

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
(2003)**

THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA

DROUGHT SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

(Department of Agriculture and Co-operation)

FORTY FIFTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2003/Agrahayana, 1925 (Saka)

<CONTENTS>

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION

PART I

CHAPTER I	Introductory
CHAPTER II	Monsoon Pattern
CHAPTER III	States Affected by Drought
CHAPTER IV	Central Assistance for Drought Affected Areas

CHAPTER V	Food for work programme
CHAPTER VI	Shortage of Drinking water and fodder
CHAPTER VII	Monitoring of Relief measures
CHAPTER – VIII	Long Term measures in Drought

PART II

Recommendations/Observations

APPENDIX I	Minutes of the 4 th Sitting of the Committee held on 25.2.2003
APPENDIX II	Minutes of the 16 th Sitting of the Committee held on 17.06.2003
APPENDIX III	Minutes of the 20 th Sitting of Committee held on 20.10.2003

COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (2003)

Shri S.S. Palanimanickam – Chairman

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Daud Ahmad
3. Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel
- *4. Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava
5. Shri Bhan Singh Bhaura
6. Shri Ambati Brahmaniah
7. Shri Ram Tahal Chaudhari
8. Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan
9. Shri Adhir Chowdhary
10. Shri Thawar Chand Gehlot
11. Shri Raghunath Jha
12. Shri Abul Hasnat Khan
- +13. Dr. C. Krishnan
14. Shri M. Master Mathan
15. Shri Tarachand Shivaji Patel
16. Shri Bhaskar Rao Patil
17. Shri Jaisingrao Gaikwad Patil
18. Smt. Rama Pilot
19. Ms. Prabha Rau
20. Shri N.R.K. Reddy
21. Shri Chandra Bhushan Singh
22. Shri Lakshman Singh
23. Shri Ramjiwan Singh
24. Shri Rampal Singh
25. Shri Tejveer Singh
26. Shri Punjaji Sadaji Thakor
27. Shri Tarlochan Singh Tur
28. Shri Chintaman Wanaga
29. Shri Bhal Chandra Yadav
30. Shri Mahboob Zahedi

RAJYA SABHA

31. Dr. A.R. Kidwai
32. Shri Oscar Fernandes
33. Smt. Jamana Devi Barupal
34. Prof. R.B. S. Varma
35. Dr. A.K. Patel
36. Shri Sudarshan Akarapu
37. Dr. Swami Sakshi Ji Maharaj
38. Shri R. Kamaraj
39. Prof. M. Sankaralingam

- 40. Shri Gandhi Azad
- 41. Shri Datta Meghe
- 42. Shri R.S. Gavai
- 43. Shri Rao Man Singh
- 44. Shri Sukhbir Singh
- 45. Shri H.K. Javare Gowda

- * Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava nominated to the Committee w.e.f. 07.04.2003.
- + Dr. C. Krishnan nominated to the Committee w.e.f. 06.05.2003.

SECRETARIAT

1.	Shri P.D.T.Achary	-	Additional Secretary
2.	Shri S.K.Sharma	-	Joint Secretary
3.	Shri A.S.Chera	-	Deputy Secretary
4.	Smt. Anita Jain	-	Under Secretary
5.	Ms. Amita Walia	-	Executive Officer

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Standing Committee on Agriculture having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Forty-Fifth Report on 'Drought situation in the country' relating to Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture & Cooperation.

2. The Committee took oral evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture

(Department of Agriculture & Cooperation), Ministry of Rural Development, India Meteorological Department and Department of Food & Public Distribution on 25th February, 2003 and 17th June, 2003 for in depth examination of the subject.

3. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation for placing before them material and information in connection with the examination of the subject and the representatives of various Ministries/Departments who appeared for oral evidence.

4. The Report was considered and adopted by the Standing Committee on Agriculture on 20th October, 2003.

New Delhi;
December , 2003
Agrahayana, 1925 (Saka)

S.S.Palanimanickam
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Agriculture

PART – I
CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTORY

1.1 Indian Agriculture has a heavy dependence on the Monsoon. Crop production is extremely sensitive to rainfall received during the monsoon season. Since agriculture constitutes 27% of the country's GDP and 70% of the country's population is living in rural areas and their livelihood is mainly dependent on Agriculture, any deviation in the monsoon has a cascading effect on the economy of the country.

