

Impact of Drought on Households in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka

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When the environment is exposed to a period of aridness, it refers to the drought condition, which can alter the continuity of existence that is not able to adapt to certain conditions. Consequently, the objectives of this study were to recognize the social impacts of drought and the perception of farmers on its aspects in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka. Since drought condition is prevailing severely in North Central Province, 533 farmers were selected randomly from eight divisional secretariat divisions to collect data through self-administrated questionnaire. The tool consisted of questions using a 5-point Likert scale to find the experience of the households regarding the perception of the drought on social aspects. The preliminary task was to find the social impacts of drought worldwide to a certain extent through the subsequent series of literature review, which was performed as a desk review of the research. It was able to excel six social impacts of drought matched with the perspective of Sri Lanka from 18 impacts that were obtained by the review. Health issues, changing the food pattern, scarcity of food, inadequate drinking water, arising conflicts among people for water resources, and migration are the six impacts. A Non-parametric analysis: Sign test with the normal approximation was performed as data were distributed freely. Correspondingly, health issues, changing the food pattern, scarcity of food, inadequate drinking water, and arising conflicts are significantly affected by drought ($Z > 1.96$) but not the migration. Heat and dust-related illnesses, low air quality, low nutritious food, low income, inadequate water supply, limited resources, and distribution of limited resources to a variety of activities are the rationales for the above results; people may not tend migration, as they cannot have any alternative. Early warning systems, awareness of drought resilience methods can be recommended to overcome the negative impacts.

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