

Evaluation of UNICEF's Drought Mitigation Project in Madhya Pradesh – 2001-2003

The specific object of the evaluation was to assess, primarily from the perspective of various socio-economic sections of drought – affected communities, to what extent the project objectives of long term drought proofing and short – term livelihood substance through wage employment were achieved.

For achieving the aforesaid objectives, the key issues addressed were:-

- Providing livelihood security that comprises of water [domestic and irrigation] food and income security.
- Evaluating the extent and impact of distress migration and suggesting ways to arrest such malady.
- Emphasis will be on whether vulnerable groups [S.C./ST/OBC/BPL] were “involved” in all the stages of the project, and to what extent benefited.
- Assessing whether the structures constructed were technically sound and cost effective.
- Institutional support for mitigating drought conditions and scope of involving Panchayati Raj Institutions for such activities.

The table below shows the major droughts in M.P and their impacts.

Major Drought of M.P. and their Impacts				
Drought Period	Area/Regions affected	Manifestation of the drought	Measures adopted by the local community	Measures adopted by the government
1902-04	Entire State of modern M.P.	No Kharif crop, no fodder in 1903, Many cattle died by mid 1903.	Barks of forest trees peeled, dried, baked and eaten as rotis by the villagers.	Probably none. Villagers do not remember having heard any measures taken by the authorities
1979-80	The Bundel Khand Drought	Failed to grow any crop for entire year. Many cattle died due to paucity of fodder. Large scale migration to nearby towns.	Sold half of the livestock. At least one family member had to migrate.	None
1987-88	The Malwa & Maha Kausal Drought	Many trees in the forest died Not enough fodder available. Very little Kharif crop was harvested. Wells dried up. Very little water was left in hand pumps.	Some people migrated out of the villages and went to remote places. Many had to borrow heavily.	None
2001-03	32 districts of M.P. belonged to all the five regions of the State.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of crop - Loss of wage employment opportunity - Problem of getting enough drinking water in many villages - Lack of drinking water for livestock - Ground water level depleted. 	Migration was enhanced. People had to borrow heavily. The Pani Roko Campaign helped the community to tide over the drought period without human loss. However, there was significant cattle mortality.	The government of M.P. undertook the Pani Rako Abihiyan and sought food for work support from G.O.I.

				Also requested UNICEF to assist in drought relief work.
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The Key findings are as follows

Short term mitigation of drought impacts

- Across 142 structures that were constructed under UNICEF'S Drought Mitigation Programme a total of 282861 person days of wage employment was generated.
- The construction of ponds and tanks and renovation of ponds provided significant wage employment benefits particularly to S.C/S.T. and OBC communities.
- Women received 1900 person days of wage employment more than men in case of construction of ponds. Concerning all other works men received larger share of wage employment.
- In terms of support to livelihoods, the 'construction of tanks' provided the maximum relief followed, by construction of ponds and construction of wells'
- Of 1377 food insecure households 47.5 percent households reported that wages and food grains received from project helped them to successfully tide over the phase of food insecurity.
- Jhabua reported the highest number of migrants per household [3 to 4 persons] while Mandla and Sidhi stood at lower end with an average of one migrant per household.
- Highest migration was seen among S.T. community.
- Across the 10 sample districts on an average 63 percent beneficiaries were landless and marginal farmers.

Long Term Drought Proofing

- Three types of structures were either constructed or renovated. The average overall cost of structure worked out to be Rs. 185873 against an average expenditure of Rs 151138.
- Almost two thirds of UNICEF assistance either went towards the renovation of existing structures or for construction of small water harvesting structures costing less than Rs. 1.00 lakh.
- It was found that in 50 percent of cases the quality of the work was reported as 'fair' Only 5 percent of works were rated 'very good,' 17 percent were given 'good' rating and 20 percent were considered to be poor quality.
- About 80 percent of respondents were satisfied with appropriateness of the sites of the structures, 73 percent were satisfied with command and coverage of the structures.
- Increase in irrigation was reported in 23 percent villages which enhanced the yield of the Rabi Crop in half of these villages. In three – fourth of these villages the increase was upto 30 percent.
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- Pani Roko Samities were not constituted in 39 percent of villages and in 73 percent of cases where they were constituted, did not play any role in programme implementation.
- In 32 percent of villages Gram Sabhas were considered approving authorities, in Mandla, the Gram Sabha was sole decision making authority in all villages.
- In 41 percent cases villagers played a key role in site selection while Panchayats and line department officials were involved in site selection in 30 percent and 12 percent cases respectively.

The important recommendations are as follows:-

- Allocation of funds to the districts to be made on the basis of drought assessment reports.
- For curbing migration, the districts having low traditional / regular migration need to be targeted.
- Follow – up programmes are necessary for converting natural assets created into potential livelihood options.