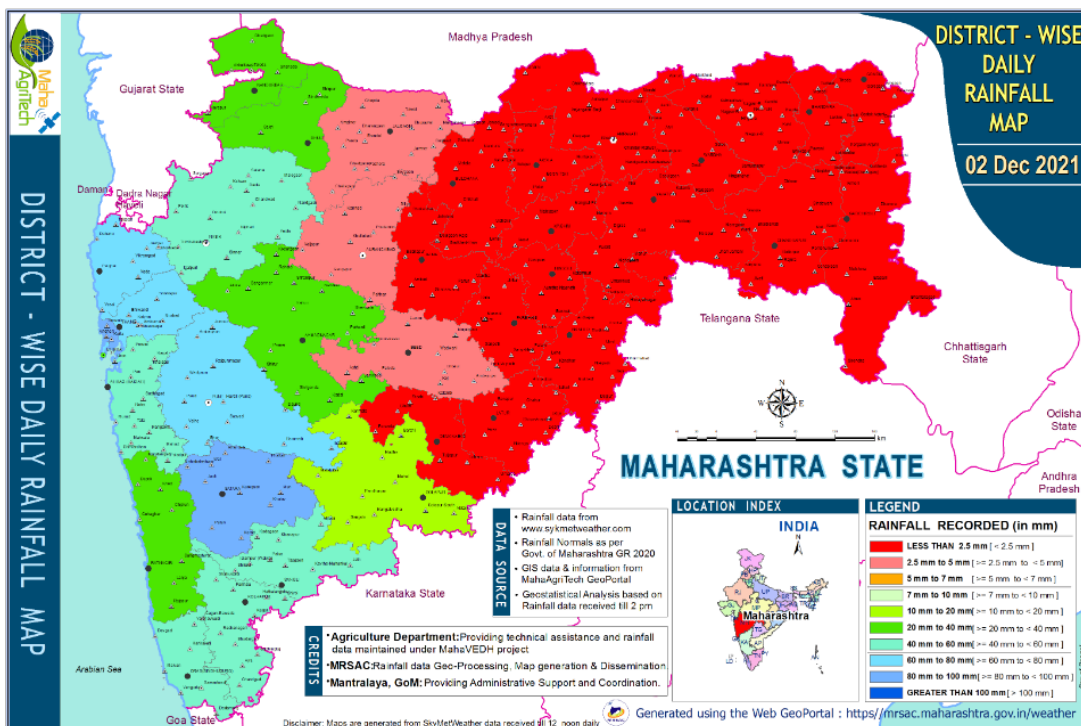


General case study

First hand assessment of the impact of extreme weather on migratory shepherds in India

LEGS recommends that agencies undertake qualitative, participatory data collection processes during initial assessments in an emergency. The active participation of affected communities is critical for designing effective responses. The initial assessment checklists (see LEGS Handbook Third Edition) identify some of the questions that local responders can use to determine the impact of the emergency and prepare their analysis of the situation. Whilst this case study did not specifically use LEGS guidance, it illustrates how the NGO Anthra was able to collate first hand data and put forward community generated solutions following rapid-onset flooding in India.

On 1st Dec 2021, North and West India experienced unusual weather and unprecedented rainfall. It rained heavily for 24 hours and standing crops were flattened. Migratory shepherds, whose livestock were grazing on cotton fields following the harvest, were caught unawares. Besides losing personal belongings including mobile phones and food supplies, many could not save their animals which perished during the night in the unrelenting rain. Many animals got bogged down in the black sticky soils that rapidly became clay, and were unable to be rescued.



Map of districts in Maharashtra showing rainfall in the 24-hour period between 1 & 2nd Dec 2021

After seeing the newspaper reports of the losses, Anthra, an NGO based in India, undertook a fact-finding mission – visiting five villages in the districts of Ahmednagar, Pune, Raigad and Satara – to meet shepherds with both large and small flocks to understand the situation. The villages were selected based on reports of high rainfall and sheep mortality.

Participatory key informant interviews with a sample of the shepherds provided information on the:

- Type of emergency – e.g. whilst this rainfall event was unseasonal and unexpected, unexpected weather events like this are becoming the norm.
- Impact of the emergency – e.g. information that was collected showed that: the livestock mortality rate ranged from 5-25% depending on the district; diseases were prevalent, weak animals suffered more, and shepherds reported high costs of veterinary medicines; and, the most affected sheep were those that had already been shorn.
- Capacity to respond – e.g. whilst camping on the fields to graze crop residues, no shelter was available for either shepherds or their animals; the loss of their mobiles made it more difficult to seek assistance during the event.
- National support system – in some circumstances the Government of India provides compensation payments for losses due to natural calamities. The authorities promised to compensate shepherds for their losses, but the paper work involved is cumbersome, and many shepherds cannot read/write to fill in the compensation forms. As yet many of the shepherds who lost their sheep have not been able to receive compensation.

A set of recommendations were generated, based on the inputs from the shepherds, that included:

- Establish an early warning system that links met offices, livestock departments and local agencies, who would then provide an automated early warning to mobiles to alert shepherds and other livestock keepers of extreme weather;
- Make available more widespread preventative animal healthcare, helplines and timely veterinary support following emergencies;
- Provide community livestock shelters and health facilities on migration routes;
- Give support for completing compensation claims and a uniform system for all districts;
- Training for local government staff on climate emergencies and a climate-resilient livestock cell in the Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Department;
- Develop an appropriate insurance model for migratory communities with small ruminants.

Anthra prepared a report based on their participatory information collection, and presented it to the Animal Husbandry Department and the Minister of Livestock of the State. A short documentary video (A Request by the Shepherds) was also made for sharing with other groups. It includes footage taken by the shepherds themselves of the extreme weather's impact on their herds.

Sources: Fact-finding report by Ashwini Labde, Anthra, January 2022, See also: anthra.org/news/shepherds-request

LEGS case studies demonstrate good practice in livestock emergency response. They cover the six LEGS Technical Intervention areas, the eight LEGS Principles as well as the broader contexts covered in the third edition of the LEGS handbook. **Process case studies** illustrate the application of LEGS guidance and **impact case studies** reflect on the outcomes of LEGS interventions.

- ▶ You can access all of the LEGS case studies at livestock-emergency.net/resources/case-studies
- ▶ For more information see the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards Handbook at livestock-emergency.net

