

ijindex

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डॉ.बाबासाहेब आंबेडकरांचे श्रम अर्थशास्त्र : एक अध्ययन श्री.सतिश आशिनाथ गोंडे	172
महिला उदयोग विकास - समस्या व अढाने प्रा.मनिषा मधुकर राऊतमारे	175
डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर आणि आंबेडकरवादी साहित्य डॉ. संगीता शिवराम दौंदे	178

Geography

Impact of Natural Hazards on Ecosystem Ajay D. Patil	182
→ Impacts of Drought in Beed District, A Geographical Study Usare B.R. Dr. Gajhans D. S.	185
The Development of tourism in Khandesh and Geographic Study Rahul D. Navghare	188
Natural Hazards and Floods in India (1953-2016) Dr. Drakshayani D. Sarwade	192
Flood : Causes and Control Dr. Bhalerao Ashok Shahaji	194
Cloudburst, Flood: A Geographical Study of Pune Dr.Vanmala Rupsing Tadvi	197
Geographical study of Irrigation in Omerga Block Dr. Khadke V. V. & Dr. Hulpalle S. D.	201
Flood: Disaster Management Kishor P. Pawar	204
Impacts of Climate Change on the Risk of Natural Disasters Kendre Rameshwar Dhondiba Dr. B. M. Mohite	206
Mumbai Floods, Reasons and Solutions Mr. Khatane R.P.	208
A Study of Mumbai Flood, Reason and its Management Dr. Vijay L. Rajale	210
Water Resource - Dams In Marathwada Region Dr. Smt. Khandare S.P.	213

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Impacts of Drought in Beed District, A Geographical Study

Usare B.R.

Dr. Gajhans D. S.

Abstract:

Drought is a dry period in natural climate cycle. Drought leads to water and food shortages and is likely to have a long-term environmental, economic and health impact on the population. Rainfall is very important for every crop. Rain is liquid water in the form of droplets that have condensed from atmospheric water vapor and then becomes heavy enough to fall under gravity. Drought produces wide-ranging impacts that span many sectors of the national economy. These impacts are felt much beyond the area experiencing physical drought. The complexity of these impacts arises because water is integral to our ability to produce goods and provide services. Drought produces both direct and indirect impacts. When direct impacts have multiplier effects through the economy and society, they are referred to as indirect impacts. These include a reduction in agricultural production that may result in reduced income for farmers and agribusiness, increased prices for food and timber, unemployment, reduced purchasing capacity and demand for consumption, default on agricultural loans, rural unrest, and reduction in agricultural employment leading to migration. Drought is a dangerous condition which decreases the quality of life. It is termed as a natural disaster with harmful effects. A drought usually occurs when a region faces a shortage of water. Drought is the most dangerous for a farmer this becomes a reason for worry as it is their sole income. Furthermore, drought also leads to various other problems for the environment and mankind.

Keywords: - Drought, Water Cycle, Precipitation, Agribusiness, Natural disaster.

Introduction:

Drought is a natural disaster that occurs in some regions of the globe. Some regions are more prone to drought while other regions are not. Drought causes death of humans, animals and plants due to the adverse conditions that are harsh to the ecosystem and limits survival. Drought is defined as a prolonged period of inadequate water and food. The periods of drought vary but lack of water for over two weeks is considered drought. During drought, the ecosystem is negatively affected that is why agriculture is compromised and it results in lack of food. Drought can occur naturally due to dry seasons or can result from human activities that cause a change in climate. Rain formation or precipitation processes require moisture accumulation in the atmosphere or on the ground as ice. Sunshine and winds can affect the precipitation processes as it affects the formation of water. During the dry season, water sources dry up due to high temperatures that increase vaporization. In the high demand for vapor, extreme measures like drawing water from plants is reached which results in death of those plants. Human activities could also result in drought. Agriculture and human settlements result in deforestation. Deforestations predispose the environment to erosion of soil and vegetation destruction. The lack of vegetation and forests causes decreased rainfall in the region.

Study Area:

Beed district is located in the central part of Maharashtra in Aurangabad division and forms a part of Marathwada region. The district lies between 18°28' and 19°28' North Latitudes and 74°54' and 76°57' East Longitudes. The district is bounded by Aurangabad and Jalna in the North, Parbhani and Latur in the East, Ahmednagar and Osmanabad in the South and



(185)

272

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Ahmednagar in the West. Godavari is the most significant river that flows on the borderline of Georai and Majalgaon Tehsils. The total area of Beed district is 10693. Sq.Kms and it is 3.47% of Maharashtra State.

The objectives of the paper:

1. To study the Social effects, Economic effects and Environmental effects of Drought.
2. To study the main causes of drought and its effect on study region.
3. To study temporal Changes in rainfall in study region.

Data base and Methodology:

The present study is based on secondary data. Secondary data will be collected from social economic review, Beed district disaster management plan, district census handbook, gazettes, decennial census Reports of Government of India. The data has been obtained from the related articles, research papers, reports, policies and plan documents of Government of India and Maharashtra. Some data has been obtained from websites of Govt. of India and Govt. of Maharashtra, beed.nic.in. been undertaken to know the environmental status.

Impacts of Drought:

The impact caused by drought is so huge that many countries that faces drought year on year still remains as under-developed countries. The day-to-day activities of the people get stopped. The severity of drought can even take many lives. Let us look into some of the major impacts:

Economic impacts:

Economic impacts denote loss of production in farm sector and also in nonfarm sectors like- forestry, fisheries, poultry, and livestock because they depend upon water supplies. These losses result in loss of income and purchasing power among those rural people who depend on these for their livelihood. The processing industries based on agro- products suffer losses due to reduced supply of agro-products or supply at enormously increased prices and losses both in primary and secondary sector result in unemployment, loss in revenue etc.

Environmental impacts:

Environmental impacts are seen in the depletion of flora and fauna due to reduced availability of water both for feeding and drinking the wild life habitats with the loss of forest cover, migration of wild life and their increased mortality due to preying by starving population. Continuance of drought for a longer period may result in the loss of biodiversity.

Heavy Loss to Farmers:

Agriculture is the source of living for the farmers. Periodic rainfall and the availability of ground water is very much important for agriculture. Drought impacts farmers the most because if there is no rainfall, agriculture fails. There is no yield, plants die, livestock suffers and farmers end up with no income. They get debts to try other ways and make their living but when everything goes out of control, they have no other way than to end their lives.


Social impacts:

Social impacts are seen in the large scale migration of the population from the drought affected areas to areas less affected, thereby causing dissensions. Children prefer doing some wage earning rather than going to school. People start selling their possessions to manage two times meal for the family.

Loss of Wildlife:

It is during the time of drought, forest fires start occurring. Since everything is dry, fire catches up very easily. The life of wild animals is at huge risk; some get burnt in the forest fires and some lose their habitat and have to move to some other place.

(186)



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273

Soil Degradation:

Continuous drought will make the soil lose its moisture and fertility. We can see at many places where there are no rains, the lands will have cracks on them. Some areas regain their fertile soil after many years of rain but some totally lose their nature to yield crops.

Conclusion:

This brings us to the question as to what can be done to remedy the situation of drought. The answerer lies in helping the environment. Drought isn't the only calamity which we are facing. The increased frequency of earthquakes, flash floods, depleting ice cover, striking change in climates are all symbolic of the piteous condition of our environment. Until and unless, we manage to educate the masses and enlighten them about the need to have a green cover and preserve the environment. Recharge wells and water harvesting structures to conserve water through rain water harvesting and by developing the culture of roof water harvesting in each household.

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