1.2 Among the natural calamities, drought is a protracted natural aberration. Operational definitions of drought specify the degree of departure from the average of precipitation or climatic variable over some time period. Broadly droughts can be of three kinds:-

(i). **Meteorological drought:-** Meteorological drought is defined usually on the basis of the degree of dryness (in comparison to some "normal" or average amount) and the duration of the dry period. This happens when the actual rainfall in an area is significantly less than the climatologically mean of that area. The country as a whole may have a normal monsoon, but different meteorological districts and sub-divisions can have below normal rainfall. The rainfall categories for smaller areas are defined by their deviation from a meteorological area's normal rainfall –

Excess: 20 per cent or more above normal

Normal: 19 per cent above normal - 19 per cent below normal

Deficient: 20 per cent below normal - 59 per cent below normal

Scanty: 60 per cent or more below normal

(ii). **Hydrological drought:** Hydrological drought is associated with the effects of periods of precipitation (including snowfall) shortfalls on surface or subsurface water supply (i.e., stream flow, reservoir and lake levels, ground water). The frequency and severity of hydrological drought is often defined on a watershed or river basin scale. It takes longer for precipitation deficiencies to show up in components of the hydrological system such as soil moisture, stream flow, and ground water and reservoir levels

(iii). **Agricultural drought:** Agricultural drought links various characteristics of meteorological (or hydrological) drought to agricultural impacts, focusing on precipitation shortages, differences between actual and potential evapotranspiration, soil water deficits, reduced ground water or reservoir levels, and so forth.

1.3 The problems associated with drought is a recurring feature in India. There are evidences of continuous terrible famine for 12 years during 310-298 BC during the Empire of Chandra Gupta Maurya. During a severe drought in 1917-18, the river Jhelum dried up completely in Kashmir. The drought of 2002-2003 arose following an unprecedented failure of rains during the South-West Monsoon in 2002, particularly in July 2002, when the country as a whole was 19% deficit in rainfall, making that month as the driest ever July in the annals of Indian Meteorological records.

1.4 The following Table gives rainfall deviation from normal vis-à-vis Kharif and Rabi foodgrains.

Year	Rainfall Deviation from normal	Kharif production (million Tonnes) Foodgrains	Rabi (million Tonnes) Foodgrains
1987	-21%	74.6	
1991	-9%	99.44	76.95
1992	-7%	101.47	76.79
1993	0%	100.40	78.01
1994	+10%	101.07	83.86
1995	0%	95.12	90.43
1996	+3%	103.92	95.52
1997	+2%	101.58	90.68
1998	+6%	102.91	100.70
1999	-4%	105.51	104.29
2000	-8%	104.60	94.83
2001	-8%	111.55	100.47
2002	-19%	90.26	

1.5 From the above, it is clear that moderate deviations in rainfall have very little impact on agricultural production. For instance, in 1994 and 1997, the Kharif production figures were almost equal despite the former year having a very substantial surplus. Similarly, in 1999, the production (Kharif foodgrains) was as high as 105.51 million tonnes despite the significant rainfall differential of 10% with reference to 1998. It is only in years of very significant deficits as for instance 1987 and 2002 that the failure of monsoon takes substantial toll of agricultural production.

1.6 As regards its effect on the overall economy of the country, the widespread drought in 2002 is estimated to have adversely affected agricultural production, which in turn has affected the overall GDP growth.

1.7 According to the Advance Estimates of National Income (1993-94=100), the GDP at factor cost for 2002-03 will be lower at 4.4% than the 5.6% growth in 2001-02 (Quick

Estimates). This reflects the negative growth in Agriculture, forestry and presents the data on GDP and prices during 1995-96-2002-03.

