

## **Socio-Economic Impacts of Drought in Balochistan:**

By

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### **Abstract:**

*Drought is a period of abnormally dry weather sufficiently prolonged due to the lack of precipitation to cause a serious hydrological imbalance and carries connotations of a moisture deficiency for man's use. The chief characteristic of a drought is a decrease of water availability in a particular period and over a particular area. Drought has affected whole of Pakistan but Balochistan province is the worst hit. It caused huge loss to life, particularly to livestock, including sheep, goats, cattle, camels, horses, donkeys and poultry and in some area buffaloes, which is likely to stagger further agricultural economy of Balochistan. Recently severe drought has jolted many parts of the region. This review is an attempt to look into the drought's effect on the economy of Balochistan. As a consequence of drought, proportionate losses in fruits production and livestock are higher among poorer and marginal land holding farmers. To cope with the drought, they have adapted a number of strategies at farm and off-farm levels that include crop and water management practices, adjustment in agricultural inputs, seeking off-farm employment, assets depletion, consumption smoothing, borrowing, and migrating to other places to seek alternative sources of income .The primary and secondary sources have been used for this review.*

**Keywords:** Drought, Economy, production, Agriculture, Income, livestock, Rural, Urban, Migration, Farming.

### **Introduction:**

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan with the area of 347190 sqm, which is 44 percent of the country. The province has a history of

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Droughts but the drought (1997-2002) were the longest dry spells in many years. Balochistan is an arid region with occasional rainfall. Drought is an intimidating hazard of nature, although it has scores of definitions. Drought originates from a deficiency of precipitation over an extended period of time, usually a season or more. This deficiency results in a water shortage for some livelihood activity to a community group, or environmental sector. The districts of Kalat, Chaghi, Naukundi, kharan, washuk and Zhob were severely affected by drought at many occasions. The monthly average rain in the dry region is between 2 and 25 mm which is very low as compared to other parts of the country. During the period from 1997 to 2002, a famine like situation developed due to lack of rain in the region. The main reason of drought in Balochistan was the deficiency of rainfall. The drought of 1997 - 2002 has been termed as one of the worst in the history of Balochistan and can be judged from the fact that it was the major cause behind slowing the economic growth rate down to 2.6 % during that period. According to the figures released by the Ministry of Finance, the drought caused a loss of PKR 25 billion to the national exchequer in the year 2000-2002. The drought in affected parts of the province led to the following consequences; Rise in food prices in the affected areas. A very low level of food in-take causing different diseases and malnutrition to affected populations. Drought has affected livestock-rearing, which plays an important role in the rural economy. This article will also highlight the socio-economic impacts of Drought in the region.

### **Balochistan:**

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of land area, comprising 44 percent of the national territory. It is, in contrast, the smallest by far in terms of population. Only about 5% of the country's population lives here mainly in a few population centers, while the rest live in scattered, sparsely populated settlements, around water sources amid an arid. Baluchistan's geography and demography has dictated its development history. The province is located to the west of the main national trade corridor connecting the populated northern part of Pakistan with its main port of Karachi. The national trade corridor has historically run along the Indus River, connecting Pakistan's economic and population centers with the sea port in the south. The locational disadvantage of Balochistan is aggravated by the difficult mountainous terrain within the province which has translated into relative isolation in terms of access to, and communication with the rest of the country and within the province. (UNDP, 2011)

### **Drought: A Global Perspective:**

There are many definitions of drought. Some simple definition focuses on the failure of the rain from falling into the usual season for many amendments have passed. Among the many phrases and definitions that have been developed for drought is seasonal drought and drought viewer and drought-related meteorological and agricultural drought and hydrological drought that suggests other phrases to describe the drought, in relation to the utility of land rather necessity, for example "pastoral drought" as well as "ecological drought."

The proposed global Meteorological Organizational descriptions of drought:

(A) The failure of the rain from falling ill or distribute it for so long; and

(B) The period of dry weather dominated by an unusual degree and prolonged enough to cause a shortage of rainfall in the hydrological imbalance seriously.

In addition, it is stated in Article 1 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the following definition: The term "dry" natural phenomenon that occurs when the rain slightest perceptible degree from the levels recorded, which is causing so in the occurrence of hydrological discrepancies affecting badly production resources organisms ground. " The United Nations Convention included the following definition for drought-related measure "means to mitigate the effects of drought is those activities that relate to the prediction of drought and are aimed at reducing the vulnerability of society and natural systems in the face of scarcity equally related with opposing desertification(Wahab, 2002)."

### **Drought Effects on Livestock Sector:**

Precise measureable examination regarding cost of livestock because of draught is very challenging to be sorted out. Provincial zone regarding livestock remains one of the main subdivision of agriculture also produces approximately (11.4 percent) provincial Gross Domestic Product during (2004). The year (1990) known to be the golden year in terms of development of livestock sector but then again, right from the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, it did not flourish actually, just because of the provincial draught. For the maintenance of the influx of revenue as well as eradication of rural poverty, Livestock remains to be requisite.

