

## **Availability and Expenditure of Drought Relief Funds in Rajasthan** An Exploratory Study from 1990-91 to 2014-15

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### ABSTRACT

The problem of funding relief expenditure has been recognized by every finance commission since the second because of which each of the successive finance commission has made recommendations with regard to provision for relief expenditure out of the revenues of the states and the extent of support to be extended by the Central Government to the State Government (GoI, 2004). The centre and the states contribute to the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) to the extent of 75 percent and 25 percent respectively. However, the Twelfth Finance Commission mentions that the states have suggested reducing the contribution of the states to the CRF which shows that the states are trying to reduce their responsibility by reducing their contribution. Rajasthan has demanded successively increased funding from centre (GoR, 2014) as it is situated at most peculiar geographical conditions in term of drought vulnerability. The present study shows that Rajasthan Government largely depended on the Centre for relief related expenditure which has increased over the years while the sacrosanct aim of 'drought proofing' is still elusive. In the period of study from 1990-91 to 2014-15, Rajasthan experienced drought two times in 2002-03 and 2009-10 while the scarcity conditions prevailed in the state in one or another area all the time for which state demanded help from centre on regular basis. Mostly the relief works get financed through the help received from the centre and state allocation. However, the present study shows that the amount received for relief remains largely unused and is getting accumulated in the state budget instead of being used to manage the prevailing scarcity and achieving the coveted goals of drought proofing.

**Keywords;** *Rajasthan, drought, financing, natural calamity, disaster, relief*

**JEL Classification:** E62, H77, H84.

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#### **Introduction**

A natural calamity cannot be reasoned as justice or injustice but it can still become a case of injustice if those who could have undertaken prevention action had failed to try (Sen, 2009) and such a case can be more complex and subtle than the assessment of an observable disaster by the calamity, when one talks

about drought, as it does not have any initiation or end point being a creeping phenomenon. Mathur and Jayal (1993) argued that a natural calamity becomes a disaster only because people live there and also asserted that drought significantly increases the vulnerability of the poor, making them greatly dependent on the outside agencies such as moneylenders and traders, as well as officials of



government departments. Hence, it can be inferred that financial strategies of the government for fighting a calamity have to focus on the people living in the affected area and due to the recurrent nature of drought, especially in the arid and semi- arid regions of Rajasthan, policy planners must evolve such solutions to the problem of sustainable development that are ecologically, economically and socially viable. Therefore, in a country like India that is largely dependent on monsoons which are erratic in nature, it becomes all the more difficult to evolve fully fledged strategies for drought management and its financing.

The problem of funding relief expenditure has been recognized by every finance commission since the second (1957-62) because of which each of the successive finance commission has made recommendations with regard to provision for relief expenditure out of the revenues of the states and the extent of support to be extended by the Central Government to the State Government (GoR, 2014). The centre and the states contribute to the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) to the extent of 75 percent and 25 percent respectively. However, the Twelfth Finance Commission mentions that the states have suggested reducing the contribution of the states to the CRF which shows that the states are trying to reduce their responsibility by reducing their contribution.

It is quite clear though that with increasing financial dependence of the state on the centre in Indian federal system, the relief from natural calamities is also funded by union government. While states are expected to contribute their share to become partners in management of natural calamities, the utilization of these funds is fully entrusted with the state government. Nevertheless, even though the policies for fighting a drought has been shifted from famine relief to drought proofing since independence, but still the coveted goal has not been reached because of certain loop holes in management strategies for drought in Rajasthan which can be seen by looking at the budget documents of Disaster Management and Relief Department, Government of Rajasthan. Rathore (2005) asserted that the State has failed so far to diagnose the drought phenomenon and to come up with a long-term solution primarily because relief is considered to be the solution for droughts management strategies and changing the approach from relief to mitigation of drought still remain one of the main issues emerging for policy formulation and action.

In the period of study from 1990-91 to 2014-15, Rajasthan experienced severe drought conditions two times in 2002-03 and 2009-10 while the scarcity conditions prevailed in the state in one or another area all the time for which state demanded help from centre on regular basis. Mostly the relief works get financed through the help received from the centre and state allocation. However, the present study shows that the amount received for relief remains largely unused and is getting accumulated in the state budget instead of being used to manage the prevailing scarcity and achieving the coveted goals of drought proofing.

### **Objective**

The main objective of the present study is to understand the receipt from Centre, contribution from State and spending pattern of the State for disaster relief mainly drought.