Year	Overall	Agriculture	Inflation
	GDP	GDP	Rate
	Growth	Growth	
1995-96	7.3	-1.2	8.0
1996-97	7.8	10.1	4.6
1997-98	4.8	-2.8	4.4
1998-99	6.5	6.9	5.9
1999-2000	6.1	1.0	3.3
2000-01	4.4	-1.8	7.2
2001-02	5.6	5.7	3.6
2002-03	4.4	-3.1*	4.9**

*Relates to agriculture and allied sectors
 **For the year ending January 31, 2003.

CHAPTER - II

MONSOON PATTERN

2.1 In India, there are two types of monsoons. (i). North-East Monsoon (October – December) and (ii) South-West Monsoon (June-September).

2.2 The Ministry of Agriculture informed that the rainfall during South-West Monsoon period (1.6.2002 to 30.9.2002) for the country as a whole was 736.9 mm against the normal rainfall of 912.5mm, with a deviation of (-19%). The rainfall deficit during this period in the affected States was Andhra Pradesh (-25%), Chhattisgarh (-16%), Haryana (-38%), Himachal Pradesh (-20%), Karnataka (-37%), Kerala (-35%), Madhya Pradesh (-18%) Maharashtra (-12%), Orissa (-19%), Punjab (-36%), Rajasthan (-64%), Tamil Nadu (-45%), Uttaranchal (-2%) and Uttar Pradesh (-23%).

2.3 The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has acknowledged that the 2002 has been "the first-ever all-India drought year" since 1987, while noting that the behaviour of the 2002 monsoon was "intriguing".

2.4 The aggregate rainfall received by the country as a whole during that year's monsoon season from June 1 to 30 September, at 735.9 mm, was 19.35 per cent below the historical long period average (LPA) of 912.5 mm for this period. Further, 29 per cent of the area in the country recorded drought conditions, with rainfall deficiency (relative to LPA) exceeding 25 per cent. The country said to experience a drought year when the overall rainfall deficiency is more than 10 per cent of the LPA and more than 20 per cent of its area is affected by drought conditions. By this definition, "2002 becomes an all-India drought year", with rainfall deficiency for the

country as a whole amounting to 19 per cent and drought conditions impacting 29 per cent of its geographical area. Of the 29 per cent area affected by drought conditions, 10 per cent was under 'severe drought' and the remaining under 'moderate drought'.

2.5 The year 2002 was among the four major droughts of the century. The situation was mainly caused by the dry spell in the month of July, with the rainfall deficiency of 49 per cent during the month being "the worst in the history of recorded observations". Only on two previous occasions in the past (1911 and 1918) did rainfall deficiency exceed 45 per cent in the month of July.

2.6 During the course of evidence, the representatives of the Department of Agriculture & Co-operation informed that normally the month of July is the wettest month of the year, but July 2002 was the driest in past 100 years, when the country received 49% less than the average monthly rainfall. There was a rainfall deficiency in 56% of the area in the country and 21 out of 36 met-sub divisions received deficient/scanty rainfall.

2.7 Stating about the North-East Monsoon, the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture & Co-operation) informed that certain parts of the country, particularly Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and parts of Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh received significant precipitation through North-East Monsoon. During North-East Monsoon (1.10.2002 to 31.12.2002), the rainfall in the country as a whole was 82.5 mm against normal rainfall of 123.7mm, with a deviation of -33%. While most of the drought affected States do not receive significant rains during the North-East Monsoon, the rainfall during the period in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu was normal to excess. But certain districts in Tamil Nadu did receive deficit rainfall within this season.

2.8 Following is the list of sub-division of rainfall distribution for South-West Monsoon for the period 1998-2002.

Sub-divisional Rainfall Distribution For South West Monsoon
(JUNE – SEPTEMBER)

