

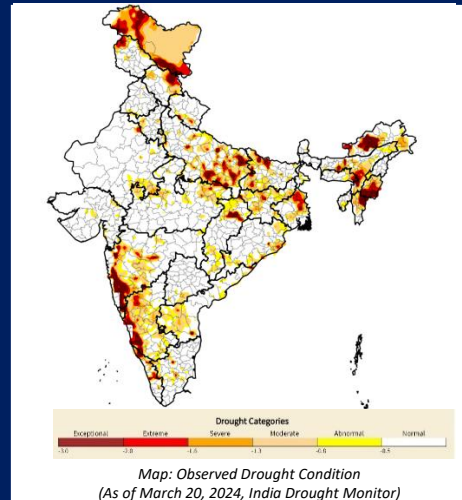


Situation Report

Droughts Situation in India

Date: 27th March 2024

Time: 10:00 AM (IST)



SITUATION UPDATE AND RESPONSE

Overview:

India is grappling with a drought crisis, affecting 26% of its land area, more than doubling from the previous year, with 9% experiencing extreme drought, with drought situation in Karnataka already at critical level. The looming threat of a Super El Niño heightens concerns over disrupting weather patterns, potentially leading to heavy rainfall, flooding, and prolonged dry spells. Kerala anticipates mild drought conditions, banking on predicted summer rainfall, while Karnataka faces critical drought, impacting 223 taluks, resulting in severe crop loss and water scarcity. Maharashtra's response intensifies, extending drought-affected regions to 66% of administrative areas. Governments provide aid but stress caution and proactive measures to mitigate crises amidst projections of a "strong" El Niño from March to May 2024 by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's climate prediction center.

Statistical Overview



Population Affected
- 13 million (Bengaluru)



Drought declared Taluks –
223 (Karnataka), 1532
revenue circle
(Maharashtra)



Crop affected – 48 lakh
hectares (Karnataka)

Karnataka:

- The drought situation in Karnataka has reached critical levels, prompting the state government to seek urgent intervention from the Supreme Court and the Centre. With 223 out of 236 taluks declared as drought-affected, the magnitude of the crisis is staggering.
- Reports indicate that over 48 lakh hectares of crops have been lost, amounting to estimated loss of Rs 35,162 Cr.
- The scarcity of drinking water has become particularly acute, affecting not only rural areas but also urban centers like Bengaluru.
- Groundwater, upon which a significant portion of the city's 13 million residents rely, is rapidly depleting. Shockingly, despite drilling borewells to depths of up to 1,500 feet, 6,900 out of 13,900 borewells in the city have run dry, exacerbating the water crisis

Maharashtra:

- The drought situation in Maharashtra has escalated significantly, prompting the state government to extend the scope of affected regions.
- On February 16, the government took the decision to include an additional 224 revenue circles, which are administrative clusters of villages, in the list of drought-affected areas. This expansion was driven by the fact that these areas received less than 75% of their average rainfall during the 2023 monsoon season.
- With this latest decision, the official declaration of drought now encompasses 1,532 out of the total 2,292 revenue circles in Maharashtra. This represents a staggering 66% of the state's administrative areas.



Kerala:

- The Center for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM) in Kozhikode has issued warnings indicating a potential onset of normal to mild drought conditions in March 2024.
- However, there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon. Recent assessments for April and May have shown positive indicators, suggesting a decreased likelihood of severe drought conditions. This optimistic outlook is attributed to the occurrence of summer rainfall, as predicted by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) for the upcoming season.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Karnataka:

- The state government has provided financial assistance of Rs 2,000 each to 33,44,000 farmers, disbursing Rs 650 crore from the state treasury. Additionally, funds amounting to Rs 450 crore have been allocated for fodder and Rs 870 crore for addressing the scarcity of drinking water.
- The state government's request to the Centre for Rs 18,171.44 crore under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).

Maharashtra:

- Maharashtra state government must now intensify its efforts to provide relief and support to the affected populations. This includes implementing drought mitigation measures, ensuring access to drinking water, providing assistance to farmers, and mobilizing resources to alleviate the hardships faced by vulnerable communities.

Kerala:

- Despite some positive indicators, farmers are advised to exercise caution. The CWRDM advisory emphasizes that fertilizers should not be applied to crops during periods of high temperature unless there is adequate moisture available. Failure to adhere to this guidance may result in detrimental effects on crop yield and quality.

Uttar Pradesh:

- The Uttar Pradesh state government has taken proactive steps to address the persistent threat of drought by announcing the establishment of Telemetric Weather Stations (TWS) in tehsils across various districts.
- To enhance monitoring and early warning systems, the government has prioritized the installation of TWS in the 100 most drought-prone tehsils spread across different districts such as Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, and seven districts of Bundelkhand.
- These stations will enable real-time monitoring of weather patterns, rainfall data, and other relevant meteorological parameters, thereby facilitating timely interventions and resource allocation.



Key Contacts

Mr. Utkarsh, IAC, Sphere India
8853976708 | utkarsh@sphereindia.org.in



Source of Information

Media, Social Media, Sphere India
WhatsApp Group

Disclaimer:

Sphere India makes every effort to verify the information contained in its Situation Reports. As the ground situation changes rapidly in emergency situations, users should check with concerned agencies before making any decisions based on the information provided in this report.