

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2649
ANSWERED ON:09.08.2000
PRIOR INDICATION OF DROUGHT IGNORED BY THE GOVERNMENT
JITENDRA PRASADA

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether according to National Remote Sensing Agency despite clear indications including satellite images, that pockets of the country could face a severe drought this year, the signals appear to have gone unheeded by the Government;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the images blamed by the Indian satellites had shown a serious decline in vegetation in almost two thirds of Rajasthan and areas of Gujarat as early as last year;
- (d) if so, the reasons as to why these signals were ignored and no measure taken to meet the situation;
- (e) whether as per preliminary observations by scientists indicate that the current drought could be worse than the previous one faced in 1987; and
- (f) if so, whether the Government had made any contingency plan to meet the crisis?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SBPBK SATYANARAYANA RAO)

(a) to (d): The National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) of the Department of Space had been reportedly regularly monitoring the agricultural drought conditions prevailing in 11 States namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, using the satellite remote sensing data, during kharif season and sending the reports to the State Governments concerned for necessary action. According to the Department of Space, the Normalised Difference Vegetation Indices (NDVI) data generated from satellite images indicated reduced vegetation condition in almost two thirds of Rajasthan and areas of Gujarat.

Drought is a creeping phenomena. The State Governments initiated necessary steps to manage the situation. Central Teams were also sent to Rajasthan, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh. In addition to release Central share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF), assistance from the National Fund for Calamity Relief (NFCR) in the wake of drought was released to them. The Central Government also took measures like free transportation of water and fodder to the drought affected areas in these States and supply of foodgrains at Below Poverty Line (BPL) rates. The situation was effectively managed during the peak period due to the various measures taken by the Central and State Governments.

(e)&(f): NRSA did not undertake any comparative study with the drought conditions prevailing during 1987.