

Effect of Drought on the Livelihoods of Livestock Farmers in Western Odisha: A Comparative Study between Drought and Non-Drought Years

ABSTRACT

The irregular climatic variation, which is causing drought, flood, cyclone, etc., across the globe is increasingly affecting the livestock rearing leading to great distress to livestock farmers financially, socially and economically during the above periods [1]. The present study was undertaken to assess the impact of drought on livelihood of livestock farmers in drought versus non-drought years in drought prone western Odisha. 72 respondents engaged in livestock farming as their primary occupation were selected randomly from 3 districts of Western Odisha by stratified random sampling. Ten pertinent questions were selected after due consultation with different stake holders of the agricultural sector, Govt. officials, University faculties and experts of the field to study the impact of drought. The questions were designed to be answered either in yes or no, which were related to the social, economic, food security and family responsibilities of the livestock farmer and his family. It was found that the respondents answered favourably to all 10 questions asked to them. They responded whether in drought or non-drought situations, most of their family needs like purchase of staple food for family, meeting daily requirements of family, purchase of cloths and medicines are met from the income received from livestock rearing. The study further revealed that animal rearing in the drought affected areas provides a sense of food security, social status and ability to meet the expenses in social rituals. Therefore, the Government of Odisha may initiate serious efforts to promote animal husbandry activities in these districts to support the farmers to negate the adverse impact of drought and to check the distress migration from these districts during the drought period.

Keywords: Drought, Livestock, Livelihood, Odisha, Food security, Distress

1. INTRODUCTION

Livestock rearing plays a very significant role in rural economy by providing regular income and employment. The vast livestock resources act as cushion to the rural farmers during drought period. The

occurrence of drought is a very regular feature in India. It is a geo-hazard, which results in severe impact on socio-economic and psychological aspects of farming community [2]. Especially small and marginal farmers' livelihood is affected seriously. In drought situations, there is below average rainfall creating shortage of water supply which not only affects agriculture but also animal husbandry activities. According to NRC [3], drought is one of the most crucial climatic hazards affecting a large number of people worldwide. More than 50% of the region of India is reported to be exposed to severe drought [4]. The states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Odisha encounters drought more often than other Indian states [5]. The Odisha State Disaster Management Authority, Government of Odisha reported that the districts like Bolangir, Bargarh, Nuapada, Kalahandi and Phulbani comprising of 47 blocks are drought prone districts of Odisha where small and marginal farmers suffered crop losses from 30 to 50% due to moisture stress in these districts. The effects of drought are manifest in the sharp drop in agricultural production and farm incomes, shrinkage in opportunities for rural employment, distress in livestock rearing and wide scale migration from rural areas. The agriculture sector in Odisha is susceptible to natural calamities like cyclones, droughts and flash floods which results in wide annual fluctuations in the agricultural production. The share of agricultural economy to GSDP has been going down over the years. Moreover, there are fluctuations in agricultural income in the state over the years, triggered by environmental factors. In recent decade, the state economy of Odisha has witnessed a sectorial shift from agriculture to towards industry and services sectors. Besides these shifts, agriculture and animal husbandry is still being considered as a priority sector for the State.

Frequent erratic monsoon in the State used to destroy the crop leaving the farmer with nothing for sustenance and unable to repay the loan. Suicides and migration of farmers have been reported from across the state and a very large percentage (70%) found in the western Odisha districts of Bolangir, Nuapada and Bargarh. The small and marginal farmers not having good number of livestock are most sufferers during the drought period. The farmers of the above districts in the western Odish force migrate to the neighbouring states to work as labourers in brick kilns. The present study was conducted to know the effect of rearing livestock in minimising the impact of drought on livelihoods of livestock farmers.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The nine districts of Western Odisha, namely, Balangir, Samablapur, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Sonepur, Sundergarh, Jharsuguda and Bargarh are mostly affected by droughts. For the present study, three districts-Balangir, Kalahandi and Nuapada were selected purposively because these districts witness frequent droughts, and the small and medium farmers of these districts don't have many options of secondary source of income. From these three districts, three blocks, one from each district namely Bangomunda block of Balangir, Golamunda block of Kalahandi and Boden block of Nuapada district were selected as these blocks face sever drought and there is very less source of alternative livelihood for the farmers during the drought period. These blocks lack any major irrigation project or any industry to provide livelihood to the farmers during drought [6]. Moreover, these blocks are adjacent to each other in a patch which will make the data collection more relevant and easier. Three hundred respondents were selected in a stratified random sampling method for the study out of which 72 (n=72) respondents were having animal husbandry as primary occupation. These 72 animal husbandry farmers constitute the sample size for the present paper. A pilot study was conducted, and a relevant questionnaire was finalized after being consulted, discussed, cross checked, and verified with experts, stake holders related to animal husbandry after judging each item with possible linkage as per the objective set forth in the study. Repeated verifications and proper measures were taken to avoid vague and ambiguous responses that may distort the information flow. Close ended questions were put in the schedule to get appropriate response. For collection of data with respect to the situation, 10 statements were selected and validated by highly experienced professors and experts of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Extension Education Departments of College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, OUAT and West Bengal as well as Animal Husbandry Department, Government of Odisha. The responses of the respondents were recorded in the form of dichotomous scale and data mentioning "Yes or No". Scoring was done as follows.

