

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Situation in Lagos State, Nigeria



Introduction

Lagos is one of the fastest-growing cities in the world and the most populous city in Africa, with an estimated population of over 20 million people (World Population Review, 2023). Daily water demand in Lagos state is estimated at 720 million gallons per day (MGD) with only 10% of its population having access to public water supply, and nearly 24% have access to adequate basic sanitation (Water Aid 2023; Daramola et al., 2023). The current installed water production capacity is only 210 million gallons per day, falling short of the demand and leaving a significant gap of over 500 MGD. This challenging situation is attributed to Lagos's rapid population growth, driven by the continuous influx of people into the city. Notable waterworks in the state include Adiyin Waterworks with a designed capacity of 70 million Gallons per Day (MGD), Iju

MGD). Additionally, there are 51 mini and micro waterworks in Lagos state ranging from 1MGD to 2MGD. Limited access to water has forced residents to depend on non-public water sources such as boreholes, wells, and water vendors, whose supply is plugged by exorbitant prices, low quality, and unregulated services. Such water sources are often characterized by a lot of health challenges due to their inability to meet the World Health Organization (WHO). standards (Lagos Water, 2023).

Preliminary consultations with stakeholders revealed that water crises cut across low, medium, and high-density areas in Lagos state, however, the impact is more felt in high-density areas such as Ojota, Ketu, Oworonshoki, Gbagada, Isheri, Omole Phase 1, Magodo, Opebi, Oregun, Alausa, Allen and Awolowo way, MKO Garden, Orile, Ajegunle, Ikoyi, etc. The challenge is heightened by the aging

Citation:

Ayeni, F.H., and Okonkwo M.A: Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Situation in Lagos State, Nigeria. Position Paper, EERC, Abeokuta, December 2023

condition of the installed water facilities and poor power leading to a limited supply of potable water, exacerbating poor water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services at the household level. In addition, the limited water supply is further heightened by poor management culture such as wastage, illegal connections, and negligence. Instances of neglect include failure to report leakages promptly, leading to prolonged designated authorities. This collective indifference to the responsible use and maintenance of water resources contributes to ongoing challenges in ensuring the efficient and sustainable management of water in Lagos State. In addition, political entities have given the wrong impression of the water supply as a public good during campaigns leading to an unwillingness to pay for water services. A substantial number of residents neglect their water bills, hindering the generation of funds crucial for the efficient management of waterworks across the state. This financial shortfall significantly impedes the Lagos Water Corporation's ability to operate effectively. Moreover, a growing distrust in the government has eroded public confidence in the safety and purity of water supplied by the water corporation, even when it meets World Health Organization (WHO) standards. Many individuals hold concerns regarding the quality of the water, further complicating efforts to promote payment compliance. Furthermore, some private water vendors perceive public water supply through water corporations as a threat to their business. These vendors engage in unethical practices such as damaging pipes, illegal water connections, and locking of water-controlling valves. This adversarial relationship exacerbates challenges in ensuring the consistent and reliable provision of safe water to the residents.

The Challenges

The water scarcity in Lagos state has had a profound impact on the state's population sanitation and

hygiene levels (Chung et al. 2020). A considerable number of residents resort to unconventional methods of sanitation and hygiene due to water shortages. For instance, those with water closets often store used laundry water for toilet flushing, and open defecation is prevalent (Pharmaceutical et al., 2019). Verifiably, several studies reported that Lagos urban slums are crowded with more than five people living in a room, where poor personal hygiene habits and open defecation in ditches are widely practiced with no social value to toilets, inadequate water and electricity supplies, lack of proper waste disposal facilities and good drainages which heightens the exposure of the residents to waterborne diseases like diarrhea, dysentery, typhoid fever and cholera. (Aminu, 2023). The high water demand has led to the over-extraction of water resources and the indiscriminate drilling of boreholes or wells in areas not served by the public water supply network. Additionally, the improper disposal and mismanagement of various solid wastes generated by the surging population have resulted in water pollution, which has further compounded the scarcity of potable water. This inadequate and non-availability of water supply coupled with sanitation and hygiene pose a severe threat to the health and well-being of people. According to UNICEF, poor sanitary conditions and the use of contaminated drinking water have resulted in the deaths of more than 70,000 children under five years old. In 2021, Nigeria recorded one of the highest cases of cholera in its history, with 111,062 cases and 3,604 deaths. According to WHO, Nigeria recorded 144,724 diarrhea-related deaths in 2020, accounting for 9.77% of total deaths. (Water Aid, 2023).

