

G. K. Prashanth · Hemantkumar N. Akolkar ·  
A. K. Haghi · Srilatha Rao

# Seawater Desalination

Technologies and Environmental Impact

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# **Synthesis Lectures on Emerging Engineering Technologies**

This series publishes short books on current engineering technologies that are gaining prominence, as well as promising technologies that are being developed, for an audience of researchers, advanced students, engineers and other professionals, and entrepreneurs.

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# Seawater Desalination

Technologies and Environmental Impact

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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Fundamentals of Saltwater Desalination</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Thermally Driven Desalination Technologies	6
1.3	Mechanically Driven Desalination Technologies	9
1.3.1	Membrane Processes and Technologies	9
1.3.2	Reverse Osmosis (RO) and Nanofiltration (NF)	10
1.4	Electrically Driven Desalination Technologies	11
1.5	Feedwater Quality During the Process	14
1.6	Energy Consumption for Water Desalination	23
1.7	Cost of Water Desalination Process	25
1.8	Water-Salt Selectivity in Desalination Process	26
1.9	Water Production Rate During Desalination	29
1.10	Salt Rejection Rate	31
1.11	Concluding Remarks	31
	References	32
<b>2</b>	<b>Understanding Water Desalination Using Solar Thermal Energy</b>	
	<b>Sources</b>	<b>35</b>
2.1	Introduction	35
2.2	History of Desalination	36
2.3	Public–Private Partnerships in Seawater Desalination	40
2.4	Opportunities of Desalination in Agricultural Activities	41
2.5	Green Desalination Techniques	43
2.6	Hybrid Desalination Systems	47
2.6.1	Homogeneous Hybrid Desalination Systems	47
2.6.2	Heterogeneous Hybrid Desalination Systems	48
2.7	Solar-Powered Desalination	49
2.7.1	Solar Stills	50
2.7.2	Solar-Driven Humidification-Dehumidification (HDH) Desalination	52
2.7.3	Solar Diffusion Driven Desalination (SDDD)	56

2.7.4	Solar Membrane Distillation .....	58
2.7.5	Concentrating Solar Energy for Desalination .....	61
2.7.6	Solar Pond Distillation .....	65
2.7.7	Solar Thermal Energy Desalination Plants .....	65
2.7.8	Environmental Impact .....	66
2.7.9	Advantages of Solar Desalination .....	66
2.7.10	Shortcomings of Solar Desalination .....	67
2.8	Process Selection in Solar-Powered Desalination Systems .....	67
2.9	Concluding Remarks .....	69
	References .....	70
<b>3</b>	<b>Environmental Impacts of Desalination .....</b>	<b>75</b>
3.1	Introduction .....	75
3.2	Present Status and Techniques of Desalination .....	76
3.3	Impacts of Desalination .....	78
3.3.1	Brine Discharge Approach .....	79
3.3.2	Brine Discharge on the Environment .....	80
3.3.3	Impact of Desalination Brine on Marine Health .....	85
3.3.4	Impacts of the Brine's Salinity on Fauna .....	86
3.3.5	Impacts of the Brine's Salinity on Flora .....	88
3.3.6	Impacts of the Brine's Salinity on Microbiome .....	88
3.4	Impacts of Chemical Discharges .....	90
3.4.1	Antiscalants .....	93
3.4.2	Biofouling Control Additives and By-Products .....	93
3.4.3	Foam Control Additives .....	93
3.4.4	Contaminants Due to Corrosion .....	94
3.4.5	Chemicals Used for Removing Suspended Solids .....	94
3.4.6	Cleaning Chemicals .....	95
3.5	Impacts on Energy Consumption and Air Quality .....	95
3.6	Impacts of Water Intake Activity .....	98
3.7	Plant Construction and Social Impacts .....	98
3.8	Other Impacts .....	100
3.8.1	Impact on Land .....	100
3.8.2	Impact on the Groundwater Uncleaness .....	100
3.8.3	Solid Waste .....	100
3.8.4	Impacts of Noise and Vibration .....	100
3.9	Concluding Remarks .....	101
	References .....	101
<b>4</b>	<b>Conclusion and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>107</b>
4.1	Conclusion .....	107
4.2	Recommendations .....	109