SNo	METEOROLOGICAL SUBDIVISIONS	1998		1999		2000		2001		2002	
		ACTUAL	% DEP								
1.	A & N ISLAND	1643	3%	1140	-29%	1101	-31%	1172	-25%	1194	-23%
2.	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	2708	33%	1930	-5%	1906	-3%	1402	-29%	1725	-24%
3.	ASSAM & MEGHALAYA									1724	-20%
4.	N M M T									1323	-4%
5.	SHWB & SIKKIM	2611	28%	2325	14%	1998	-1%	1724	-14%	2159	12%
6.	GANGETIC WEST BENGAL	954	-13%	1435	31%	1189	8%	1042	-4%	1214	5%
7.	ORISSA	882	-25%	1063	-10%	956	-19%	1445	23%	920	-19%
8.	JHARKHAND	1104	3%	1504	39%	1163	8%	1085	1%	1142	6%
9.	BIHAR	1139	14%	1208	20%	1142	14%	1011	1%	1004	0%
10.	EAST U.P	1018	13%	901	0%	949	6%	883	-2%	673	-24%
11.	WEST U.P	912	18%	767	-1%	759	-2%	605	-22%	609	-21%
12.	UTTARANCHAL	1409	9%	1315	2%	1594	23%	1157	-11%	1205	-4%
13.	HAR. CHD & DELHI	735	43%	387	-24%	437	-15%	479	-7%	321	-38%
14.	PUNJAB	621	25%	449	-11%	421	-16%	516	3%	364	-27%
15.	HIMACHAL PRADESH	841	-9%	852	-7%	789	-14%	770	-16%	737	-16%
16.	JAMMU & KASHMIR	408	15%	416	-8%	461	-2%	485	5%	410	23%
17.	WEST RAJASTHAN	287	2%	213	-24%	220	-21%	240	-14%	87	-71%
18.	EAST RAJASTHAN	602	-4%	547	-13%	437	-31%	511	-19%	260	-60%
19.	WEST MADHYA PRADESH	864	-6%	1007	9%	582	-37%	726	-21%	704	-22%
20.	EAST MADHYA PRADESH	834	-27%	1181	3%	816	-29%	1163	2%	950	-18%
21.	GUJARAT REGION	1272	20%	804	-24%	741	-30%	962	-9%	705	-26%
22.	SAURASHTRA & KUTCH	568	4%	229	-53%	304	-45%	501	-8%	401	-25%
23.	KONKAN & GOA	2896	3%	2608	-7%	2902	4%	2234	-20%	2289	-18%
24.	MADHYA MAHARASHTRA	890	20%	888	-10%	881	-8%	895	-7%	670	-13%
25.	MARATHWADA	950	37%	578	-5%	796	11%	626	-13%	652	-3%
26.	VIDARBHA	939	-4%	943	-3%	939	-4%	889	-9%	955	1%
27.	COASTAL ANDHRA PRADESH	784	29%	532	-13%	756	24%	565	-7%	436	-25%
28.	TELANGANA	882	13%	729	-6%	949	22%	691	-11%	602	-22%
29.	RAYALASEEMA	577	55%	323	-14%	548	46%	413	10%	259	-33%
30.	TAMILNADU & PONDICHERRY	337	10%	205	-36%	329	2%	271	-16%	172	-46%
31.	COASTAL KARNATAKA	3659	15%	3228	2%	2980	-6%	2988	-6%	2188	-30%
32.	N. I. KARNATAKA	667	41%	424	-10%	551	17%	401	-15%	329	-31%
33.	S. I. KARNATAKA	853	22%	638	-9%	856	22%	643	-8%	522	-44%
34.	KERALA	2207	2%	1607	-25%	1764	-18%	1869	-13%	1322	-33%
35.	LAKSHADWEEP	1242	32%	947	0%	805	-15%	842	-11%	537	-45%
36.	CHHATTISGARH									948	-18%

2.9 Following is the list of sub-division of rainfall distribution for North-East Monsoon for the period 1998-2002.

SUBDIVISIONAL RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION FOR NORTH-EAST MONSOON

(OCTOBER – DECEMBER)

