

## Strategic Interventions to Combat Socio-economic Impacts of Drought in Thar - A Case Study of Nagarparkar

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**Abstract :** Pakistan is one of those developing countries that are least involved in emissions but has the most vulnerable environmental conditions. Pakistan is ranked 8th in most affected countries by climate change on the climate risk index 1992-2011. Pakistan is facing severe water shortages and flooding as a result of changes in rainfall patterns, specifically in the least developed areas such as Tharparkar. Nagarparkar, once an attractive tourist spot located in Tharparkar because of its tropical desert climate, is now facing severe drought conditions for the last few decades. This study investigates the present socio-economic situation of local communities, major impacts of droughts and their underlying causes and current mitigation strategies adopted by local communities. The study uses both secondary (quantitative in nature) and primary (qualitative in nature) methods to understand the impacts and explore causes on the socio-economic life of local communities of the study area. The relevant data has been collected through household surveys using structured questionnaires, focus groups and in-depth interviews of key personnel from local and international NGOs to explore the sensitivity of impacts and adaptation to droughts in the study area. This investigation is limited to four rural communities of union council Pilu of Nagarparkar district, including Bheel, BhojaBhoon, Mohd Rahan Ji Dhani and Yaqub Ji Dhani villages. The results indicate that drought has caused significant economic and social hardships for the local communities as more than 60% of the overall population is dependent on rainfall which has been disturbed by irregular rainfall patterns. The decline in Crop yields has forced the local community to migrate to nearby areas in search of livelihood opportunities. Communities have not undertaken any appropriate adaptive actions to counteract the adverse effect of drought; they are completely dependent on support from the government and external aid for survival. Respondents also reported that poverty is a major cause of their vulnerability to drought. An increase in population, limited livelihood opportunities, caste system, lack of interest from the government sector, unawareness shaped their vulnerability to drought and other social issues. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the local authorities shall create awareness about drought hazards and improve the resilience of communities against drought. It is further suggested to develop, introduce and implement water harvesting practices at the community level to promote drought-resistant crops.

**Keywords :** migration, vulnerability, awareness, Drought

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