Sl. No	Response	Score
1	Yes	2
2	No	1

Mean Score is calculated to know the shift of the response towards yes and no as well as this would give an indication on opinion of the majority.

$$\text{Mean Score} = \frac{\text{Total score obtained}}{\text{Maximum score}}$$

Percentage was used in descriptive analysis for making simple comparisons between two responses. For calculating percentage, the frequency of a particular cell was multiplied by 100 and divided by the total number of respondents in the particular category to which the cell belonged.

$$\text{Percentage (\%)} = \frac{\text{No of respondent s}}{\text{Total No. of respondent s}} \times 100$$

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the selected villages, 72 respondents with Animal Husbandry as their primary livelihood generating option were asked 10 questions related to both drought as well as in non-drought situations and the responses were compared. In this study, it was found that 88.89 % and 93.06 % of the respondents reported that the total need of the staple food for one year of my family is being met from the animal resources in both drought and non-drought year with a mean score of 1.89 and 1.93. This finding reflects that whether drought or non-drought period, livestock used to play a very important role in supporting the livelihood. The study conducted by Bahta and Myeki reported that the small holder livestock farmers are not resilient to agricultural drought and drought significantly impacted resources and food security [7]. 95.38% of the farmers in both drought and non-drought period reported that they get other items for the family by selling animals and their products. The mean score of the above response was 1.96 each in drought and non-drought situations, which signifies that animal husbandry is independent of drought or non-drought situations in terms of selling animal head to earn food for the respondent and his family. 83.33% respondents agreed and remaining 16.67% disagreed on being questioned whether the daily needs requirement of the respondent family is being met from the money he gets by selling animal products and animals in drought situation, however in non-drought situations 87.50% agreed and remaining 12.50% said no to the same question. The mean score was 1.83 and 1.88 in drought and non-drought situation. On asking whether he can purchase clothes for his family out of sale proceeds of my animal resources in drought year, 84.72% respondents said yes

whereas in non-drought years, 94.44% said yes to the statement with a mean score of 1.85 and 1.94, respectively. In drought situations, 83.33% respondents said yes whereas in non-drought situations, 86.11% respondents said yes that they purchase medicine after selling of animal products and Animal resources. The mean scores in drought and non-drought years for the statement were 1.83 and 1.86. On enquiring whether the respondent could repair his house with the money he gets from selling of milk, egg, poultry birds, goats etc., 88.89% respondents in drought year said yes and remaining 11.11% said no. Whereas, in non-drought years 93.06% respondents said yes and remaining 6.94% said no to this statement. The mean scores in drought and non-drought condition were 1.89 and 1.93, respectively. 76.39% respondents agreed (said yes) and remaining 17(23.61%) disagreed (said no) on being questioned whether his livestock resources provide him a status to be credit-worthy in the village in drought conditions. However, in non-drought situations 79.17% agreed and remaining 20.83% said no to the same question. The mean scores were 1.76 and 1.79 in drought and non-drought situation. In drought situations, 91.67% respondents said yes, whereas in non-drought situations 94.44% respondents said yes on asking them whether the livestock resources provide the respondent a sense of food security for his family. The mean scores in drought and non-drought years were 1.92 and 1.94, respectively which signifies that irrespective of the drought or non-drought year majority of the respondents supported the statement. To a question whether they could be able to meet the expenses of his family members when they attend social gatherings in the village from Animal husbandry, all most all agreed (65 respondents) in drought condition whereas 91.67% respondents agreed in non-drought situation with a mean score of 1.90 and 1.92 in the respective situations. On enquiring whether the respondent can meet the expenses of his social obligations and rituals out of the income he gets from Animal Husbandry, both in drought and non-drought years 61 (84.72%) respondents said yes and remaining 11 (15.28%) said no, and having mean score of 1.85 in both the situations. From the above findings it was observed that the responses of the respondents were not in much deviated in drought and non-drought years which indicates that animal husbandry and its practices are mostly independent of the drought and non-drought conditions and always used to support the households in rural areas. The study conducted by Swain et al. also reported that farmers were not able to meet their household food requirement and thus drought affects the agriculture farmers severely and the rearing of animals provides an effective coping mechanism to counter the adverse impact of drought [8][9]. From the

above findings presented in table 1, it is observed that the respondents in the study area were able to meet their basic requirements of life in drought as well as in non-drought years from the income of animal husbandry activities.