The Way Out

Addressing the WASH challenges in Lagos state will require multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral partnerships, including governments, policymakers, private sectors, local authorities, civil society

1. Aminu, F. (2023). Relationship Between WASH Practices and The Incidence of ...
2. Chung et al 2020. Challenges in Water Resources of Lagos
3. Daramola et al. 2023. Biting the Bullet
4. Pharmaceutical et al. 2019. The Challenge of Open Defecation.....
5. Water Aid Nigeria Country Program Strategy 2023 - 2028
6. Water Corporation Lagos State. (2023)



organizations, community groups, water treatment firms, supply firms, water vendors, individuals, and other relevant actors in the water sector. The partnerships would stimulate well-coordinated multifaceted efforts geared towards (a) co-creating and promoting policies that emphasize public-private partnerships and Co-investment Opportunities for sustainable and cost-effective water services; (b) enhancing social behavioral change aimed at dispelling the perception that water is free; (c) promoting shared responsibilities and inclusivity to enhance ownership and community-driven WASH management culture among citizens; (c) encouraging shared responsibility and inclusivity to promote a sense of ownership among citizens. Simultaneously, efforts should be directed towards rebuilding public confidence in the safety and hygiene of water produced by the corporation. This is because public awareness campaigns highlighting the adherence to global standards such as those set by the World Health Organization (WHO), can play a pivotal role in reinstating trust. Also, public-private partnerships are essential to mitigate the adversarial stance of private water vendors, fostering a collaborative atmosphere. Similarly, encouraging shared responsibility and inclusivity can help align the interests of both public and private entities leading to co-investment opportunities. This collaboration should extend to adopting innovative solutions and policies aimed at improving water management. In addition, promoting a sense of ownership among citizens is pivotal for the sustainability of water-related initiatives. This involves instilling a mindset that considers water facilities as communal assets, encouraging everyone to actively participate in their upkeep. Public-private partnerships can play a role in achieving this goal by creating a shared sense of responsibility. Furthermore, addressing existing political promises of free water during campaigns is essential. Realigning these policies with the practicalities of water management, and

communicating the actual costs and sustainability measures, can contribute to more informed public expectations and responsible water usage. Thus, leveraging a multi-stakeholder approach will stimulate multifaceted efforts and collective action towards addressing the WASH challenges in Lagos state.

Policy Implications

Lagos State water crisis demands urgent action through multi-stakeholder partnerships. Public-private partnerships (PPPs), inclusive community management, and responsible water use awareness are crucial to overcome infrastructure limitations, address negative perceptions, and ensure sustainable water access for all.

- Addressing the WASH challenges requires collaboration among governments, policymakers, private sectors, local authorities, and civil society organizations, multi-sectoral partnerships are crucial for well-coordinated efforts.
- Public awareness campaigns should communicate the actual costs of water services and instill a sense of responsibility among citizens regarding water usage
- Encourage policies that emphasize PPPs and co-investment opportunities for sustainable and cost-effective water services.
- Promote shared responsibilities and inclusivity to enhance ownership and community-driven WASH management

Contact:

Environmental and Economic Resource Centre (EERC),

1, Iporo Community, Opposite Elepa Junction, Abeokuta-Ibadan Road,
Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. Email: info@eerce.org Tel: +2349029006867



ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC
RESOURCE CENTRE