

Addressing the Drought Situation

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- With low rainfall this season, the country is most likely to witness a drought situation this year.

\n

- Tackling drought must be the immediate priority for administrators across the country.

\n

\n\n

What is the rain deficit scenario?

\n\n

\n

- The actual deficit last monsoon was modest, barely 10%.

\n

- But the post-monsoon rainfall (October to December, 2018) or PMR has registered a 44% deficit.

\n

- This national average deficit conceals shortages in some regions where it is much higher.

\n

- E.g. In Marathwada, the deficit is 84%, and in Vidarbha, 88%.

\n

\n\n

Why is it so significant this time?

\n\n

\n

- The next nearest rains are six months away, and there is no guarantee that June will see the onset of a normal monsoon.

\n

- This low-rain and no-rain situation is going to aggravate the water crisis.

\n

- By April-May, this drought could be tormenting millions in several States, including the urban India.
\n
- Years of policy-driven, corporate-driven water transfers from rural to urban, agriculture to industry, poor to rich and so on have made the country-side chronically water-scarce.
\n
- But the failure of rains this time is so serious that 'drought' now means not just a farm crisis but a national crisis.
\n
- This is more likely to affect towns and cities no less than villages.
\n
- In urban regions, the piped water supply could falter and water cans could cost even more than they do today.
\n

\n\n

What does it call for?

\n\n

- There is massive waterlessness that has hit the country already.
\n
- It calls for addressing and being prepared for a drought situation, beyond the popular agrarian distress and farm-loan waivers debate.
\n
- There is a crucial need to address the water-starved, food-short, livelihood-broken, rural India's agrarian distress.
\n
- The policy makers should thus make drought relief, water-use, food security and massive earth-related programmes an absolute priority.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n