Prolonged Droughts and Sexual Violence Against Women

Prelims: Current events of National and International Importance | Social development

Why in News?

A new study published in PLOS Global Public Health highlights that prolonged droughts in low- and middle-income countries are linked to increased risks of sexual violence against women.

Key Findings

- Prolonged droughts (lasting 8–43 months in a 4-year period) linked to increased risk of sexual violence against women and teenage girls.
- Even very dry periods, without being extreme, increase vulnerability to sexual violence.
- The first population-level study showing direct correlation between environmental stress and sexual violence risk outside intimate relationships.

Impact on Rural Communities

- Rural women and girls in **low- and middle-income countries** most affected.
- Droughts reduce resources and livelihood options, forcing women to:
  - Walking long distances for water.
  - Migrate to unfamiliar regions.
  - Face pressure for **early marriage** to reduce household burdens.

Water Insecurity as a Form of Violence

- Women in Indonesia and Peru described the extreme burden of fetching water during droughts as a form of violence.
- Water insecurity linked to adverse sexual and reproductive health outcomes.
- Previous studies showed extreme weather events like storms, landslides, and floods increase domestic and intimate partner violence.

Reference

The Hindu| Prolonged Droughts and Sexual Violence Against Women