### **Hypothesis**

The State of Rajasthan is not spending fully on combating scarcity, drought management and drought proofing while the budget is increasing every year where the share of centre is manifolds than its own share in the relief fund.

### **Rationale and Literature**

Rajasthan with a land area of 342239 Square Km comprises 10.4% of the country's total area and around 6% of the country's population. According to the census 2011 (GoI, 2011), Rajasthan has population of 68.62 million with population density of 201 persons per square kilometre. The climate of Rajasthan is characterized with hot and dry winds and 60% of its area falls within the Great Indian Desert of Thar. A substantial proportion of population resides in this area despite dry winds and scanty rainfall. Report on water resources (Central Ground Water Board, 2006) mentions that the state has only 1% of India's water resources. The climate of Rajasthan State varies from arid to sub-humid. Low rainfall coupled with erratic behaviour of the monsoon in the State makes Rajasthan the most vulnerable state to drought.

Efficient financing is required for coordinating government's policies for drought reduction/mitigation, ensuring adequate preparedness at all levels in order to face the drought, coordinating response to it when it strikes and for harmonization of relief and rehabilitation. Mathur and Jayal (1993)

identified the relation between dry region's vulnerability to drought conditions, poverty and ecological degradation. This places Rajasthan, which is also, geographically, the largest state in the country, as the most vulnerable area in the country in terms of drought and scarcity and is also most vulnerable to poverty and ecological degradation (Mundetia & Sharma, 2014).

Benson and Clay asserted that the extent and intensity of drought impacts is determined by prevailing economic conditions, the structure of the agricultural sector, management of water resources, cereal reserves and overall economy of the region (Benson & Clay, 1998). The impact of droughts can be understood as wide spread crop failures leading to acute shortages of food and fodder, adversely affecting human and livestock, health and nutrition accompanied by scarcity of drinking water accentuated by deteriorating ground water quality and declining water tables leading to migration (Narain et al, 2000).

Rathore (2005) asserted that the impacts of drought can be direct and indirect and may vary in nature and intensity. Direct impact include, impact on agricultural production, water availability for household and irrigation purposes, impact on natural resources and biodiversity, stress on government revenue and expenditure on relief, stress on ground and surface water etc. The indirect impacts of droughts include unemployment, inflation, regional inequality, indebtedness, increased crimes and insecurity, migration etc.

Livestock provide supportive income, employment and nutrition to the house hold, livestock income is more stable as livestock both large and small have the capability of converting plant residue that is inedible by the people into forms that provide several essentials for humans survival. These include not only milk and meat products but also energy inputs for consumption and nutrient for the soil. Livestock has extra advantage of mobility. In drought years Livestock is moved to areas where fodders availability is more assured. The impact of drought differs on the different categories of livestock. The desire of farmers to protect a viable stock of livestock to ensure continuity of the future income is apparent in their choice on the size of the herd. To save the livestock from the impacts of drought, the farmers follow a path that involve extensive change in feeding sources and practices, a shift in the composition of the livestock varieties and movement of the animals to areas perceived to have better

pasture and water. Variation between these principal responses is conditioned on the rapidity and intensity of the drought, market conditions and the resource capacity of the farm population (Rathore, 2004 ).

Drought also has adverse impacts on agriculture and related sectors, including forestry and fisheries, because of the reliance of these sectors on surface and subsurface water supplies. The web of impacts may become so widespread that it is often difficult to determine accurate financial estimates of damages. In all, drought affects not only the economy of the region but also impact the society as a whole. According to the Crisis Management Plan (GoR, 2014) the fundamental aspect of crisis situation in case of drought can be identified as explained in the following table:

According to National Disaster Management Guidelines (2010), years 1965, 1972, 1979, 2002 and 2009 were the years of severe drought i.e. when rainfall is deficient by 25-40% of normal or more. India has pursued many strategies and implemented several development programs for mitigation of the adverse effects of drought and to combat desertification (Narain et al, 2000). These programs include Drought Prone Area Program initiated in 1973-74, Desert Development Program started in 1977-78, National Watershed Development Program in rain-fed areas started in 1990 etc. Drought proofing i.e. preparing the drought prone area in advance was enunciated as a policy goal for the first time in 1987. Before this the scarcity management has been an important part of the administrative and policy agenda of independent India. Mathur and Jayal (1993) defined Drought Proofing as an effort of strengthening the local natural and human production resource base which can provide a certain desirable amount of food, fuel, fodder, drinking water and livelihood resources during a drought (Mathur & Jayal, 1993).

