

Locust Invasion in Sindh
Rapid & Rudimentary Analysis and
Farmer Perspective

By

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Historical background

- Sindh province; a land of multi-cultural colors and values. 47.89 Million people
- Predominantly agro based livelihoods and economy
- 70 percent population depends on agriculture
- In past locust caused wide spread damage to crops during 1960s, 1950s.
- Last locust was seen during 1993/1997

General Behavior of Locust in Sindh

- During June 2019 onwards it has been transitory, on its way in most of western parts of Sindh province and did not cause wide spread damage
- But wherever it landed it wiped out the crops and all kind of greenery which came in its way
- The general perception that the locust would not withstand extremely hot season of Sindh also proved hallow as swarms of locust continued to however and cause harm in different agro-zones of Sindh province during extremely hot season

Agro-zones and Areas Under Locust Attack

There are 3 main Agro-zones in Sindh:

1 Rice/wheat **zone** of the right bank of river Indus in lower **Sindh**

2. cotton/wheat zone of the left bank of river Indus

3 rice/wheat/sugarcane **zone** of lower **Sindh**

- Topographic zones are mountainous/spate area , desert riverine area and coastal area
- Almost all zones witnessed locust attack. though the intensity of damage has been different in these areas
- The damage was less in those areas where corps have been harvested or hoppers were on their way to other area

Crop Damages in Sindh During 2019 and 2020

- Government & FAO estimate approx. 25 % loss to crops, trees, orchards and other greenery in Sindh
- Millet and Mooth Bean, chilies & different kinds of vegetables, grass including Jantar/Sesbania, trees, cotton, sorghum and other crops got damaged
- According to RDF rapid inquiry in 11 districts in Sindh 74 villages reported damage to their crops, trees orchards, grass, vegetables etc

“The locusts and their eggs have now covered 50,000 square kilometers of farmland. We are expecting them to infest more than 5m hectares”. Provincial Agriculture Minister Mr. Ismail Raho.

Government, Farmer and NGOs Response

Governments response:

- According to Chief Minister of Sindh province 62,813 acres out of total 411927.142 (**hardly 15%**) were sprayed in 22 out of total 29 districts in the province.
- **Farmers Response:** farmers used different noise making methods i.e. beating tin boxes, pans, pots, clapping's, shouting, honking vehicles horns etc to drive out the locust
- Some big landlords used tractors to sprayed their large standing crops from their own resource
- **NGOs response:** NGOs raised the issue at media and on different forums
- Disseminated information on precautionary measures
- RDF conducted rapid assessment in 11 districts. Coordination with Government Authorities.

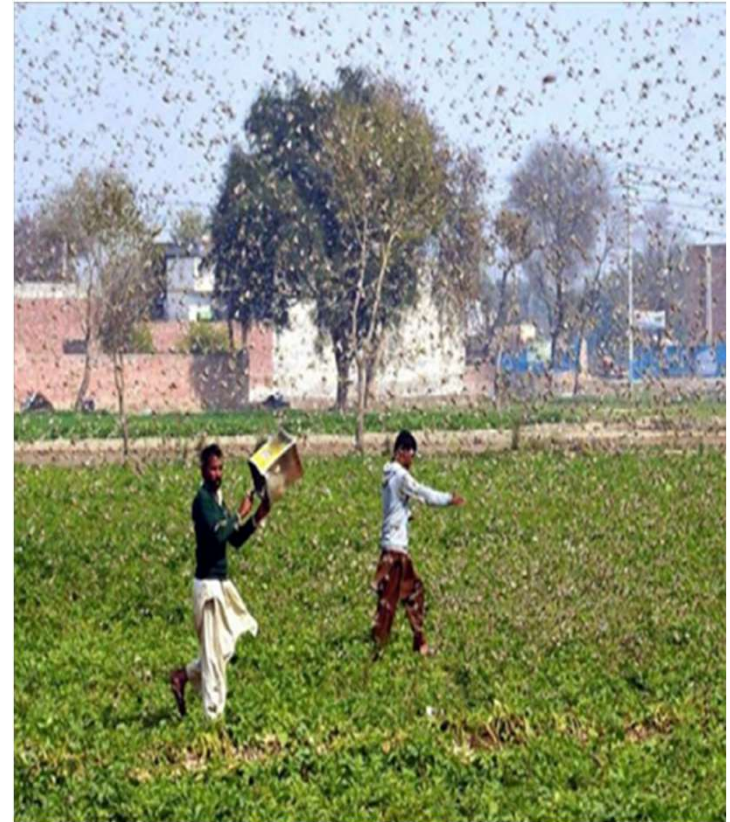
Locust situation in spate irrigation project area

- Total 6 locust attacks have been observed
- According to agriculture extension department locust caused 1 percent loss to grass, vegetables, Farmers said that loss to crops was 5 to 8%
- In spate project area main crops were harvested before locust attack, so the loss was less
- IEC Material by NGOs and Agriculture department
- RDF disseminated messages through whatsApp, SMS to farmer organizations, formed under RVO's Spate Project
- These community noise making measures succeeded before landing of the locust or when the locust were in small number spread in small area

“If large locust influx attack again, our corps may not survive; a says spate farmers”

Way Forward; A Farmers Perspective

- It threatens food security, majority of farmers opine.
- Farmers reiterate for Aerial spray, that is an effective solution to avert the impending threat.
- Majority of farmers were unsatisfied with government measure; as the coverage is very little/negligible.
- Farmers' indigenous coping mechanism of noise making is not much effective, but somehow reduces the risk temporarily. It is laborious too.
- It is playing havoc with the agriculture since June 2019 coupled with covid-19 situation, needs immediate attention of the international donor community and the Government.
- The expert fear successive attacks of flocks throughout 2020 and beyond.
- This situation warrants large scale coordination, information sharing application of best practices from other countries, training of stakeholders and joining hands by different stakeholders to ward off the future situation
- Relief to small farmers, particularly of the stressed environments like the spate.



Thanks