2.10 Following is the rainfall position reported by IMD for the period from 01.06.2003 to 13.08.2003.

S. No.	State	Actual	Normal	% Dep	Category
1.	A&N Islands	701.2	947.0	-26%	D
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	1376.8	1309.9	5%	N
3.	Assam	1053.0	1016.6	4%	N
4.	Meghalaya	3750.8	2508.5	50%	E
5.	Nagaland	642.5	878.8	-38%	D
6.	Manipur	785.1	605.4	26%	E
7.	Mizoram	1153.7	853.7	35%	E
8.	Tripura	1257.5	1015.4	24%	E
9.	Sikkim	1473.6	1374.3	7%	N
10.	West Bengal	936.5	878.7	7%	N
11.	Orissa	711.5	714.2	%0	N
12.	Bihar	753.4	621.8	23%	E
13.	Jharkhand	587.8	670.4	-1%5	N
14.	Uttar Pradesh	529.5	503.3	5%	N
15.	Uttranchal	816.0	832.4	-2%	N
16.	Haryana	435.5	305.1	43%	E
17.	Chandigarh (UT)	535.1	552.1	-3%	N
18.	Delhi	707.3	420.6	68%	E
19.	Punjab	306.3	319.9	-4%	N
20.	Himachal Pradesh	604.2	606.1	0%	N
21.	Jammu & Kashmir	239.7	304.1	-21%	D
22.	Rajasthan	341.3	328.4	4%	N
23.	Madhya Pradesh	580.6	616.3	-6%	N
24.	Chhattisgarh	786.3	740.4	6%	N
25.	Gujarat	771.2	587.3	31%	E
26.	Daman (UT)	1685.0	1527.8	10%	N
27.	Diu (UT)		462.3	-	-
28.	Goa	2364.8	2228.4	6%	N
29.	Maharashtra	683.1	729.7	-6%	N
30.	Andhra Pradesh	426.3	334.8	27%	E
31.	Tamil Nadu	215.5	153.0	41%	E
32.	Pondicherry	264.8	150.9	75%	E
33.	Karnataka	536.4	623.9	-14%	N
34.	Kerala	1139.3	1645.5	-31%	D
35.	Lakshdweep (UT)	803.7	599.5	15%	N

D=Deficient N=Normal E=Excess.

Monsoon Forecast

2.11 On the query of the Committee regarding the forecasts made by India Meteorological Department, the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture & Co-operation) in a written reply stated as under:-

2.12 “India Meteorological Department (IMD) give their forecast for rainfall every year using 16 Regional and Global land-ocean atmosphere parameters which are physically related to the Indian Monsoon Rainfall. Giving their long-range forecast for 2002 South West monsoon season rainfall, IMD in their press release dated 25.5.2002 stated:

- (a). In 2002, the rainfall for the South-West monsoon season (June to September) for the country as a whole is likely to be normal, thus making the year 2002, the 14th normal monsoon year in succession. The normal is defined as rainfall within $\pm 10\%$ of its long period average.
- (b). Quantitatively, the rainfall over the country as a whole for the 2002 South-West monsoon season (June to September) is likely to be 101% of its long period average with an estimated model error $\pm 4\%$.
- (c). Over the broad homogeneous regions of India, the rainfall for the 2002 South-west monsoon season is likely to be 104% of its long period average (LPA) over North-West India, 99% of the LPA over the Peninsula and 100% of the LPA over North-east India with an estimated model error $\pm 8\%$ ”.

2.13 The Committee enquired during evidence as why the Meteorological Department was not in a position to predict accurately, the representatives of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) explaining about the problems stated:-

“The problem of predicting drought is also same as predicting rainfall per se. The history of last hundred and twenty-five years shows that the monsoon has never failed to come. But the problem is that each monsoon is different. The distribution is different in terms of space and time, the arrival time is different, the withdrawal time is different, there are long breaks, which are different. This particularly makes a problem in terms of the scales on which we predict.

There are three different scales of predictions. (i) Short-term or a Short-range (ii) Medium-range and (iii) Long-range.

The short-range consists of one to two days of prediction, which is done with the help of the satellite pictures, the charts and so on. We are equipped with our own satellite –Kalpana I – which has been launched last year, and another one is coming in April. So, short-term predictions are meant for the 48 hour zone only.

Medium-range predictions need computer modelling, which is also being done in this country.

But, long-range predictions depend very much on this different scale. We cannot predict long-range on the basis of physics. We basically use statistics and when we use statistics, there are always uncertainties. There is no statistical correlation that is 100 per cent. We have a model that is not 100 per cent. So some error is inevitable because statistical correlation is being used. Nevertheless, we predicted monsoons correctly for 14 years. We have said that the monsoons will be normal for the country as a whole and they were”.

