

Exploring Water Risk Perceptions: An Anthropological Study of Farmers in Mali and Swami Ki D̥hāṇī of Indrapura Village, Rajasthan

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Abstract

In recent times, water has become an established field of inquiry within anthropology and a growing number of anthropologists are employing their insights into developing sustainable forms of existence to maintain a balance between communities and their respective environments. In India, Rajasthan is one of the most water-stressed states in terms of rainfall and per capita water availability. However, the state has a large population dependent on agriculture and its related activities that require an enormous amount of water. The paper presents an anthropological understanding of the perception of local farmers regarding the water associated risks and the socio-cultural implications of such risk perception in the context of Mali and Swami ki D̥hāṇī of Indrapura village, Jhunjhunu district of Rajasthan. The study follows a constructive approach, which maintains that meanings of water risk are shaped by actor's environmental conditioning along with the social context one is faced with, which includes the area inhabited and socio-cultural practices adopted. The study indicates that farmers of the Mali and Swami ki D̥hāṇī perceive water scarcity as a significant risk which is followed by the risk of fluoride contamination of groundwater resources. The adoption of various adaptive strategies to cope with risk associated with water in the Mali and Swami ki D̥hāṇī has been influenced by the perception of farmers which in turn is shaped by compelling socio-cultural factors. In fine, the study highlights the importance of local perception in designing local adaptive strategies.

Keywords: Farmer's perception; Water risk; Indicators of water risk; Perception of water scarcity; Socio-cultural implications; Community's perception.