Waḥy (Book of Revelation) (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 1997) , ḥadīth no. 112

8. Ibid, hadith: 3838.

9- Al-Quran:59/ 7.

According to Islam human beings has the basic right to the resources that Allah has provided for his creation, as Rasool ullah said: Muslims have a common share in three things: grass (pasture), water, and fire (fuel)"¹⁰. It is well accepted by Islamic scholars that the right-of-way of water use rights is right of humans to drink water or quench their thirst; second, the right of cattle and household animals, and third, the right of irrigation which proves that water is not important only for human beings, but also for animals and plants. The importance of water reflected in the hadith for any creature: "A prostitute was forgiven by Allah all mighty, because passing by a panting dog near a well and seeing that the dog was about to die of thirst, she took off her shoe, and tying it with her head-cover she drew out some water for it. So, Allah all mighty forgave her because of that (mercy)"¹¹.

HUMAN'S ROLE

Human beings are the most liked creation of Allah's, we are all also responsible for these gifts are available to all living beings. But instead of protecting these natural resources we polluted the environment in the name of our development activities. In the Quran, Allah commands believers to "make not *fassad* (mischief/misdoing) on earth". The meaning of *fassad* can be interpreted as spoiling the natural functioning of the world or spoiling or degrading of natural resources. Islamic scholars and rulers have historically imposed sanctions on the misuse of water, such as contamination or degradation of clean water. This paves the way for modern legal measures to penalize or impose fines on those who pollute water. Additionally, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH wisely prohibited urinating in still water.¹²

WATER RESOURCES OF PAKISTAN

Pakistan is a fortunate nation with abundant freshwater resources, including rivers, glaciers, ponds, lakes, streams, wells, kenals and rainfall. However, the

10- Abū Dāwūd, Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Kitāb al-Buyū', (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 2008), vol. 3, p. 284, ḥadīth no. 3470.

11. Ibid, Kitāb al-Ḥudūd, vol. 4, p. 145, ḥadīth no. 4538.

12. Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Ṣalāh, vol. 1, p. 178, ḥadīth no. 553 (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 2007).

availability of per capita water has significantly declined from 5300 m at the time of independence to approximately 1000 m.¹³

Now a day this decline can be because of the growing population and inefficient water usage, but because of these problems Pakistan has reached a critical point where it is considered water-scarce.

WATER SHORTAGE REPORTS

According to the World Bank Report, 2000¹⁴, Terrorism, celebrity, controversies and cricket wins are what rule Pakistan’s headlines but beneath all the commotion the country is battling a severe problem: a massive water crisis.

PCRWR (Pakistan council of Research in water Resources) has alerted the country will reach absolute water scarcity by the year two thousands twenty five (2025)

GOVERNMENT’S STRATEGIES FOR WATER CONSERVATION

INDUS WATER TREATY

In 1960, the Indus Basin Treaty was signed among four countries: Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, and China. The IWT (Indus Water Treaty) is a water distribution agreement between India and Pakistan, signed on September 19th¹⁵.

Under this treaty, Pakistan was allocated water rights for the three western rivers, namely Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab, Meanwhile India was allocated water rights for the three eastern rivers, namely Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej with the aim of distributing water equally among the member countries.

13. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 45, ḥadīth no. 37.

14. Feisal Khan is assistant professor in the Department of Economics at Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

15. The Indus basin in the framework of current and future water resources management, Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci., 16, 1063–1083, <https://doi.org/10.5194/hess-16-1063-2012>, 2012.

INTER HYDRO POLITICS:

Inter-hydro-political conflicts are impeding the country's plans to develop hydroelectric dams on the river Indus. While Punjab supports the construction of the Kalabagh dam, political issues among the three provinces and nationalist political parties have made the construction of this crucial dam unfeasible. As a result, millions of acres of fresh, sweet water are at risk of being wasted and diverted to become part of seawater.

FUNDRAISING FOR DAMS:

The Supreme Court of Pakistan On 4th July, 2018 directed the government of Pakistan to commence construction of the dam, along with the Mohamad Dam, to address water shortages. The Chief Justice of Pakistan personally donated 1 million Pakistani rupees towards the construction of these two dams. Subsequently, on July 6th, the Pakistani government established a fund for the construction of the Bhasha Dam, initiating fundraising efforts through bank accounts and cellular companies for public participation.