2.14 He further clarified that “the main thing was that, there was no model anywhere in India or abroad which could predict this year’s drought. It was a rather unique drought and many

situations were there which were unprecedented, the Arabian Sea for the first time was grossly inactive. This is something that we could not anticipate. El Nino was very different this year. It was not that intense, but the nature was different, which could not be seen earlier”.

2.15 Informing about their efforts, the representative of India Meteorological Department (IMD) stated “We are constantly trying to upgrade our skills in monsoon predictions and this 16 parameters model depends on correlation and statistics. We have gone through the whole model and we have found that there are some correlations, which are weakening with time. So we have to remove them and substitute them with other parameters. We will come up with a model that has a better scientific foundation”

2.16 When asked whether our country is developed enough scientifically to predict exactly or whether it is impossible to predict it exactly, the representatives of IMD clarified:-

“If you want a long range prediction for a season as a whole, before the season begins, then we cannot do it for small areas. For example, we cannot say for Delhi or a small district, four months in advance. For such a case the time scale will be two days in advance. But for the country, as a whole, it is possible because the statistical nature of the problem permits us to work on a larger area. On farmers’ scale, long-range, that is scientifically not possible”.

2.17 About the mechanism of exchange of Meteorological information between China and India, he informed that there is a World Meteorological Organisation, which has its headquarters in Geneva. India is a member of it and the entire meteorological community is duty-bound to exchange data.

2.18 On the question of technical requirements and costs in developing improved models he stated that “We are going to need a lot of ocean data in the years to come because we are going

to develop Coupled Atmosphere Ocean models. We need more ships or more data buoys, getting this observation from the ocean is something that costs money; putting satellites in space costs money. We, in IMD, get the satellite pictures free, but the satellite costs a lot of money. So, these are the hidden costs for our forecasting, Moreover, to build a complicated model, technology advanced computers are needed”

CHAPTER - III

STATES AFFECTED BY DROUGHT

Declaration of Drought

3.1 The Central Government has no role to play in the declaration an area or State as drought affected. This matter rests with the State Governments concerned in accordance with the provisions of the Land Revenue Code/Land Revenue Rules/Scarcity Manuals, etc. While the details vary from State to State, the determination is either on the basis of crop cutting experiments or on ‘eye estimates’ in case of very severe droughts.

3.2 During 2002-2003, the following States declared Drought in various Districts/Tehsils/Mandals.

Details of Declaration of Drought by State Governments

S.No.	Name of the State	Details of Date of Declaration and No. of Districts/Tehsils/Mandals etc.		
1.	Andhra Pradesh	<u>01.08.2002</u> 836 Mandals (22 Districts)	<u>08.10.2002</u> 89 Mandals in 8 districts (925 Mandals in 22 Districts)	
2.	Chhattisgarh	<u>27.07.2002</u> All 98 Tehsils in 16 Districts		
3.	Gujarat	<u>24.10.2002</u> 13 Districts		
4.	Haryana	<u>08.08.2002</u> All 19 Districts		
5.	Himachal Pradesh	<u>1.8.2002</u> All 12 Districts		
6.	Jharkhand	<u>07.08.2002</u> 212		

