

## **PRESS RELEASE**

The detailed Memorandum on the Drought situation in Tamil Nadu was handed over in the Hon'ble Prime Minister's Office by State Relief Commissioner and Commissioner of Revenue Administration Dr. K. Satyagopal, I.A.S., and Secretary to Government, Revenue Department Dr. B. Chandra Mohan, I.A.S., on 16.1.2017 along with a letter from the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru O.Panneerselvam** addressed to the Hon'ble Prime Minister **Shri. Narendra Modi** seeking assistance from National Disaster Response Fund. The text of the letter is extracted below. A copy of the memorandum was also handed over to Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture to Government of India Shri. S.K. Pattanayak, I.A.S.

"I write enclosing a copy of the Government of Tamil Nadu's detailed Memorandum seeking assistance from the National Disaster Response Fund and from other Central funds towards the cost of relief and rehabilitation measures for the prevailing drought situation in the State.

As you are aware, Tamil Nadu relies primarily on the North-East monsoon in the months of October to December for its water needs. The onset of the North-East Monsoon, 2016, was considerably delayed and it set in only on 30.10.2016 in the State. Even though the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast a normal rainfall during the season, there has been very little rainfall in the State. The State received only 168.3 mm of rainfall during North-East monsoon as against the normal rainfall of 440.4 mm - a deficit of 62%. Earlier even in the South-West monsoon a deficit of 20% was recorded.

IMD predicted formation of two cyclonic storms Nada and Vardah during first and second weeks of December, which were expected to bring wide spread rain. However, while NADA ended in a whimper, VARDAH was a wind storm which left behind a trail of extreme destruction in 3 Districts. Unfortunately, the rainfall was much below predicted levels. All the 32 Districts have received rainfall that has been scanty or deficient and the range is from 35% to 81%.

The drought situation in Tamil Nadu has been exacerbated by the non-release of water by Karnataka in accordance with the Final Order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal. As against the total quantum of 179 TMC feet of water which was to be released by Karnataka during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2016, Karnataka released only 66.5 TMC feet of water, leaving a huge shortfall of 112.5 TMC feet. As a result, the storage in Mettur Dam, the main reservoir which serves the Cauvery Delta, was grossly insufficient to save even a single paddy crop in the Cauvery Basin of Tamil Nadu.

I reviewed the situation on 3.1.2017 and ordered a detailed assessment of the drought condition based on the guidelines contained in the Manual for Drought Management, 2016. Since the mandatory and impact indicators fulfilled the criteria prescribed, I ordered the officials to carry out the ground truthing exercise. I also constituted District Level Committees with Hon'ble Ministers and Senior IAS officers to supervise the ground truthing exercise and to submit a report with specific recommendations to the Government after assessing the field situation in the Districts. The District Level Committees conducted field inspections in the Districts concerned and submitted their reports on 9.1.2017. Out of 16,682 Revenue villages in the State, 13,305 villages have been identified as Drought affected. Ground truthing exercise was carried out in 1,564 villages. The ground truthing exercise revealed that in 87% of the area, the extent of damage is estimated to be more than 50% indicating that the drought is 'severe' in a large majority of villages. The situation is likely to worsen in the ensuing months as the North-East monsoon has come to an end and further rains are not part of the normal pattern.

Taking into consideration the prevailing situation in the State and after satisfying the criterion in the revised Manual for Drought Management 2016, the State has been declared as drought affected on 10.1.2017.

Due to the failure of the South West and North-East monsoons in the year 2016-17, the water storage position in all the water bodies is at a critical level. As against the total storage capacity of 198.384 TMC ft. in 15 major irrigation reservoirs in the State, the water available as on 31.12.2016 is only 25.742 TMC ft. (ie.) 13% as against a storage of

126.233 TMC ft. (64%) on the same day in 2015. The combined storage in the 4 drinking water reservoirs which cater to the drinking water needs of Chennai City is only 1.966 TMC ft. as on 31.12.2016 as compared to 10.339 TMC ft. at the same time in 2015.

The Government has to provide relief to the farmers for the damages caused to the crops due to the failure of the monsoon and to ensure drinking water supply through various temporary measures which have to be undertaken up to tackle the water scarcity across the State. Moreover, adequate fodder availability needs to be maintained to protect cattle and the small ruminant population. Employment generation programmes have to be taken up on a war footing to ensure that the livelihood of agricultural labourers is protected. For the above purposes, I request that a sum of Rs. 39,565/- crores may be sanctioned from the National Disasters Response Fund.

In view of the urgency, I request you to kindly depute a team from the Government of India to study the extensive damages caused to agriculture crops and to take stock of the drinking water scarcity in the State.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the State experienced heavy floods in 2015 and in December, 2016, heavy damages were inflicted by cyclone "VARDAH". Hence, the funds available with the State Government in the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) is not sufficient to meet the situation. The State is in urgent need of assistance from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) so as to take up immediate relief and rehabilitation measures in the State.

Hence, I request you to urgently sanction the release of an "on account" payment of Rs.1,000 crores from the NDRF to the Government of Tamil Nadu to enable taking up immediate relief and rehabilitation measures to mitigate the drought situation".

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