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“Locked in Growth Patterns: Rethinking land, water and disasters for the
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Natural Resource Management and Livelihood Strategies in Drought
Prone Area of Maharashtra

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Abstract

Area with scarcity and seasonal variability of rainfall are also the regions of chronic
droughts. Due to lesser water availability, these drought prone areas are marginal ecosystem
with its specific characteristics of semi-arid environment. The marginal ecosystem of semi-
arid regions in Maharashtra demonstrate a tendency of excessive use of ground water and
unsustainable use of other natural resources in order to meet the growing demands. It has
caus[ed the irreversible depletion of natural resources such as ground water, vegetation, soil
and bio-diversity. The uncontrolled use of resources for agriculture and domestic purposes
affects the commons such as pasture land, sacred grooves, and other natural vegetation. As a
considerable proportion of agrarian community rely on these common resources for their
livelihoods, ground water depletion affects the livelihood too. The traditional resilience
strategies on drought prone area are based on the concept of sustainable use of scarce
resources.

The present study is based on the primary data collected using ethnographic methods
such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA), focused group discussion, and historical resource
mapping. The sustainable livelihood framework has been used to analyze the role of ground
water for livelihood sources. Based on the results this study suggests a holistic approached
based on the results of traditional knowledge systems superimposed on technological
adaptations along with change in livelihood options. The resource intensive agriculture policies are needed to be redesigned based on the combination of traditional strategies and suitable technical adaptations.