		Divisions in all 22 Districts			
7.	Karnataka	<u>18.07.2002</u> 43 Talukas in 18 Districts	<u>25.07.2002</u> 40 Talukas in 14 Districts (83 Talukas in 19 Districts)	<u>01.08.2002</u> 60 Talukas in 18 Districts (143 Taluks in 24 Districts)	<u>08.08.2002</u> 11 Taluks in (154 Taluks in 24 Districts) & <u>26.10.2002</u> 157 Taluks in 24 Districts.
8.	Kerala	<u>19.8.2002</u> 1 District	<u>05.11.2002</u> 5 Districts (6)	<u>06.11.2002</u> 5 Districts (11)	
9.	Madhya Pradesh	<u>12.08.2002</u> 31	<u>28.08.2002</u> 1 District (32 Districts)	<u>25.11.2002</u> 1 District (total 189 Tehsils in 33 Districts)	
10.	Maharashtra	<u>05.08.2002</u> 353 Talukas in 33 Districts			
11.	Orissa	<u>10.08.2002</u> 283 Blocks in 30 Districts			
12.	Punjab	<u>17.08.2002</u> All 17 Districts			
13.	Rajasthan	<u>29.07.2002</u> All 32 Districts			
14.	Tamil Nadu	<u>24.01.2003</u> 28 Districts			
15.	Uttaranchal	<u>06.08.2002</u> 8 Districts	<u>07.08.2002</u> 2 Districts (10)	<u>08.08.2002</u> 3 Districts (13)	
16.	Uttar Pradesh	<u>19.07.2002</u> 15 Districts (15)	<u>20.07.2002</u> 2 Districts (17)	<u>22.07.2002</u> 4 Districts (21)	<u>23.07.2002</u> 5 Districts (26)
		<u>24.07.2002</u> 5 Districts	<u>25.07.2002</u> 8 Districts (39)	<u>27.07.2002</u> 3 Districts (42)	<u>29.07.2002</u> 12 Districts

		(31)			(54)
		<u>30.07.2002</u> 3 Districts (57)	<u>31.07.2002</u> 4 Districts (61)	<u>01.08.2002</u> 1 Districts (62)	<u>06.08.2002</u> 2 Districts (64)
		<u>07.08.2002</u> 1 Districts (65)	<u>08.08.2002</u> 5 Districts (70)		
17.	West Bengal	<u>07.08.2002</u> 1 District	<u>12.08.2002</u> 2 Districts (3)		

Note: Figures in bracket indicate the total number of districts so far declared by the State as drought affected.

3.3 When enquired about the areas, which experience consecutive droughts, the department furnished the following information.

LIST OF DISTRICTS EXPERIENCE CONSECUTIVE DROUGHTS
(PERIOD: 1998-2002)

STATE	YEARS OF CONSECUTIVE DROUGHTS					
	THREE YEARS			FOUR YEARS		FIVE YEARS
	1998-2000	1999-2001	2000-2002	1998-2001	1999-2002	1998-2002
UTTAR PRADESH			AGRA ALIGARH ETAH ETAWAH		HARDOI RAI BARELLY	
UTTARANCHAL					GARHWAL TEHRI	
HARYANA					MAHENDRAGARH	
PUNJAB					BHATINDA FARIDKOT SANGRUR	
HIMACHAL PRADESH		CHAMBA	LAHAUL & SPITI SOLAN			
JAMMU & KASHMIR						LADAKH
RAJASTHAN			HANUMANGARH ALWAR BHARATPUR CHITORGARH KARAULI SAWAI MADHOPUR TONK		BANSWARA	JALORE
MADHYA PRADESH		DHAR JHABUA	CHINDWARA DEWAS UJJAIN		INDORE RATLAM	
GUJARAT	KUTCH	BROACH			KAIRA PANCHMAHEL SABARKANTHA	
DIU	DIU					
TAMILNADU						CUDDALORE VILLUPURAM
KERALA					KOZIKODE	WYNAD

3.4 The Ministry stated that while specific details vary from State to State, as per provisions of the relevant Land Revenue Act/Scarcity Manual etc., generally, the following parameters are taken into account while declaring a State as drought hit.

(i) Rainfall deficit; (ii) Area unsown; (iii) Damage to crop on eye inspection; (iv) State of water bodies and common grazing grounds; (v) migration of agricultural workers; and (vi) State of human and animal nutrition, etc.

3.5 While giving the additional information, the Ministry in a written reply clarified that in crop cutting experiments, yield of various standing crops obtained through random crop cutting is matched against the normal yield based on past actuals in ‘good’ years. When the yield of experimental cuttings is less than the prescribed percentage of the normal yield, droughts are declared. In very severe droughts, where large areas either remain unsown or germination is to take place due to total failure of rains, eye estimation is resorted to. In other words, the quantum of rainfall in a particular State is not taken into account for the declaration of drought.

