



DISASTER
RELIEF

CASE REPORT
India-Drought
1972/1973

Agency for International Development
Washington, D.C. 20523

INDIA

DROUGHT 1972/73

DROUGHT in 1972 and 1973 affected nearly 200 million people. The Central and State Governments of India undertook emergency relief measures with relatively little outside assistance at a cost of \$519 million to the Central Government. The U.S. Government contributed 30,402 metric tons of food aid through U.S. voluntary agencies.

Value of U.S. Government

Assistance \$6,637,000

Value of Assistance from

U.S. Voluntary Agencies \$2,114,464

Value of Assistance from the

International Community \$ 740,087

Foreign Disaster Case Reports are publications of the Office of the Foreign Disaster Relief Coordinator, Agency for International Development. This office has responsibility for coordinating U.S. Government foreign disaster relief responses and for the further coordination of such activities with those of the U.S. private and international disaster relief communities.

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PHOTO by CARE

Water holes dried up causing an acute shortage of water for drinking and irrigation

The life-giving monsoon rains which normally begin early in July of each year failed to materialize in the summer of 1972. Soon 230 out of 340 districts in India were in the grip of drought. Shortages of water for drinking and irrigation quickly developed. Power production was reduced, affecting the operation of electrified tubewells in rural areas and further aggravating the water situation. The lack of water was most acute in the villages. Water was also in short supply in several cities and towns including Bombay. Food and oil seed crops failed over large areas. Millions of people were faced with near famine conditions, but there were reports from some areas that people were managing to survive on the mahua flower which sprouts in great abundance during the dry seasons. Malnutrition and disease were reported throughout the drought-stricken states. Rural incomes were sharply reduced and the absence of agricultural activity increased unemployment.

States most affected were Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Mysore, and

Madhya Pradesh. Total figures were not available on the number of people affected in each state, but the following numbers were reported: Mysore and Andhra Pradesh — 20 million, Gujarat — 10.5 million; and Maharashtra — 2.5 million.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA:

Food shortages developed slowly, but water supplies for drinking and irrigation rapidly became critical. Indian Government officials cautioned the people against panic, noting that the Central and State Governments had 9.5 million tons of food grains in storage, which was the largest reserve supply in the history of the country. Conditions, however, worsened month by month.

State Governments organized relief operations quickly once the seriousness of the drought was recognized. The Central Government launched a crash program to help cope with the food and water shortages. It established a committee to work with state administrators in dealing with the problems.

The Prime Minister toured the drought areas to observe conditions, and teams from the Central Government were sent to areas most affected to work with local officials in developing relief programs.

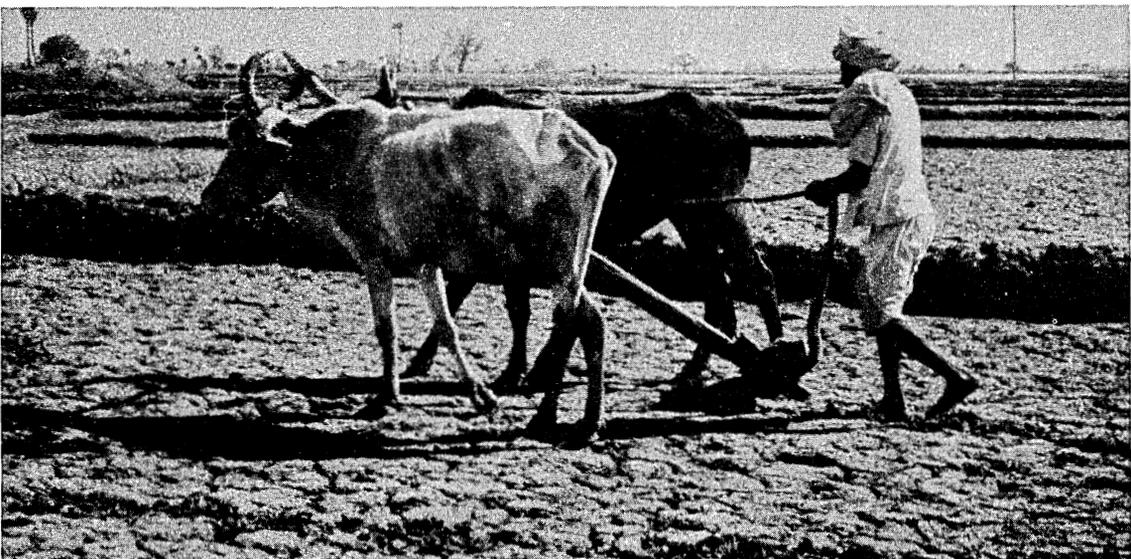
The Central and State Governments provided wheat and money for transport, storage facilities and administrative services, and initiated work projects. All available water pumps and diesel engines were mobilized to provide more water for irrigation. Restrictions were imposed on the use of electricity by some industries in order to make full use of electrically powered water pumps. Fair price shops were opened and drinking water was hauled in to the affected areas. Work projects undertaken consisted of constructing roads, desilting irrigation tanks and wells, digging new wells and improving old ones, enforcing soil conservation measures, and establishing cattle feeding centers.