#### **Drought proofing:**

After independence major changes were brought in order to shift focus from drought adaptation to drought mitigation. Prabhakar and Shaw established that the strategies for fighting drought are mainly two folds i.e. adaptation which involves providing relief to people and economy of drought hit area through subsidies, employment and food; and drought mitigation which involves long term strategies aimed at drought proofing of venerable area like development of water harvesting structure, changing crop patterns etc. (Prabhakar & Shaw, 2008).

Drought proofing an area then implies that the local natural and human production resource base can provide a certain desirable amount of food, fuel, fodder, drinking water and livelihood resources during a drought (Rathore, 2005). Prabhakar and Shaw (2008) listed the Drought Proofing and Development Programmes in India as follows:

#### **Financial Management of Drought:**

In India, State Governments are primarily responsible for disaster management including prevention and mitigation, while the Government of India provides assistance where necessary as per the norms laid down from time to time and proposes that this overall framework may continue. However, since response to a disaster requires coordination of resources available across all the departments of the government, the policy mandates that the Central Government will, in conjunction with the State Governments, seek to ensure that such a coordination mechanism is laid down through an appropriate chain of command so that mobilization of resources is facilitated. However, in some of the States like Rajasthan, there may be successive drought years and scarcity, enhancing the vulnerability of the population in these areas.

The financial management of drought plays a major role in adoption of a suitable and sustainable strategy to provide relief to the sufferers and mitigation. The policy and the funding mechanism for provision of relief assistance to those affected by natural calamities are reviewed by the Finance Commission appointed by the Government of India every five years. The pattern of relief for drought has largely followed the recommendation set out in the report of the finance commissions. A Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) has been set up in each State as per the recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission for relief assistance to those affected by natural calamities. The size of the Calamity Relief Fund has been fixed by the Finance Commission after taking into account the expenditure on relief and rehabilitation over the past 10 years. Where the calamity is of such proportion that the funds available in the CRF will not be sufficient for provision of relief, the State seeks assistance from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF).

However, in the year 2010, as per the recommendations of the Thirteenth Finance Commission, the Disaster Management of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, constituted the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for which the balance as on 31.03.2010 in the

Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) was transferred to the SDRF and CRF ceased to exist (GoI, 2010).

#### **Methodology**

The study of financing of drought in the state of Rajasthan has been done through an exploratory research using the Budget data from department of relief, the state budget books and various policy papers of the Government of Rajasthan. The study uses comparison charts to analyse the trends in drought financing.

#### **Data and Discussion**

The analysis of the State Budget provides information about the health of the State economy. It provides information vital for studying a concept from financial perspective like revenue being raised by the state government, the expenditure made, budget deficit and public debts etc. The Annual Budget documents of the Finance Department of Government of Rajasthan show that major proportion of relief grant is used to create wage employment in the drought affected villages. There are budgetary allocations for livestock like for providing fodder for cattle being an important asset and equally affected by drought including heavy expenditures on transportation of fodder. During the last drought year (2009-2010), special effort was made to address the malnutrition and hunger of children in the State. The budget books of the state have shown that when the intensity of drought is higher, more expenditure on drinking water has been incurred in the state.

However, it is seen from the budget books that most of the expenditure allocated for Drought in the Major Head for Relief on Account of Natural Calamities is non-plan expenditure. Also, a large portion of the receipts for CRF/ SDRF from Central and State Government has remained unused (Figure 1). Hence, there are inevitable gaps in the policy of funding mechanism of drought management in the state as the goal has shifted from drought management to drought proofing. Therefore, there is a need to adopt new and better aimed strategies for funding drought management so that the percolation of benefits can be done to those suffering due to drought in a more efficient manner.

Figure 1 compares the trends in the total receipts and total expenditure for CRF/ SDRF between years 1990-91 and 2014-15. It can be observed from the figure that every year except the years around severe drought years 2002-03 and 2009-10, the total

expenditure done by the State for disaster relief work and for combating the prevailing scarcity in the state is substantially very low than the total receipts which shows that the budget is not being used fully. This drawback is worth noticing because drought is a creeping phenomenon and has impact for many years. Not all of the amount allocated for relief work is utilized for the drought proofing the State and a lot of it remains unused in the State treasury while the total receipts have been much more than the total expenditure and have increasing almost every year.

