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Odisha Drought Update

A Civil Society Initiative on behalf of
Odisha Water Forum &
Odisha State Center, Forum for Policy Dialogue on Water Conflicts in India

This initiative is an attempt to provide periodical updates on Drought Situations and related events/news with respect to Drought in Odisha. News from Odia and English (Bhubaneswar internet editions) news papers are put together at one place to provide an appreciation of Drought in Orissa periodically.

This Drought Update is being circulated among media, decision makers - legislatures, bureaucrats etc. with an aim to catalyze informed and expeditious decisions and actions.

We request to all recipients and their civil society contacts/friends to kindly mail (baitarani@gmail.com) /phone (Priyabrata:9438286393) us such events/developments related to Drought in your areas for adding value and meaning to this Civil Society Initiative.

Needless to say that all such news will be acknowledged with source

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1. News (Headlines) from Odisha Media¹ during Aug 13-20 2010

a. *Drought Situation in the State*

- Possibility of drought like situation in the state if there is no rain within 31st August 2010(The Khabara-19.08.2010)
- Drought situation of the state will be highly harmful if there is no rain within 10 days(The Samaja-19.08.2010)
- Disturbed monsoon leads to drought like situation in the state(The Samaja-18.08.2010)
- Rainfall deficiency leads to drought in the state (The Dharitri-18.08.2010)

b. *Drought Affected Areas*

- Threat of Drought in Anandapur due to no rain (The Khabara-19.08.2010)
- 11 districts are in danger due to drought(The Khabara-18.08.2010)

c. *Impact on Agriculture*

- Crops would be seriously affected if there is no rainfall in the next 10 days(The New Indian Express-19.08.2010)
- Lack of rain leads to agricultural crop loss in Balanga(The Khabara-19.08.2010)
- Disturbed Monsoon leads to crop loss(Samaja-18.08.2010)
- Erratic rains: Farmers fear another bad crop(The New Indian Express-18.08.2010)
- No water for Kharif crop(The New Indian Express-18.08.2010)
- Seven districts have recorded deficit rainfall and three districts are experiencing water scarcity for kharif crop(The New Indian Express- 18.08.2010)
- Scanty rainfall worries farmers(The New Indian Express-14.08.2010)
- Crop loss due to monsoon deficiency(The Dharitri-17.08.2010)
- No water for irrigation due to scanty rainfall(The Samaja-17.08.2010)
- 11 Dists face Agricultural loss due to lack of rain (The Sambad-17.08.2010)

d. *Response of the State/Central Govt*

- CM asked the Revenue Department officials to prepare an action plan to deal with the possible drought like situation(The New Indian Express-19.08.2010)
- Drought control; Chief Minister reviews the preparedness(Sambad-19.08.2010)
- Drought like situation in Odisha; an action plan prepared by the state government(The Khabara-19.08.2010)
- An action plan prepared by the state government to meet the drought like situation(The Pragatibadi-19.08.2010)
- Difference in view between revenue minister and the agricultural minister of the state regarding the issue of Drought(The Dharitri-19.08.2010)
- Possible drought, C.M reviews preparedness(The Samaja-19.08.2010)

¹ *The Samaj, The Sambad, The Dharitri, The Pragatibadi, The Khabar & The New Indian Express; all Bhubaneswar Edition*

- Possible drought: Difference in view between the revenue minister and the agricultural minister on drought(The Sambad-20.08.2010)

2. Selected News from Local English Media² (13-20 Aug)

a. *Drought threat looms large over 41 blocks*

<http://odianews.blogspot.com/2010/08/drought-threat-looms-large-over-41.html>

August 20, 2010

Bhubaneswar: With monsoon playing truant, the treat of drought looms large over 41 blocks, which have received 50 per cent deficit rainfall till third week of this month. The state government is serious and deficit rainfall has put a question mark on paddy cultivation and the situation may aggravate if these areas do not receive adequate rainfall in the next 5 to 10 days, Revenue Minister Suryanarayan Patro said on Thursday. According to Patro, 41 blocks have received 50 per cent less rainfall while another 112 blocks have recorded 30 percent deficient rainfall so far. "Areas in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar have received 50 per cent deficit rainfall. The crops would get affected if these areas do not receive rain in the next few days," Patro said. The situation is more acute in Sundargarh where four out of six blocks fall under the non-irrigated regions. Here, all the farmers depend on the gamble of monsoon. "We are witnessing such situation for the first time here," a farmer said. On the other hand, Agriculture Minister Damodar Rout has now questioned the report-card of the Revenue Department. Recently, Rout had lambasted the media for the reports on possible drought in the state. "I am in constant touch with the farmers and the media is just trying to create panic," Rout had said on August 16. Today he said that, "I want to ask Revenue minister if 50 crores were distributed among farmers as compensation for crop loss last year then why it was not included in the crop cutting list? he remarked.