By December 1972 about 82,000 relief work projects had been organized, employing 4.2 million people. Even though the Indian Government is not generally in favor of gratuitous relief, free food supplies were provided on a carefully selected basis in some areas.

Despite India's large food surplus from the previous year, it eventually became necessary to import more grain. The first grain shipment arrived in Bombay on February 4. By April 1973, 1.5 million tons of grain had arrived in India. The imported grain was purchased from the following countries: 500,000 tons of wheat and 400,000 tons of grain sorghum from the United States, 400,000 tons of wheat from Canada, and 200,000 tons from Argentina. Further imports of foodgrains continued during 1973 for a total of about 4 million tons before the record monsoon crop began to be harvested in November 1973.

The Central Government authorized a total of 4,428 million rupees (approximately \$519 million) for drought relief.

While the Government of India did not request assistance from the United States, several state governments appealed to U.S. voluntary agencies with programs in the country to provide food aid. The U.S. Government (USG) authorized the provision or diversion of 30,402 metric tons of corn/soya/milk (CSM), vegetable oil, and wheat for distribution by C.A.R.E., Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service, and Lutheran World Relief.



Farming was almost impossible and food shortages developed throughout the drought-stricken area

PHOTO by CARE



An organized emergency feeding center for children at Ahmendnagar

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT:

The USG made an emergency Food for Peace grant through the voluntary agencies and additional P.L. 480 food commodities were diverted from voluntary agencies' in-country stocks. This food assistance consisted of the following:

C.A.R.E. — 17,200 metric tons (MT) of CSM, 3,271 MT of vegetable oil, and 9,395 MT of wheat.

Catholic Relief Services — 77 MT of wheat and 278 MT of vegetable oil.

Church World Service/Lutheran World Relief — 181 MT of vegetable oil.

This food was valued at \$5,932,000 and the ocean freight cost was estimated at \$705,000 for a total value of\$6,637,000

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES:

C.A.R.E., Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service, and Lutheran World Relief distributed food to approximately two million drought victims in the States of Orissa, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh. From their own resources, the voluntary agencies contributed the following:

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) — received cash donations from private groups and individuals which were used for well

digging, irrigation projects, and other drought-related programs, for a total of \$129,345

Church World Service (CWS) — CWS purchased in the United States 681 metric tons of wheat costing approximately \$60,000. Material aid to the drought victims valued at \$1,875,119 was also provided for a total of\$1,935,119

Lutheran World Relief (LWR) — LWR purchased 454.5 MT of wheat at a cost of \$40,000

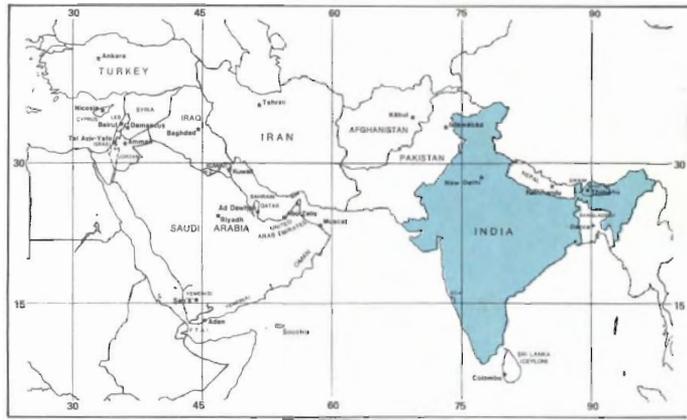
Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) — MCC provided funds for food-for-work projects in Bihar in the amount of \$10,000.

Total value of assistance reported from U.S. Voluntary Agencies \$2,114,464

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

The following Red Cross Societies made cash and in-kind contributions for a value of:

Australia	\$	150
Canada		991
Iran		63,507
Ireland		391
U.S.S.R.		675,048
TOTAL		\$740,087



INDIA