Figure 1 also compares the contribution of the State in CRF/ SDRF to Total Receipts and Total Expenditure. It can be observed that during most years, the contribution of state is much lower than the total receipts and the total expenditure which shows that a large portion of expenditure is done from the help received from the Central Government. Even though the contribution of the State and SDRF is in the 25 % and 75% respectively, yet it can be seen from the following figure that the State largely depends on the Centre for relief expenditures.

The above figure shows that only during the years 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2010-11, the total expenditure was more than the total receipts. These years are around the years when Rajasthan experienced severe drought conditions i.e. 2002-03 and 2009-10. The total expenditure includes expenditure on relief largely during drought and also on floods, fires and other disasters. In the year of the onset of the Ninth Finance Commission, year 1990-91, total receipts for CRF/SDRF was INR 124 crores whereas the total expenditure on relief work during this year was only INR 42.2 crores. In the next year i.e. 1991-92, the total receipts increased by 91 crores whereas the total expenditure decreased by 35.82 crores. In 1992-93 the expenditure increased by 151.24 crores but was still 201.57 crores less than the total receipts of the same year which increased by 137.13 crores as compared to the receipts of 1991-92. Again in the year 1993-94, the expenditure decreased to only 58.38 crores while the total receipt was 282.15 crores more. Similarly, in the last year of the ninth commission, year 1994-95, total expenditure on relief was 219.46 crores less than the total receipts for CRF/SDRF of that year.

Similarly, during the Tenth Finance Commission i.e. from the year 1995-96 to 1999-2000, each year total expenditure on disaster relief was much less than the total receipts. However, during the Eleventh Finance Commission i.e. from the year 2000-01 to 2004-2005, it can be seen that the total expenditure for the

years 2000-01 and 2001-02 was higher than the total receipts of these years because during these years Rajasthan was suffering from high drought conditions that ultimately lead to severe drought year of 2002-03 while during the drought year of 2002-03, the total expenditure became yet again quite less than the total receipts for CRF/SDRF for that year. The same trend continued up till the Twelfth Finance Commission (2005-06 to 2009-10). However, again in the year 2010-11 i.e. the first year of the Thirteenth Finance Commission (2010-11 to 2014-15) a negative trend has been observed. The total expenditure on relief was more than the total receipts for the year 2010-11 as the year 2009-10 was again a severe drought year in Rajasthan.

As mentioned earlier, Rajasthan is a drought prone State and therefore a large proportion of the expenditure done on relief is allocated for expenditure done on drought followed by floods relief, fire and other disasters. Figure 2 shows that for each year the major area of expenditure from CRF/SDRF was drought relief. However, as seen from the figure 1, the allocated budget does not get utilized properly even when every year more amount needs to spent on drought relief and a lot of amount remains unused in SDRF which keeps accumulating in the State treasury.

The above figure shows that the total expenditure and expenditure for drought relief is almost same every year. This again shows that there is a need to spend on drought relief every year which is justified as drought is a creeping phenomenon and has its effects for long period of time. Therefore, in a state like Rajasthan, continuous policy efforts are required for combating drought impacts and making the State drought proof.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has argued that drought should not be seen only as shortage of rainfall, but also in terms of various ways in which the policies and the spending pattern of the state affect the economic and social lives of the people. People living in drought prone areas are found to have developed their own strategies over centuries to cope with the adverse consequences of drought and to some level they have been successful in their endeavours but there still exist a large section the population living below poverty line including marginal and small farmers and the socially marginalized groups who are more vulnerable to drought and who lack the technical know how about dealing with drought. Along with

economic development, social institutions which are considered to be a source of strength for these people earlier while coping with droughts are gradually weakening. (Rathore, 2004 ) Hence the role of the State is growing in managing the drought.

Even a cursory appraisal of policy in the fields such as agriculture, rural development, employment generation and land and water management, leads to the inescapable conclusion that the dry regions have largely been neglected in the development projects of the Indian states. (Kuldeep-Mathur-Niraja-Jayal, 1993). In Rajasthan, the budget books and other financial documents have shown that the State is not spending adequately while there is a continuous need of relief expenditure and so it has important ramifications for the way policy-makers have been dealing with the issue of drought management and drought proofing. Till now the policies for addressing drought have been proving ad hoc relief but there policies and drought manual need to be revisited and a comprehensive drought policy that treats drought economically and socially needs to be devised.