UNDER PEER REVIEW

Table.1. Response of respondents as per their livelihood from Animal Husbandry during Drought year and non-drought year in western

Odisha

Sl. No	Constraints	Response					
		YES	YES NO	MEAN SCORE	YES	NO	MEAN SCORE
1	The total need of the staple food for one year for my family is being met from the animal resources I have	64 (88.89)	8 (11.1)	1.89	67 (93.06)	5 (6.94)	1.93
2	I get other food items for my family by selling animal heads	69 (95.83)	3 (4.17)	1.96	69 (95.83)	3 (4.17)	1.96
3	The daily needs requirement of my family is being met from the money I get by selling	60 (83.33)	12 (16.67)	1.83	63 (87.50)	9 (12.50)	1.88
4	I purchase clothes for my family out of sale proceeds of my animal resources	61 (84.72)	11 (15.28)	1.85	68 (94.44)	4 (5.56)	1.94
5	Medicines for any ailment of my family members are usually purchased from the money I keep after selling of animal products and animal resources	60 (83.33)	12 (16.67)	1.83	62 (86.11)	10 (13.89)	1.86
6	I go for repair of my house with the money I get from selling of milk, egg, poultry birds, goats etc.	64 (88.89)	8 (11.11)	1.89	67 (93.06)	5 (6.94)	1.93
7	My livestock resources provide me a status to be credit-worthy in the village	55 (76.39)	17 (23.61)	1.76	57 (79.17)	15 (20.83)	1.79
8	My livestock resources provide me a sense of food security for my family	66 (91.67)	6 (8.33)	1.92	68 (94.44)	4 (5.56)	1.94
9	As my vocation is Animal Husbandry, I am able to meet the expenses of my family members when they attend social gatherings in the village	65 (90.28)	7 (9.72)	1.90	66 (91.67)	6 (8.33)	1.92
10	I meet the expenses of my social obligations and rituals out of the income I get from Animal Husbandry	61 (84.72)	11 (15.28)	1.85	61 (84.72)	11 (15.28)	1.85
		Total Mean Score in Drought Year		18.68	Total Mean Score in Non-Drought Year		19.00

(The figure in upper row is frequency and lower is percentage in 3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th columns)

UNDER PEER REVIEW

4. CONCLUSION

The districts of western parts of Odisha are frequently affected by drought which seriously affects the food security of small and marginal farmers leading to large scale migration to other parts of the country in search of employment. The present study indicated that animal husbandry is playing a crucial role in supporting the livelihood of the farmers during drought period. However, the majority of the farmers in these areas are not in possession of a good number of animals. The farmers are also not aware of the economic benefit of commercial livestock rearing. Most of the livestock rearing in these districts by the farmers are with zero or minimal inputs. The Government of Odisha may initiate serious efforts to promote animal husbandry activities in these districts to support the farmers to negate the adverse impact of drought and to check the distress migration from these districts in the drought period.

REFERENCES

1. Mare F, Bahta Y. T, Niekerk. The Impact of drought on commercial livestock farmers in South Africa. *Development in Practice*.2018; <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2018.1493091>, accessed on 19.08.2024.
2. Saha S, Kundu B, Paul G.C, Mukherjee K, Pradhan B, Dikshit A, Abdul Maulud K.N, Alamri A.M. Spatial assessment of drought vulnerability using fuzzy-analytical hierarchical process: a case study at the Indian state of Odisha. *Geomatics, Natural Hazards and Risk*, 2021; 12(1):123-153.
3. NRC (National Research Council). *Climate and social stress: Implications for security analysis*. Committee on assessing the impacts of climate change on social and political stresses. In: Steinbruner, J.D., Stern, P.C., Husbands, J.L. (Eds.). *Board on environmental change and society, division of behavioral and social sciences and education*. The National Academies Press, Washington, DC. 2013; 280.

4. Kamble MV, Ghosh K, Rajeevan M, Samui RP. Drought monitoring over India through normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI). *Mausam*. 2010; 61(4):537–546.
5. Swain D. P. Assessment of animal husbandry as an alternative source of livelihood during drought in western part of Odisha. PhD. Thesis, submitted to the West Bengal University of Animal and Fishery Sciences, Kolkata, West Bengal, India. 2019.
6. Swain D.P, Goswami A., Das B.C, Ganguli D, Mahapatra M.M. A Comparative Assessment of Farmers' Perception on Drought and Related Impacts in Western Part of Odisha. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Socio-ecological Resilience in the Face of Climate Change: Contexts from a Developing Country*, Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore. 2023;71-83.
7. Bahta T.Y, Myeki V.A, The Impact of Agricultural Drought on Smallholder Livestock Farmers: Empirical Evidence Insights from Northern Cape, South Africa. *Agriculture* 2022; 12, 442. <https://doi.org/10.3390/agriculture12040442>, accessed on 19.08.2024.
8. Swain D.P, Goswami A, Das B. C, Singh, B. P, Govil K , Sant S. Impact of Drought on the Livelihoods of Farmers in Western Odisha: A Comparison Between Drought and Non-Drought Years. *Archives of Current Research International*, 2024; 24(6); 286-292.
9. Kanwal V, Sirohi S, Chand, P. Effect of drought on livestock enterprise: Evidence from Rajasthan. *Indian Journal of Animal Sciences*, 2020; 90(1);94-98.