

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HYDRO-POLITICAL CRISIS OF JORDAN RIVER BASIN IN MIDDLE EAST: AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The Jordan River rises in Mount Hermon, at the juncture of Syria and Lebanon and drains one of the world's driest countries and planet's most water deficit region. The river runs through Lebanon, Syria, Jordan Israel and Palestine for 251 km and finally dribbled down into the Dead Sea. It is an important water source in the region and due to climate change, the region is becoming drier with the time. Historically, the river valley had a lush green, wetland ecosystem and was the biological heart of the Middle East region. A European explorer once described it as "the crookedest river that was". The river has now seen that over 90 per cent of its water has been diverted and obstructed by the construction of dams and diversion for irrigation as well as for domestic use in the region. Competition for limited and scarce water resource has generated hydro-political tension among the shareholders of the region; the region is correctly described as the "global hotspot of unsustainable water use. Jordan, the world's third driest country of the world pulls 160 per cent from the underground reservoirs than puts in, out of which 60 per cent is consumed for agricultural purposes. Many countries of the Fertile Crescent region fall well below the world's average annual water availability. The upstream dams and diversion have totally reduced the flow of the river in the lower region where it flows snakes through various ecologically rich smaller lakes. The obstruction of the natural flow of the river has a negative and excruciating impact on the biodiversity of the valley region. There is a need for regional cooperation like Red-Dead project for the management of water resource in the region based on the principle of environmental sustainability. The study is solely based on documentation-including academic research works, government reports, and newspapers.

KEYWORDS: *Jordan River, Hydro-Political Crisis, Environment, Sustainability*