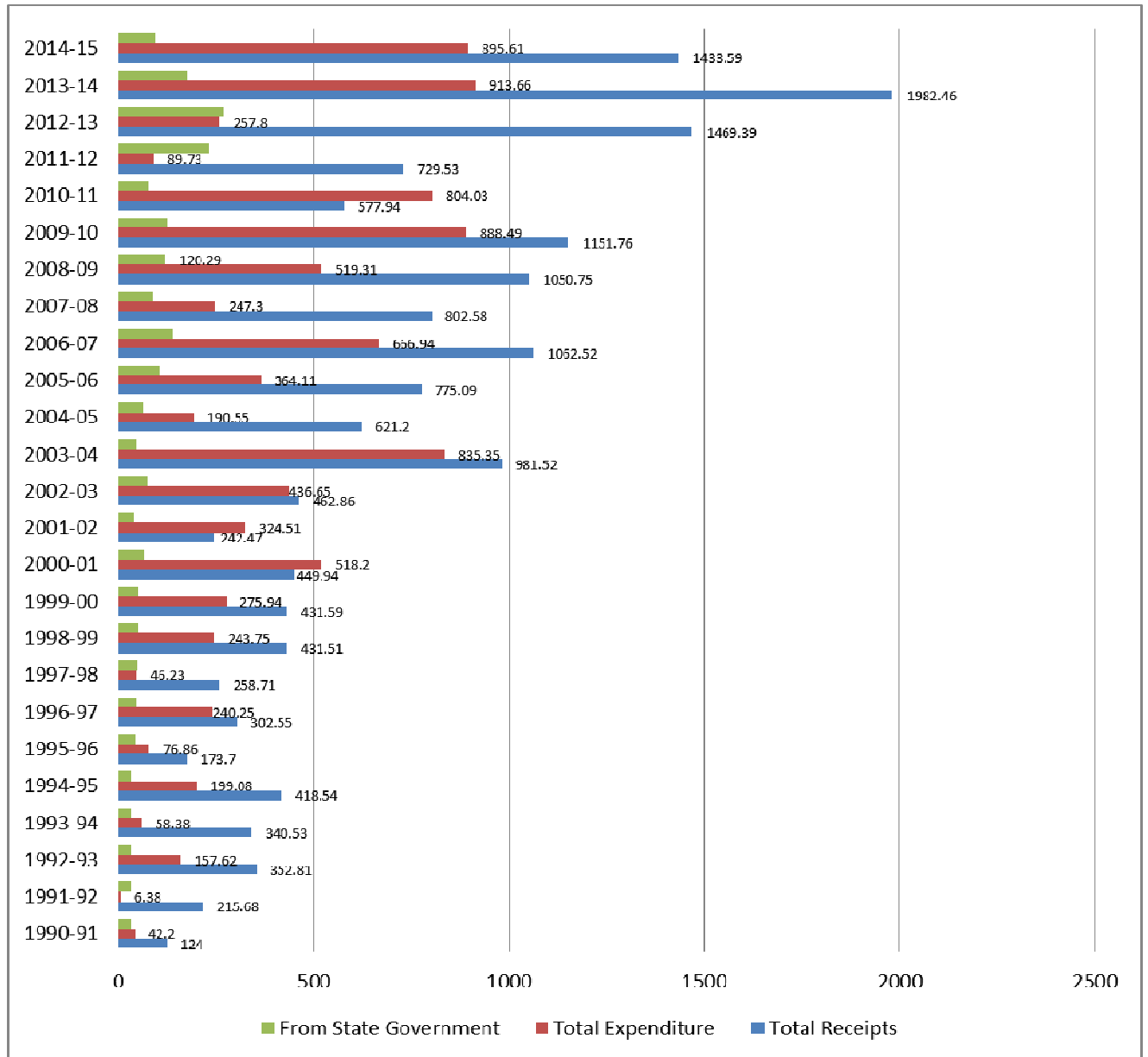
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**Figures and Tables Used**

