

Water Problems, Social Mobilization and Migration: A Case Study of Lake Urmia

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Abstract : Transforming a public necessity into a commercial commodity becomes more and more evident as time goes on, and it is one of the issues of water shortage. Development projects of countries, consume the water and waterbeds in various forms, ignoring the concepts such as sustainability and the negative effects they place on the environment, pollute and change the ways of waterways. Throughout these processes, the water basins and all the vital environments sometimes can suffer damage to the irreparable level. In this context, the issue of Lake Urmia that is located in the North West of Iran left alone by drought, has been researched. The lake, which is on the list of UNESCO's biosphere reserves, is now exposed to the danger of desiccation. If the desiccation is fully realized, more than 5.000.000 people that they are living around the lake, will have to migrate as a result of negative living conditions. As a matter of fact, along with the recent years of increasing drought level, regional migrations have begun. In addition to migration issues, it is also necessary to specify the negative effects on human and all-round's life that depend on the formation of salt storms, mixing of salt into the air and soil, which threaten human health seriously because the lake is salty. The main aim of this work is to raise national and international awareness of this problem, which is an environment and a human tragedy at the same time. This research has two basic questions: 1) In the case of Lake Urmia, what are environmental problems and how they have emerged and what is the role of governments? 2) What is the social consequence of this problem in relation to the first question? In response, after the literature search, having a comparative view of the situation of the Aral Sea and the Great Salt Lake (Utah, USA), which involved the two major international examples. The first, one is related to the terms of population and migration, the second is about biological properties. Then, data and status information that provided after 3 years area research has been evaluated. Towards the end, with the support of qualitative and quantitative methods, the study of social mobilization in the region has been carried out. An example of it is using the public space of TRAXTOR matches like a protests area.

Keywords : environment problems, water, social mobilization, Lake Urmia, migration

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