

Thirst For Water: The Daily Challenges Women Face Accessing Potable Water In Tamale

FROM Eric Kombat, Tamale

IT'S 6AM on Wednesday morning and Amata Adam, a mother of two gathers her water containers in preparation for her trip from Kukuo, a suburb of Tamale in search for potable water for her household.

As she walks a few miles in search of water, her mind is focused on the urgent task of getting water for her household especially her children to ensure they bath and get ready for school on time.

Amata and her children are unsuccessful getting access to potable water after walking some miles due to the water crisis in Tamale, compelling them to resort to the Ghana Senior High School (Ghanasco) dam.

Upon arriving at the dam, Amata begins to fetch what can only be described as polluted, unhygienic water for her family's consumption. She reflects on the critical importance of clean water not just for survival but for dignity and health.

Amata tells *Daily Guide Network* that, despite knowing the dangers of the dam water for her family's health, they have no choice but to rely on it, as they cannot afford to purchase water from tanker drivers.

"We sometimes go to some houses where they have polytanks to beg for water because the only option is the tanker drivers who sell a gallon of clean water between GH¢3.50 and GH¢4.00 and we will need about 5 gallons daily but my family can't afford it so we have to depend on the dam water, which we treat with Aluminum Chloride to make it safer for consumption, at least reducing some of the risks," she narrated.

Amata lamented about the negative impact of her children's education due to the water crisis.

"As you can see, I'm hear with my children to fetch water and by the time we get home for them to prepare and go to school they will be tired so definitely the daily walking to the dam affects their academics as well as getting to school late daily."

She, however, remained hopeful that a day will come when residents, especially women will no longer have to walk miles in search of water but instead will have easy access to clean water.

But for now, she embraces the challenge, understanding that her efforts are not just for her family but for the future of her community, nurturing hope, resilience, and the promise of a better tomorrow that the water crisis in Tamale will be solved permanently.

Residents' Concerns

Tamale has been hit with a severe water crisis that has significantly disrupted economic activities, forcing residents to purchase water from tanker contractors.

dents after school trooping to the dam to fetch the contaminated water for consumption.

The Ghanasco dam has fecal matter dotted around it with animals drinking from the same dam used by human beings which could lead to typhoid and diarrhea infections.

According to them, the dam water is the only source of water for the school which they use to bath, drink and wash their clothes.

"Even though the dam water is not clean, this is the only source of water we can access for drinking, washing, bathing among others,"

management to find urgent solutions to the problem.

"Let's do everything we can to increase water pumping. I have received numerous complaints, including text messages and group visits threatening a demonstration. This meeting is crucial to prevent a situation we both want to avoid, so let's work together to find a lasting solution," he stated.

Ghana Water Company Limited

Ing. Albert Nyeteng, the Regional Production Manager of GWCL, noted that the current water demand in Tamale is 90,000 m³, while production levels are only between 35,000 m³ and 38,000 m³ adding that the discrepancy has necessitated the implementation of water rationing in Tamale and its environs.

He indicated that a long-term solution to the water crisis lies in the construction of the Yapei Water project.

Ing. Nyeteng reassured the Minister and the public that GWCL is committed to ensuring residents receive a sufficient water supply.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 which Ghana is a signatory, calls for the need for the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

The global effort to achieve water and sanitation for all by 2030 extends beyond households to include institutional settings such as schools, healthcare facilities, and workplaces.

This initiative is reinforced by global education strategies highlighting how water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in schools improve access to education and learning outcomes, particularly for girls, by providing a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environment for all.

In 2010, the United Nations general assembly declared that human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use. however, the reality is a contravention of the above for Amata Adam, her family and Ghanasco students in Tamale.



Amata Adam with her children at the Ghanasco dam fetching the contaminated water. INSET: Some Ghanasco students fetching the dam water



This situation has severely impacted businesses, including restaurants, schools, hospitals, homes among others.

Residents recently threatened to embark on a demonstration against the management of the Ghana Water Company Ltd (GWCL) due to the worsening water crisis in the regional capital.

Ghanasco Students

Students of the Ghanasco have been compelled to depend on dam water for survival due to the lack of potable water in the school.

A visit to the Ghanasco dam, showed stu-

one of the students said.

They called on the government and other institutions to come to their aid by providing them with source of potable water to enhance teaching and learning in the school.

Government Response

The water crisis situation in Tamale compelled the Northern Regional Minister, Adolf Ali John, to convene an emergency meeting with GWCL management to investigate the cause of the water shortage.

The Regional Minister stated that the water crisis poses security threats and urged GWCL