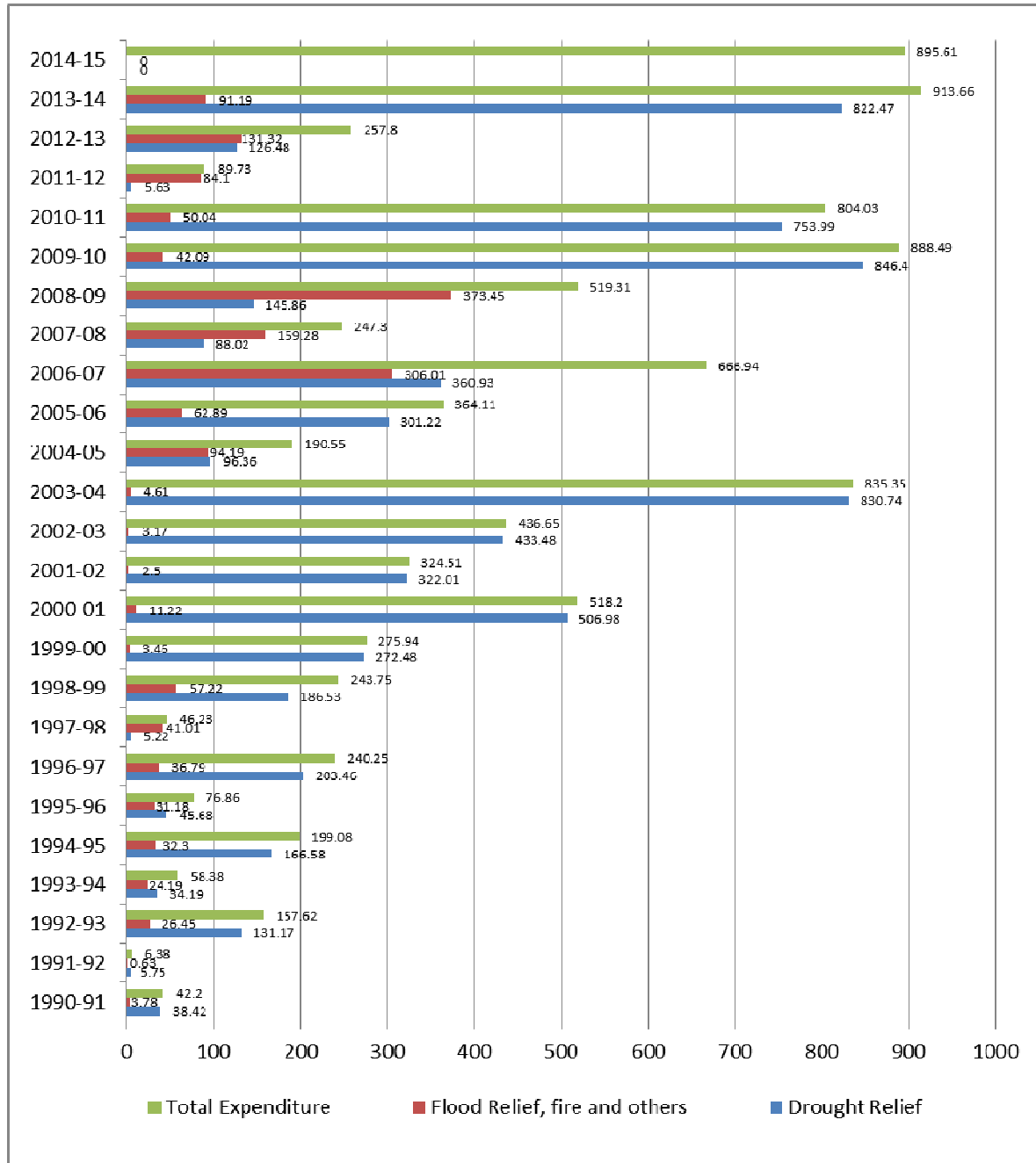
**Figure 1: Comparison of Total Expenditure to Total Receipts and Contribution of the State in the Total Receipts for Calamity Relief Fund/ State Disaster Response Fund (amount in INR crore)**



Source: Annexure 1



**Figure 2: Total Expenditure, Expenditure on Drought Relief and Expenditure on Flood Relief, fire and others (amount in INR crore)**



Source: Annexure 1

**Table 1: Vulnerability magnitude and phases of crisis situation of drought**

S. No.	Phases of Crisis	Vulnerability Magnitude
1	Normal	Zero (Rainfall is above +19% to -19%)
2	Alert/ watch	1-2 (in Apr- Jun, forecast of late monsoon coupled with water crisis and heat waves)
3	Warning	3-4 (in Jun- mid July, delayed onset of monsoon and deficient rainfall for more than two weeks along with Acute water crisis)
4	Emergency	5-7 (In July- Sep, Deficit rainfall below -25% and midseason withdrawal of monsoon or no rainfall during sowing season )
5	Acute	7-10 (In, Jul- Oct, no rainfall for more than 4-6 weeks)
6	Recovery (Post disaster)	>10-0 (In Oct- Jun, normal rainfall in Rabi and subsequent seasons)