b. *No water for Kharif Crop*

<http://expressbuzz.com/states/orissa/no-water-for-kharif-crop/199049.html>

18 August, 2010

BHUBANESWAR: While the monsoon is playing truant, kharif operation like transplantation and beusaning could not be started in a few districts due to lack of water in the fields. Seven districts have recorded deficit rainfall of more than 30 per cent than the normal while another three districts are experiencing water scarcity for taking up kharif operation. Rainfall deviation of 19 per cent is considered to be normal. "Crop position in Deogarh, Sambalpur, Mayurbhanj and Sundargarh is grave and it will be near impossible to save the crop if there is no rain in the next few days," Agriculture Minister Damodar Rout told this paper. Inter-cultural operation has slowed down in a few coastal districts like Kendrapara, Bhadrak, Angul and some areas of Cuttack due to scarcity of water. The actual rainfall in these districts is less than 30 per cent than the normal. While the overall crop position in the State is normal, a few districts are experiencing dry soil condition due to rise in temperature after the low pressureinduced rains in the first week. The Minister said Angul and Kendrapara which had more than 55 per cent deficit rainfall in July improved appreciably following a good spell of rain across the State in the first week of this month. Agriculture operations have been intensified in the two districts, he added. However, reports coming from as many as 10 districts said that lack of rains unnerved the farmers. The current dry spell has started affecting crop in high and medium land. If the situation continues for a few more days, standing crop in low-lying areas will be affected, experts feared. Senior agro-meteorologist of Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) S.N. Pasupalak feared that the dry spell would continue for another seven days or more. There are no symptoms of formation of another low pressure in the Bay of Bengal in the next few days, he added. If there is no rain in the next seven days, the farmers should go for light rabi crops like pulses, the Agriculture Minister said, adding, the department was kept in readiness to supply seeds for rabi crops.

² Bhubaneswar Editions of The Pioneer, The Times of India & The New Indian Express

c. Scanty Rainfall hits crops in 11 districts

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhubaneswar/Scanty-rainfall-hits-crops-in-11-districts/articleshow/6327159.cms>

August 17, 2010

BHUBANESWAR: Agriculture operations in parts of 11 districts in Orissa continue to be hit seriously, indicating the possibility of a drought-like situation even as the low pressure rain towards July-end improved the situation a bit. Official sources said agriculture operations were worst hit in Deogarh and Mayurbhanj districts due to severe deficiency in rainfall of 45 per cent and 44 per cent respectively. The other districts where operations were hit due to deficient rainfall ranging from 20 to 59 per cent are Sambalpur, Kendrapada, Sundergarh, Angul, Baud, Dhenkanal, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur and Keonjhar.

According to the rainfall report of the local meteorological centre, of the 30 districts in the state, Sambalpur has received the highest deficient rain 47 per cent so far this monsoon, followed by Deogarh, Mayurbhanj and Kendrapada districts. The state overall received 16 per cent deficient rain this monsoon as against the average normal 773.6 mm of rainfall by Wednesday, the report said.

"The paddy crop in some pockets of selected districts may be affected if there is no rain for the next few days," admitted Babaji Giri, director of agriculture. He, however, said the situation was not alarming anywhere as the non-paddy agriculture operations were decent in areas with scanty rainfall even though the paddy crop was affected partially. Giri added the overall agriculture coverage in kharif' crops in the state was also quite good compared to last year, though in some pockets, scattered rainfall had affected kharif crops as well.

According to an official report, notwithstanding the poor rainfall condition in selected districts, paddy, the major crop of the state, was sown in 29.57 lakh hectare area by August 13; the paddy crop covered 29.35 lakh hectare area during this period last year. The total targeted area of cultivation of paddy in the state in kharif' this year stood at 36.5-lakh hectare, the report said. Non-paddy crops like maize, cereals and pulses covered 4.22 lakh hectare area so far, against 3.86 lakh hectare area covered during this period last year. The trend for the area coverage of oil seeds, fibre, vegetable and spices was similar.

Giri said the department was also hopeful of improvement in the coverage of crops if there was adequate rain in the coming days. Besides, he said, farmers could switch over to non-paddy crops if the state failed to get enough rainfall. The director of the local meteorological centre, Sarat Chandra Sahu, said formation of low pressure zones and depressions in the monsoon generally bring more rain. However, he said, this monsoon the state has witnessed only six low pressure formations so far, and none of these intensified into a depression, which would have triggered more rain.

d. Orissa Government gears up to combat drought

<http://www.orissadiary.com/CurrentNews.asp?id=20662>

Wednesday, August 18, 2010

Bhubaneswar: Orissa Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday directed the concerned Department to make an action plan to combat drought-like situation in the State. Reviewing precautionary measures on possible flood situation at the State Secretariat Patnaik gave this direction. It was known from the meeting that districts like Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur, Keonjhar, Kendrapara, Deogarh and Jharasuguda experienced low rainfall during August. Apprehensions raised that there would be huge crop loss across the State if it does not rain in coming 10 days. Keeping in view possible drought like situation, Chief Minister directed to make an action plan to face the same. It was informed in the meeting that every kind of precautionary steps has been taken to fight possible flood situation including repairing of embankments in the State. It was also informed that 593 places have been identified as weak and of these 35 are the weakest. Among others, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Surya Narayan Patro, Chief Secretary TK Mishra,

Principal Secretary to CM BK Patnaik, ADC Rabi Narayan Senapati and Secretaries of Water Resources, Rural Development, Health and Works Departments were present.

e. North very very wet, East stares at drought

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/north-very-very-wet-east-stares-at-drought/659290/>

August 12, 2010

Monsoon showers in the last few days have almost completely wiped out the overall rainfall deficit of this season, but entire eastern India continues to reel under an abnormally dry spell and now faces a second successive year of serious drought. As of Wednesday, there is almost 25 per cent rainfall deficiency in eastern and north-eastern India. And the situation is unlikely to show any significant improvement in coming days, the Meteorological office said. "More than half the monsoon season is already over. There is no way such large deficits in Jharkhand, Bihar and other areas will be compensated for. There is likely to be improvement in the rainfall situation in the coming days, we will be lucky even if 10-15 per cent of this gap is bridged," said Ajit Tyagi, Director General of India Meteorological Department (IMD). While overall deficiency in the country has come down to barely four per cent, Jharkhand, the worst-affected state, has received only half the amount of rainfall that it usually gets by now. Eastern Uttar Pradesh has 43 per cent deficiency while Bihar and West Bengal have 32 per cent shortfall each. Madhya Pradesh has received about 20 per cent less rainfall this season.