

Press Release

Press Statement on review of preparedness on drought and progress of Centrally Sponsored Schemes by Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India on 04.07.2023 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu

A special meeting was held under the co-chairpersonship of Shri.Ashish Kumar Srivatsava, IFS, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India and Shri. C.Samayamoorthy, IAS, Agricultural Production Commissioner and Secretary to Government, Agriculture-Farmers Welfare Department, Tamil Nadu at the O/o Commissioner of Agriculture, Chepauk, Chennai to review the status of drought preparedness of Tamil Nadu and implementation of all Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

The Agriculture Production Commissioner and Secretary to Government, Agriculture – Farmers Welfare Department in his initial address thanked the Joint Secretary for reviewing the drought preparedness and implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes as the issues can be shared and remedial measures can be immediately taken with support of Government of India. Dr.L.Subramanian, Commissioner of Agriculture made a detailed presentation on the rainfall distribution, water storage in all reservoirs, crop coverage, steps taken by the Government of Tamil Nadu to mitigate drought and status of preparation of Contingency Plan. It was informed that South West monsoon is deficient in 10 districts. The APC and Secretary expressed his concern about the unseasonal rainfall happening in the State in the last few years affecting the harvests of crops. He also informed about the emphasis being given to over exploited and critical firkas for installation of Micro Irrigation system to improve the ground water status. Agro Forestry is given focus under Green Tamil Nadu Mission wherein forest tree seedlings are given free of cost.

It was informed that APC and Secretary has already held two preliminary meetings for drafting the drought mitigation plan and accordingly 23 sensitive districts vulnerable to drought have been identified with 116 blocks. Adoption of various strategies like cultivation of less water intensive crops, positioning of seeds, fertilizers, integration of rainfall data collected from 608 standard rain gauges and 257 Automatic Weather Stations established by different agencies,

adoption of drought management cultivation practices like community nursery and direct seeding, construction of water harvesting structures to store rain water, establishment of cattle shelters and availability of green fodder and dry fodder were explained in detail. It was also informed that Drought Monitoring cells have been formed at State and District level. Shri. Raman, IAS, Director, Tamil Nadu Disaster Risk Reduction Agency remarked that though it is too early to predict drought, the State is closely watching the status of indicators as per the Manual for Drought Management.

The Joint Secretary, Government of India remarked that the Government of India is very keen to know the status of States' preparedness for drought situations if monsoon fails and coordination among different agencies. Further, he instructed to put in place a specific monitoring mechanism both at State and district levels particularly in the sensitive districts. Though Indian Meteorological Department has predicted normal rainfall during South West monsoon for the current year, Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has taken an initiative to check the preparedness of States through all its senior officials. The JS, after getting the inputs from the district officials, expressed his satisfaction about the State's preparedness for drought.

The Joint Secretary advised that all Centrally Sponsored Schemes should be implemented in time for the welfare of farmers for which the release of fund should not be a problem. In this regard, the APC and Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu informed that expeditious steps have been taken by the State Government to complete the physical activities and to utilise the funds by adopting all the stipulated norms.

The Joint Secretary appreciated Tamil Nadu for being first in the country in the preparation of consolidated Annual Action Plan well in advance and getting the funds released for the year 2023-24 and also the launching of new portal called Tamil Mann Valam for the welfare of farming community. He remarked that it will act as model to the entire country. Finally, he cautioned the State officials to be on toes to tackle the drought situation if it arises and also to implement centrally sponsored schemes at the earliest.

The Agriculture Production Commissioner and Secretary to Government Shri.C. Samayamoorthy, IAS, Commissioner of Agriculture Dr. L.Subramanian, IAS,Dr.Natarajan IAS., Director of Agricultural Marketing and Agri-Business Shri.Anbazhagan, IAS, Executive Director, Tamil Nadu Watershed Development Agency, Dr.Brindha Devi, IAS, Director of Horticulture and Plantation Crops, Smt. Shreya Singh, IAS, Additional Director (Personnel Management), Chief engineers of Agricultural Engineering Department and officials from state and district offices participated in this discussion on drought preparedness and implementation of Centrally Sponsored schemes.

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