Source: Crisis Management Plan, 2014, Government of Rajasthan

**Table 2: Drought proofing and developmental programmes in India**

Programme	Coverage/expenditure (INR)
Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP)	180 districts of 16 States, Rs 19.0 billion
Desert Development Programme (DDP)	40 districts of 7 States, Rs 8.5 billion
Watershed approach	Rs 22.6 billion
Others including developmental programs	
Food for work Programme, Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)	Rs 16.0 billion
Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY)	Rs 16.5 billion
Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)	Rs 25.0 billion
Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)	0Rs 5. Billion
Annapurna Scheme	Rs 3.0 billion

Source: Prabhakar and Shaw (2008)

Annexure 1

**Receipts for and expenditure from Natural Disaster Relief Fund/ State Disaster Response Fund (amount in INR crore)**

Year	Opening Balance	Receipts for Natural Disaster Relief Fund/ State Disaster Response Fund					Expenditure from Natural Disaster Relief Fund/ State Disaster Response Fund			Balance as on March 31st
		From Central Government	From State Government	From National Disaster Response Fund	From interest	Total Receipts	Drought Relief	Flood relief, fire and others	Total Expenditure	
1990-91	.	93.00	31.00	-	-	124.00	38.42	3.78	42.20	81.80
1991-92	81.80	93.00	31.00	-	9.88	215.68	5.75	0.63	6.38	209.30
1992-93	209.30	93.00	31.00	-	19.51	352.81	131.17	26.45	157.62	195.19
1993-94	195.19	93.00	31.00	-	21.34	340.53	34.19	24.19	58.38	282.15
1994-95	282.15	93.00	31.00	-	12.39	418.54	166.58	32.3	199.08	219.46
1995-96	.	126.74	42.25	-	4.71	173.70	45.68	31.18	76.86	96.84
1996-97	96.84	134.28	44.76	21.00	5.67	302.55	203.46	36.79	240.25	62.30
1997-98	62.30	141.70	47.23	.	7.48	258.71	5.22	41.01	46.23	212.48
1998-99	212.48	148.92	49.64	.	20.47	431.51	186.53	57.22	243.75	187.76
1999-00	187.76	155.25	51.75	21.98	14.85	431.59	272.48	3.46	275.94	155.65
2000-01	.	196.00	65.34	187.93	0.67	449.94	506.98	11.22	518.20	-68.26
2001-02	.	122.26	40.75	78.97	0.49	242.47	322.01	2.5	324.51	-82.04
2002-03	.	216.09	72.03	174.74	-	462.86	433.48	3.17	436.65	26.21
2003-04	26.21	134.79	44.93	772.08	3.51	981.52	830.74	4.61	835.35	146.17
2004-05	146.17	188.71	62.90	216.79	6.63	621.20	96.36	94.19	190.55	430.65
2005-06	359.45	311.74	103.90	.	.	775.09	301.22	62.89	364.11	410.98
2006-07	410.98	413.66	137.88	100.00	.	1062.52	360.93	306.01	666.94	459.45
2007-08	459.45	257.35	85.78	.	.	802.58	88.02	159.28	247.30	555.28
2008-09	555.28	360.87	120.29	.	14.31	1050.75	145.86	373.45	519.31	531.44
2009-10	531.44	378.90	126.30	115.12	.	1151.76	846.40	42.09	888.49	263.27
2010-11	277.61	225.25	75.08	-	.	577.94	753.99	50.04	804.03	-226.09
2011-12	-226.09	698.67	232.75	-	24.60	729.53	5.63	84.1	89.73	639.80
2012-13	639.80	496.67	267.45		65.47	1469.39	126.48	131.32	257.80	1211.59
2013-14	1211.59	521.50	174.36		75.01	1982.46	822.47	91.19	913.66	1068.80
2014-15	1068.80	273.59	91.20			1433.59			895.61	537.98

Source: Disaster Management and Relief Department, Government of Rajasthan, 2014

Note: Rows shaded green indicate years of severe droughts in Rajasthan