

Drought as a silent Natural Disaster

Outline :

1) Introduction

- Attention grabber
- Interlink of drought as a natural disaster
- Thesis statement

2) Essence of terms

3) Manifestations of droughts as a silent Natural Disaster

a) Droughts onset strike abruptly

b) Droughts devastate agriculture without destroying infrastructure

c) Droughts indirectly increase mortality rate

Case in point: Malnutrition in Tharparkar, Sindh

d) Droughts create groundwater depletion

Case in point: India's Northwest plain - severe water scarcity

e) Droughts aggravate chronic poverty

Case in point: Balochistan - repeated droughts - forced farmers to sell livestock

f) Droughts affecting human capital development

Case in point: Sahel region droughts - stunting and cognitive impairment in children

g) Drought-induced migration silently deepens social inequality

Case in point: Rural to urban migration in Karachi

h) Droughts accelerate environmental degradation without immediate alarm

Case in point: Pakistan's desert expansion

i) Droughts slowly dismantle social structures without immediate chaos

Case in point: Tharparkar - Increased child marriages

j) Gradually undermines national security by fueling resource conflict

k) Absence of drought visuals lead to long term policy neglect

Case in point: Pak's NDMA - historically ^{more} funding to floods and earthquakes

4) Policy recommendations to counter implications of droughts

- a) Institutionalizing early warning and monitoring system
- b) Integrating drought into development planning
- c) Political recognition of drought as a national security threat

5) Conclusion

Introduction :

During the 1930s, the American Midwest faced one of the worst environmental crisis in history: The Dust Bowl, where prolonged drought turned fertile lands into barren wastelands. Millions of acres of crops failed, livestock perished and families were forced to abandon their homes in search of survival. John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath" captured this silent catastrophe, depicting how the drought gradually destroyed livelihoods without

dramatic headlines. This depicts the silent killer nature of ^{disasters} droughts. From the very nature of abrupt onset to accelerating environmental degradation, droughts are catalyst for creating social and political unrest. Absence of its dramatic visuals leading to long term policy neglect pertaining to drought, thus further aggravating its long term consequences.

By acting as a stimuli to trigger stunting and cognitive development among children, droughts are silent killers for human capital development. Keeping in view these manifestations, can one still argue that droughts are not a silent killer disasters. Indeed, ^{disasters} droughts by dismantling social structures, undermining national security and eroding economic resilience, droughts act as a silent natural disaster.

However, by applying Stein positive measures it is possible to counter its negative implications effectively.

To begin with, one of the reason to categorize drought as a silent natural disaster is its abrupt onset without prior notices. Like floods or earthquake, droughts operate silently or slowly. In the beginning, rainfall patterns reduces, soil loses moisture and water

table level declines gradually. All these signals are ignored by the community and government. For instance, the Horn of Africa drought started with a few failed rainy season but later on developed to a disaster.

Also, in Tharparker Sindh, droughts build up over months and by the time its effects are noticed, drought-driven food shortages have left 21% of households food insecure. This slow and sudden onset prove that droughts are silent natural disasters.

Furthermore, droughts devastate agriculture without physically destroying infrastructure, which is why it is considered a silent natural disaster. Although irrigation channels remain intact, fields remain standing yet crops wither due to prolonged lack of water.

One of its manifestation is Argentina drought that took place in 2022-23.

Argentina faced a severe drought that sharply reduced the production of soybean and maize. The overall decline in agricultural productivity is observed without damaging infrastructure.

Thus, droughts silently destroys agricultural productivity while leaving no dramatic

signs of destruction.

In a nutshell, it is concluded that droughts are a silent natural disaster. Due to its abrupt onset, damaging agricultural productivity without any visible signs of causing infrastructure destruction, droughts act as a natural disaster. From intensifying hunger and malnutrition to deepening social inequality, disasters act as a catalyst for forced migrations of people and dismantled social structures. Also, by fueling resource conflict, drought gradually undermines national security. Alongwith this, absence of drought visuals lead to long-term policy neglect on part of government representatives, thereby aggravating its negative implication. However, by adopting effective measures such as institutionalizing drought's early warning system coupled with integrating drought into development planning, it is possible to overcome its consequences. Only through these measures, the promise of protecting humanity from catastrophic impacts of droughts can be fulfilled as stated in these lines;

Date: _____

M T W T F S

Even the darkest nights yield to a
pale dawn,

When human will learn to mend
what it has dreamt

With wisdom as compass and hope
as flame

Tomorrow can still be gentler than
today