Despite these efforts by the government, they still fall short of adequately meeting the needs of our people and safeguarding our country from water scarcity.

NEGLIGENCE IN WATER CONSERVATION

Pakistan, known for its rivers and glaciers, possesses abundant freshwater resources compared to many other water-scarce nations. However, the country grapples with this issue due to poor governmental management and the apathetic attitude of its people, exacerbated by widespread illiteracy. Some of the critical issues contributing to this challenge includes:

UNTREATED WASTEWATER

A significant concern is the lack of separation between city wastewater and industrial wastewater effluent in Pakistan. Both types of waste flow directly into open drains, then that water feed into nearby natural water bodies. This practice contaminates our freshwater streams and rivers, turning them into polluted waterways. There is no regular monitoring program to assess the

water quality of the surface and groundwater (WB-CWRAS Paper 3, 2005)¹⁶

WATER POLLUTION AND DISEASES

Due to improper wastewater management, the wastewater seeps into the ground along with many chemicals and heavy metals. The same water we pump for drinking which is a main cause of many diseases. Besides, this water is also used for irrigation near the cities without any treatment. In this way, these chemicals and metals enter into our food chain through soil and crops resulting into many diseases such as blood pressure, liver and urinary cancer, blindness, skin cancer and mental stress.

Untreated wastewater causes many environmental problems. One liter of wastewater pollutes about 8 liters of clean water and people of other places use this water for drinking purpose – causing them to suffer from many diseases¹⁷. At the same time, the aquatic life is also affected badly. We are equally responsible for making this water polluted. Whereas, Allah has blessed us with the purest water.

DOMESTIC WATER CRISIS IN PAKISTAN

In our country, even a bucket of clean water is a luxury for the less fortunate. This precious resource remains elusive for many. Unfortunately, we are living in a land where the neighbor sucks the water of his own neighborhood through his motor pumps, where the feudal and Land lords steal the water and aggregate his own land and let his partner's land barren. Our society witnesses the Tanker mafia steal the water from the pipelines and citizens are forced to purchase water at their mercy. Islamic scholars and rulers have historically imposed sanctions on the misuse of water, such as contamination or degradation of clean water. This paves the way for modern legal measures to penalize or impose fines on those who polluted or sell water.

16. Report compiled by: Freshwater & Toxics Program, WWF – Pakistan. Published 2007 by WWF – Pakistan, Feroze pur Road, Lahore – 54600, Pakistan.

17. In 1995–2015, the average urban growth rate for LDCs is 2.9 per cent, in contrast to 3.2 percent.

WATER CONSERVATION IN ISLAM

The Quran makes two clear statements regarding water that support water demand management. First, the fixed supply of water, and second, it should not be wasted. The statement that water supply is fixed, and that therefore, at some point, demand must be managed because supplies cannot be infinitely increased, as per Quran:

"And we send down water from the sky in fixed measure"¹⁸

The Quran then tells humans that they may use God's gifts for their sustenance in moderation, and again Quran commands:

"O Children of Adam! . . . Eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for God loved not the wasters"¹⁹.

The hadith are even more explicit. The Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) "used to perform ablution with one mud of water [equal to 2/3 liter] and used to take a bath with one sa' up to five muds [equal to 2–3 1/2 liters]"²⁰. This hadith demonstrates the logical approach to sustainable water use in arid Arabia where the Prophet lived. However, the Prophet forbade waste even in conditions of seeming plenty when he said "Do not waste water even if performing ablution on the bank of a fast-flowing (large) river"²¹.

WORLD WIDE WATER CONSERVATION STRATAGIES

Many countries in the MENA²² region, spanning from the Arabian Peninsula to Africa, are grappling with severe water scarcity issues and are implementing smart strategies to address them. Let's take a closer look at these innovative approaches.

SUQIA (UAE)

The UAE Water Aid Foundation, Suqia established in 2015, an entity under the umbrella of the Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, that provides humanitarian aid around the world and helps communities that suffer from

18. Al-Quran: 40/18.

19. Al-Quran: 7/31.

20. Sahih Bukhari, hadith: 1200.

21. Termizi, hadith: 427

22. Middle East and North Africa

water scarcity by providing them with potable water. They also work to identify how innovative and sustainable technologies can be part of the solution to the global water crisis. This is why His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid launched a USD one million global award to find sustainable solutions to water scarcity. Maktoum Global Water Award' that encourages leading corporations, research centers, institutions and innovators from across the world to compete in finding sustainable and innovative solutions to the problem of water scarcity.