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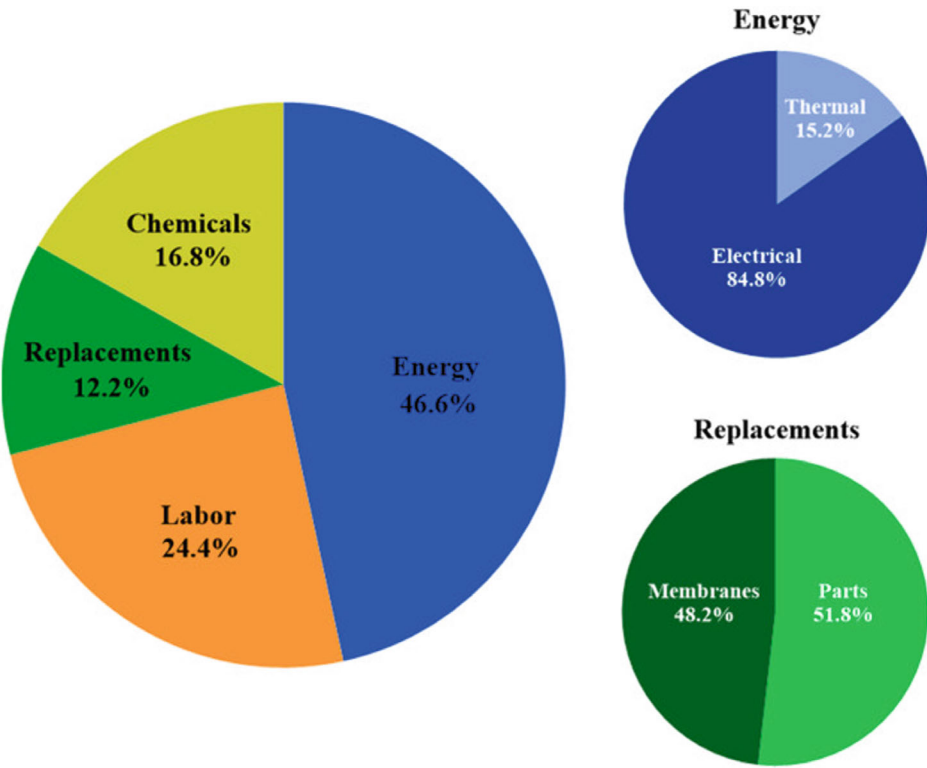
# Fundamentals of Saltwater Desalination

# 1

## 1.1 Introduction

One of the most important water treatment methods in the world today is desalination, which is needed to encounter the rising water necessity fetched on by fast civilization, financial growth, and farming advancements [1]. The International Desalination Association (IDA) estimates that 92.5 million m<sup>3</sup>/d was the overall capacity of every desalination facility in operation worldwide in 2018 [2]. Nearly 400 desalination plans have been contracted globally since July 2018. The desalination projects that were contracted for in the first half of 2019 had a capacity of about 4 million m<sup>3</sup>/d, which is equal to the sum of the capacity of 2015 and 2016. 60% of this capacity came from four separate projects in the Middle East: Shaiq 3 and Rabigh 3 (980,000 m<sup>3</sup>/d) in Saudi Arabia, and Taweelah and Umm al Quwain (1.6 million m<sup>3</sup>/d) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) [3]. Their freshwater supplies are insufficient to fulfil the increasing water demand; hence, these high desalination capacities are required.

Despite being seen as a vital source of freshwater globally; desalination's high cost is one of the biggest obstacles to its expansion [4]. Over the next four years, an estimated \$93,700 million would be spent on desalination facilities, in accordance with the Global Water Intelligence (GWI) DesalData. The operating expenses alone account for almost \$51,600 million. Power, labor, substitutions, and substances are the primary facilities that comprise running expenses, as illustrated in Fig. 1.1. Thermal and electrical energy will account for over half of operating expenses. Given that desalination was identified as the most energy-intensive water treatment technology in 2014, utilizing 75.2 TWh of energy every year, a maximum expense of energy for this task is not surprising [5]. The water treatment level, plant capacity, treatment method, and feedwater quality affect the energy needed for a desalination operation.



**Fig. 1.1** Operating costs for desalination by industry. *Source* [6]

The varying energy required to produce 1 m<sup>3</sup> of drinking water if water is preserved from various sources is displayed in Table 1.1. Seawater desalination uses the most energy when compared to other water resources. Although treating surface and groundwater requires less energy, the supply from these sources is scarce to fulfil the growing necessity for freshwater.

Thus, despite the energy expenditures involved, desalination of saltwater appears to be the best way to resolve water scarceness in the ecosphere [6]. One strategy to minimize

**Table 1.1** Energy needed to produce 1 m<sup>3</sup> of drinking water from various sources [12, 13]

Water Source	Energy (kWh/m <sup>3</sup> )
Seawater	2.58–8.5
Wastewater recycle	1.0–2.5
Wastewater treatment	0.62–0.87
Groundwater	0.48
Surface water (pond or canal)	0.37