The provincial economy entirely depends on agriculture products especially livestock and its byproducts. Livestock mainly dependent on 93% of the rangelands present in the province as 90% of the feed requirements of livestock particularly of small ruminants are met from these rangelands (Wahab, 2002). As matter of fact, livestock is proportional to the development of agriculture to a considerable extend. Hence both depend on rainfall as result they both face continual drought. To live with droughts much more is needed than storage water and food. It is necessary to decentralize the distribution of land, as most county families have less than 5 ha; it does not allow the farmer make sustainable use of their property. Linked to the decentralization of land should be the strengthening of family farming, with appropriate credit to the different categories of farmers and technical assistance and free extension and quality. Implement effective public policies to strengthen education in rural areas and the development of the field are also great measures important to increase adaptation before phenomena such as drought. Starting here comes the options that have been used, tanks, dams underground, ponds, pits, tanks, passion seed, silage, haymaking, plants and animals resistant, beekeeping. Last but not least, combat drought industry, denouncing deviations and when resources fail to comply with duties to work as a bargaining chip by votes or favors for politicians and landowners.(wahab, 2002)

### **Socio-Economic Impacts of Drought:**

Balochistan doesn't have enough water capitals for creation of extensive series of farming crops. Though, apricot, peach, cherry, apple, melon, walnut and almond are produced in the area.

The current famine has almost immersed whole of Balochistan and troubled the economic, social and agricultural balance of the province to a huge degree. The famine should not be watched just a natural procedure, but a natural tragedy. The lengthy famines often have unique costs over the lives of the people. (Younas, 1997) The Apple trees and orchards destroyed by almost 80%. Migration of people from drought affected areas. Heavy cost incurred by government in relief works in the affected areas - 22 out of the 28 districts sought assistance in water and Flood. Increased health hazards: The drought also contributed to the incidence of Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF). The disease was first noticed in September 2000 in Loralai district of the province. Several people are said to have succumbed to the disease which was triggered by the drought. Malnutrition, T.B and Hepatitis affected thousands of local communities

especially women and children during the period. 80% of livestock died in severely affected areas. A typical example of decreasing trend of rainfall from 1997 to 2002 in three districts representing upper, middle and lower parts of Balochistan Districts and Tehsils /sub- Tehsil s frequently affected by drought. Most Severely Affected District Severely Affected District Moderately Affected District.

1. Kharan 1. Sibi 1.Killa-Saifullah 2.Washuk 2.Mastung 2.Barkan  
3.Chagai 3.Kalat 3.Ziarat 4.Nushki 4.Khuzdar 5.Punjgoor 5.Lasbella  
6.Kech 6. Musa Khail 7. Gwadar 7. Killa Abdullah 8. Awaran 9.Jhal-  
Magsi 10.Bolan 11.Dera-Bugti 12.Kohlu 13. Sherani Most Severely  
Affected Tehsils Severely Affected Tehsils Moderately Affected Tehsils  
1. Qamar-Din-Karez 1.Khanozai 1. Tehsil Zhob 2. Tehsil Loralai 2.  
Barshore 2. Tehsil Pishin 3. Tehsil Chatter 3. Panjpai 4. Mekhtar.(PDMA  
BALOCHISTAN, 2012)

Hunger, anemia, malnutrition and deaths of people are often witnessed in drought-stricken areas. Drought is a great causal factor for low food production, thus, when experienced in poorer regions the effects of malnutrition, hunger, anemia and mortalities are compounded since there is little food available for consumption. (earthclipse.com)

Shortage of food products will result in rising prices of food items. People dwelling in rural areas of the province will likely face shortage of food. Not only people will have less to eat but their incomes will also decrease because agriculture is main source of income for people in rural areas.

Drought will also have negative bearing on the livestock owned by people in rural Balochistan. Drought will result in fodder shortage for livestock. In fact, 25 per cent of livestock has already perished in Noshki district of Balochistan. Livestock is the only source of food and income for 70 per cent rural population. Economic backbone of rural Balochistan will be ruined due to the forthcoming drought.

In order to realistically estimate the possible effect of the forthcoming disaster, impact of the last one can be considered. Balochistan faced a devastating spell of drought from 1997 to 2005. This long spell resulted in death of 1.76 million livestock and hundreds of people died due to malnutrition and related diseases. According to the figures of PDMA, last drought caused a loss of Rs25 billion to Balochistan's exchequer. The previous drought ended a decade ago and today the ground situation is even worse. Population has increased and so has the demand for food

items. On the other hand the capacity of government to assist drought victims has decreased during the period due to bad governance. (The news, 2015)

As a consequence of drought, proportionate losses in fruits production and livestock are higher among poorer and marginal land holding farmers. To cope with the drought, they have adapted a number of strategies at farm and off-farm levels that include crop and water management practices, adjustment in agricultural inputs, seeking off-farm employment, assets depletion, consumption smoothing, borrowing, and migrating to other places to seek alternative sources of income. (IJDRR, 2013)

### **Conclusion:**

Over the years, Balochistan has been one of the areas most affected by the drought. The long drought of 1997-2002 left Baluchistan's agriculture and livestock sector virtually paralyzed. Since then, the agriculture and social sector of the region has lived under continuous threat of severe drought.

Fighting off the severe consequences of drought is heck of a task and cannot be fought on provincial level. The federation and international community's help is vital. Water experts have always demanded for establishment of a federal ministry to cope up with the causes and consequences of a potential drought.

The federal ministry should be responsible to mobilize the people regarding necessary steps to save the water, agriculture and livestock development of the country. A comprehensive approach should be taken to involve all the stakeholders.

In many countries measures have been taken to forecast a drought. Such bodies are established on local, provincial and national basis. These bodies are entitled to such jobs as forecasting drought, pre-drought planning, acting during a drought and managing post-drought situation.

Private sector should also be taken into consideration while devising and implementing drought related strategies locally and nationally. Government, with the cooperation of private sector should take necessary measures to preserve and enhance the development of livestock sector in the economy. Livestock sector of Balochistan is one of the key economic components of the province.

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