DESALINATION OF SEA WATER

Desalination is a process that takes away mineral components from salty sea water and convert it into drinkable water. Many Middle East and North African countries are desalinizing or processing sea water and converting it into drinkable water and handling water scarcity efficiently.

WASTEWATER REUSE

The method of recycling domestic wastewater for agricultural purposes has started over two thousand years before, with origins in ancient Greece²³. This practice is a crucial part of water demand management strategies, as it allows the conservation of freshwater for more critical needs. However, it's important to acknowledge the potential health risks and challenges associated with this practice. Many MENA (Middle East and North Africa) countries are using this strategy for gardening and plantation.

WATER CONSERVATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

AND INNOVATION MESSAGES OF MERCY:

In London, a unique program has been initiated where the Ahadith of Rasoolullah ﷺ are displayed on buses, serving as a poignant reminder for water conservation. Similarly, in an Australian water company, Prophet Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) Ahadith are quoted on water bottles, emphasizing the importance of conserving water

AIR WATER GENERATOR:

23. Abumoghli, I. (2015), Islamic Principles on Sustainable Development, EcoMENA <available on <http://www.ecomena.org/islam-sustainable-development>

It can generate water with the help of water system of air. It sucks the water from the air and convert it into drinkable water; according to the company it can generate 20 liters of water in a day with the help of the air around it.

SALUTION ACCORDING TO THE SIRAH OF RASOOLULLAH

Our beloved Prophet (P.B.U.H) laid the beautiful examples for us to follow, through his words and actions, as he said: "خير الناس من ينفع الناس"

The best among you is the one who Benefits People...!!!

In a time of dire need when our nation grapples with water scarcity and limited government resources to address this issue, individuals can make a substantial difference in water conservation efforts as follows:

INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS WATER-EFFICIENT TECHNOLOGIES

- Promote the use of water-efficient technologies and appliances in homes, industries, and agriculture.
- Offer incentives or subsidies for the adoption of water-saving devices such as low-flow faucets, efficient irrigation systems, and water-efficient appliances.

RAINWATER HARVESTING

- Encourage rainwater harvesting at both individual and community levels.
- Provide guidelines and support for the construction of rainwater harvesting systems in residential, commercial, and industrial buildings.

PUBLIC AWARENESS COMPAINGN:

- Launch comprehensive public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the importance of water conservation.
- Use various media channels to disseminate information on water-saving practices and the impact of individual actions on the overall water supply.

- Launch a school program to guide the students for water conservation

Water Ample Pakistan

سیراب پاکستان

Mission: To educate and empower youth and students in Pakistan to become advocates for water conservation, fostering a culture of responsible water usage and environmental sustainability.

How it will work:

Water Ample Pakistan will introduce hands-on learning through interactive workshops, practical activities, and community involvement. They equip students with the knowledge and tools needed to become champions of water conservation in their homes, schools, and local communities.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

WASTEWATER TREATMENT AND REUSE

- Invest in wastewater treatment facilities to purify and reuse treated water for non-potable purposes like irrigation and industrial processes.
- Implement policies that promote the safe and regulated reuse of treated wastewater.

STRICT WATER USE REGULATIONS

- Enforce and update water use regulations for residential, commercial, and industrial sectors.
- Implement penalties for water wastage and encourage responsible water consumption practices.

GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES

- Provide financial incentives, tax breaks, or subsidies for businesses and individuals adopting water-efficient practices.
- Allocate budgetary resources for water conservation projects and initiatives.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

- Invest in research and researchers and development of new tools and technologies and innovations for water conservation.
- Support research on sustainable water management practices and solutions.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

- Collaborate with neighboring countries and international organizations to address Trans boundary water issues.

CONCLUSION:

Life is a journey, and in this journey, let's strive to create a legacy that future generations will remember us for. Let's focus on actions that facilitate our return to our Lord. God cherishes those who show love to His creation. While we may be uncertain if our worship has been accepted or not, serving humanity is a sure way to gain His love. If we genuinely care for His creation, He will surely accept our efforts Insha Allah.

Each drop of water is precious, therefore, save it for yourselves and for your generations.

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