

Musical chairs: A representation of scarcity.

By Jaahnvi Chandra, DPI

Musical chairs, a game that everyone would have played at least once in their lifetime, actually represents something far deeper than just having a good time. This game depicts the premise of scarcity, an ever growing issue in today's world. In present times, a lot of our resources are rapidly becoming scarce, meaning that eventually there will be more people and less of the resource, just as in the game of musical chairs. There will always be a person without it, which is seen in the number of chairs being one less than the number of people; and the availability of resources is shrinking, represented by the removal of chairs each round. Scarcity, arising from the inability of limited resources meeting unlimited wants, is central to the basic economic problem of the world in which choices are forced to be made. Time, a limited and scarce resource, pushes us to make choices that result in opportunity costs; obtaining something by giving up the value of the next best alternative. If we continue down the path of musical chairs portraying our model for living, then scarcity will be prevalent for decades on end, and everyone around us will be labelled as a competitor for resources deemed to be short in supply.

Let's take a look at Iran whose freshwater resource is being majorly exploited and used in an unsustainable manner, resulting in it becoming scarce rapidly. Political restraints are only driving them to further exploit their water resource in order to support the population. At present Iran is using approximately 80% of its total freshwater resource, when the sustainable percentage limit is 40%.

An estimate of 90% of the country faces arid weather conditions during agricultural season, and precipitation in the winter when it is not in demand. Thanks to rapid socioeconomic developments and climate change, Iran is facing dry conditions like never before. The demand for food will never stop, more so because the population keeps increasing (out of which 70% live in urban areas) which adds to the pressure of ensuring available sources of water. Iran's grounds have been milked dry; of course it would as 50% of water used by the agricultural sector comes from underground aquifers, labelling the country as the largest unsustainable user of water and the top groundwater miners in the world. Iran, despite already having been facing issues with regards to availability of water, continued to make it more scarce than before, resulting in dried up lakes and rivers, declining groundwater resources and soil salinization (making it even more unfitting to grow crops, causing the whole cycle to repeat). Other consequences include forced migration, sandstorms, economic losses and widespread ecosystem damages.

The competitive nature and shoving during the game of musical chairs represents the various factors that influence the scarcity of a resource. The more the resource depletes, the more people go without a chair to sit on. Through the game of musical chairs we comprehend that there will now never be enough for everyone, and therefore some will have to be losers. It is through this that we get the umbrella perspective on the impact of missed out resources, talents and opportunities for those who were not provided a chair. It contains us, making us live in a box of anxiety, clouded with the thought that one day that person will be me.

<https://tradingeconomics.com/iran/population>

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<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-24712-6>

