



DROUGHT CONDITIONS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE YOUNG GENERATION



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Himachal Pradesh is well known for its green mountains, rivers, forests, apple orchards and scenic villages. "Most people think a state with so many rivers and snow-covered mountains cannot have a water shortage. In many parts of Himachal Pradesh, people are getting lesser water in dry periods. Changing weather Less snowfall Irregular rainfall and increasing demand for water is making drought like conditions a serious concern.

The majority part of Himachal Pradesh is still having agriculture dependent for economic level. A large portion of farming is dependent on rainfall because about 80% of the agricultural land is rain-fed. Farmers are forced to rely on the timely arrival of rains. Rainfall occurs irregular or delayed can harm crops.

Farming was a typical aspect of village life for older generations. They knew how to conserve water during dry spells, when to plant seeds and when to expect rain. Today's youth are growing up in a different setting. Their way of life has evolved. Education, government and private employment, business, tourism, technology, and social media are all areas of interest for a large number of young people. Many people view farming as hard labour job that takes a lot of time and that not yield a steady income.

This feeling may be more acute in a drought. Farming becomes dangerous when water is lacking. Even if a farmer spends money on labour, fertilizer and seeds, the crop may not do well if it does not get enough moisture. Such uncertainty may be another reason why a young person looks for alternatives outside agriculture.

But that doesn't mean that young people don't care about their communities. Many young people are still very attached to their culture, their home, their land. The problem is their hope for a

better life and a more regular income. A young person may want to stay in the village if there are no suitable jobs, poor internet or transportation facilities and farming is becoming difficult because of lack of water, but moving to a town or metropolis may appear to be the easier option.

In the Himalayan region, youth migration is already a significant problem. According to research on Himachal Pradesh, jobs and education are the main drivers of migration, while environmental and agricultural issues may exacerbate the situation.

Drought can also change the daily lifestyle of young people. In villages, water shortage does not only affect fields. It can affect household work, livestock and small businesses. Young people may have to spend more time helping their families collect or manage water. This can become difficult for students and those preparing for competitive examinations or working from home.

Another important change is the increasing use of technology. Young people today are connected through mobile phones and social media. This can actually become an advantage in dealing with drought. Young farmers can use weather information, online agricultural advice and modern irrigation methods.

The young generation can be an important part of the solution. Young people can bring new ideas to agriculture, not just walk away from it. Rainwater harvesting, protected cultivation, water-saving farming methods, crop diversification and drip irrigation can reduce dependence on rainfall. The government programs of Himachal Pradesh are also focused on better irrigation, crop diversification and enhancing farm income.

We also need to change the way young people see agriculture. Farming should not be

viewed as traditional labour only. Education and technology can turn agriculture into a business. The young person can grow vegetables, manage an orchard, start a nursery, process farm products, sell directly through online platforms or develop a small Agri-tourism business. These activities can generate income and keep the young people linked to their villages.

Small actions can make a difference among young generation. Saving water at home by discovering new style of techniques that support rainwater harvesting. Young people can also educate their families and communities about the importance of water.

The government and educational institutions also have an important role. Young people need practical training, better employment opportunities and support for starting agricultural businesses. Schools and colleges can teach students about climate change, water conservation and sustainable agriculture.

Himachal Pradesh is facing a changing climate, and drought risk is one part of this larger challenge. The state's disaster management planning identifies several districts as drought-prone and notes that climate change may increase drought risk.

In the end, drought is not only a problem of dry fields. It is a problem that can influence the lifestyle, decisions and future of the young generation. If water level decreases, agriculture becomes difficult, village life changes and migration may increase. Young people have education, technology and new ideas that previous generations did not have.

The real need is to connect these new ideas with the traditional knowledge of Himachal Pradesh. The older generation knows the land, seasons and local water sources, while the younger generation knows technology, modern business and new ways of communication. If both generations work together, drought can be managed better.

The future of Himachal Pradesh will depend not only on how much water the state receives, but also on how wisely that water is used. The young generation can play a major role in making this future safer, more sustainable and better for the villages where they grew up.

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