

Indigenous Knowledge for Disaster Risk Reduction in Rajasthan, India

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Abstract A preliminary review of literature on droughts and famine in India suggests that the interaction between drought shocks and the economy are complex rather than direct and straight forward. Famine and drought are an interwoven global endemic natural phenomenon occurring in different parts of the world at different times of varied intensity. The basic difference lies in the degree of mortality, geographic scope, chronological duration, intensity or severity. The concept of drought varies from place to place depending upon normal climatic conditions, available water resources, agricultural practices and the various socio-economic activities in a region. It is difficult to define drought in terms of natural conditions of rainfall, temperature and soil, because drought is a human conception, that is, inseparably tied to the mode of making a living and to the cultural level of societies. Also, a drought is necessarily to be perceived in terms of the needs of a given community. Drought is frequently defined according to disciplinary perspective. People do not view drought as a simple, unified way. Their perception of drought is complex and responses often unpredictable. Hence the expected impact of drought and the responses also are different. In order to understand the diversity of coping strategies, this paper is to explore the social, political and institutional factors that provide contexts for these individual perceptions, based on primary and secondary data sources.

Keywords: drought, vulnerability, impact, perception, responses, India, Rajasthan.