



Perceptions, on drought impact amongst land reform beneficiaries in Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

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Abstract

Land Reform beneficiaries are faced with various trade-offs and constraints as drought exposes them to greater risk and renders some of their current practices unworkable. This study assessed the land reform beneficiary's perceptions, responses and views on the local impact of drought in three drought prone district of the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

By making use of the participatory learning action research method, beneficiaries were able to articulate a consistent story regarding how the impact of drought has affect their livelihoods and how local climate has changed compelling most of them to implement a variety of coping strategies in order to withstand the impact of drought.

The study revealed a multiplicity of stressors that confront the beneficiaries, with climate variability especially in terms of rainfall, water shortages, lack of government support being the most critical consequently exacerbating livelihood insecurity.

Drought and Its Impact

- South Africa has long been recognized as a country subjected to recurring droughts of varying spatial and temporal dimensions. These droughts date back from 1964, 1980, 1981, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1995, 2004 (Vogel, 1995). More recently the 2015 drought disaster was the worst in history brought about devastating impacts on South African Agriculture, the local drought policy under scrutiny and revealed significant weaknesses in the government's ability to respond timeously and effectively (Agri Sa 2016).

Drought status in South Africa



Andries Visser

Phillip Manoto

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Methodology

Participatory Learning Approach(PLA)

- (PLA) techniques are part of a family of participatory methodologies which have evolved as a set of approaches, methods, behaviours and relationships for investigating local context and life (Thomas, S. 2003). They aim to empower local people by giving them opportunities to express and enhance their knowledge and take action (Thomas, S 2003).



Respondent of the study

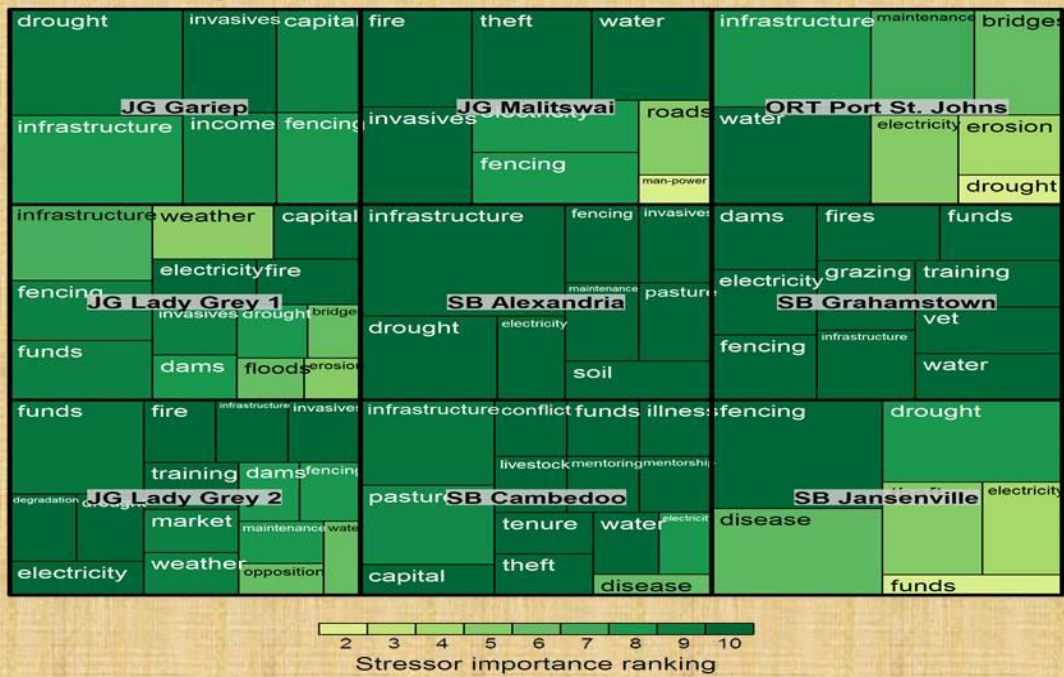


Land reform beneficiaries

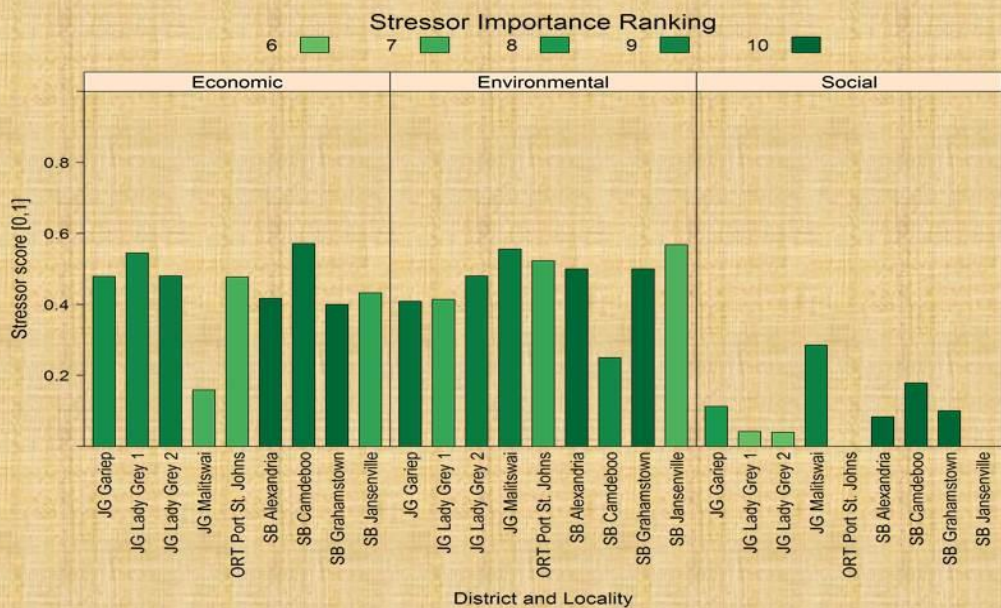
Means those persons (or their descendants) who were excluded from South Africa's formal agricultural economy on the basis of their skin colour, acquired land through the PLAS grant and are engaged in farming on a larger scale to sell crops and livestock on the market through the support and assistance of the recapitalisation and development programme from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR 2013).



Treemap of concise stressors



Barchart of stressor category



Conclusions

The empirical results reveal drought as being amongst a multiplicity of stressors confronting the beneficiaries, with the following challenges attributed to low agricultural performance:

- Their livelihoods are vulnerable to drought & its impact
- Water shortages.
- Poor coping mechanisms during dry spells.
- No access to credit, insurance etc.
- No access to feed supplementation during drought periods.
- No Financial backing from government for re-stocking in cases where drought disasters have led to losses.

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