3.6 During the course of evidence it was enquired as why some States do not declare the drought in time and why they declare the districts as drought hit in instalments, the representative of the DAC stated “the declaration of drought is a State subject; it is entirely up to them. For instance in Tamil Nadu, until in the entire country, the South-West Monsoon is over, they will not be in a position to say whether they will have a drought or not because their main season is afterwards. So till then, they cannot decide. Therefore, the seasonality factor is one thing. Even within a State, the cropping patterns also depends upon the behaviour, the time, and space of rain. These also matter a lot.”

He further clarified that the release of foodgrains for assistance also depends on the time of declaration.

Damage To Crops Due To Drought

3.7 The Committee enquired the details of sown area and unsown area as reported by States during Kharif 2002 and Rabi 2002. The Department furnished the following information.

State-Wise Details Of Normal Area, Area Sown And Area Unsown During Kharif 2002 In Respect Of Drought Affected States

S. No.	State	Normal Sown Area (Lakh Ha.)	Sown Area this year	Unsown Area due to drought (Lakh Ha.)	Percentage of unsown Area over Normal Sown Area
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Andhra Pradesh	65.00	39.20	25.80	39.7%
2.	Chhattisgarh	37.20	35.30	1.90	5.1%
3.	Haryana	22.30	15.70	6.60	29.6%
4.	Himachal Pradesh	4.78	4.32	0.46	9.6%
5.	Jharkhand	23.62	20.42	3.20	13.5%
6.	Karnataka	47.80	36.60	11.20	23.4%
7.	Madhya Pradesh	86.40	77.50	8.90	10.3%
8.	Maharashtra	120.60	113.40	7.20	6.0%
9.	Orissa	58.00	50.98	7.02	12.1%
10.	Punjab	97.11	92.02	5.09	5.2%
11.	Rajasthan	88.70	49.20	39.50	44.5%
12.	Tamil Nadu	24.89	7.39	17.50	90.7%
13.	Uttar Pradesh	92.02	61.12	30.90	33.6%
14.	Uttaranchal	5.90	5.65	0.25	4.2%

Details Of Area Coverage During Rabi 2002-03

(lakh ha.)

S. No.	Name	Rabi Normal Coverage	Coverage during current Rabi	Variation in current year
1.	Andhra Pradesh	30.17	27.99	(-) 2.18
2.	Chhattisgarh	7.41	7.59	(+) 0.18
3.	Haryana	29.98	30.28	(+) 0.30
4.	Himachal Pradesh	4.09	3.66	(-) 0.43
5.	Jharkhand	0.77	1.19	(+) 0.42
6.	Karnataka	34.13	35.96	(+) 1.83
7.	Madhya Pradesh	77.34	63.33	(-) 14.01
8.	Maharashtra	58.07	49.14	(-) 8.93
9.	Orissa	5.92	7.48	(+) 1.56
10.	Punjab	35.23	34.85	(-) 0.38
11.	Rajasthan	66.69	31.95	(-) 34.74
12.	Tamil Nadu	13.32	13.32	----
13.	Uttaranchal	4.34	4.31	(-) 0.03
14.	Uttar Pradesh	124.68	122.98	(-) 1.70
15.	Gujarat	9.84	7.09	(-) 2.75
16.	Kerala	0.69	0.25	(-) 0.44
	Total:	502.67	441.37	(-) 61.30

3.8 The Committee enquired as to how the damage caused due to drought is assessed by the State/Centre, the Ministry in a written reply stated:-

“The role of the Centre in assessment of damage caused by drought is restricted to ascertain the requirement of relief expenditure with reference to the prescribed norms. Assessment of damage is the responsibility of the State Governments. The machinery of assessment is mainly the Revenue Department which carries out village and field level surveys to determine the extent of crop loss and to also assess the degree of distress among human and cattle populations”.

3.9 As regards State wise details of area sown during Kharif 2002 which has been damaged 50% or more, the Ministry furnished the following Table:-

State-Wise Details Of Area Sown During Kharif 2002 Damaged 50% Or More

S. No.	State	Area Sown	Area Damaged 50% or more
1.	Andhra Pradesh	39.20	6.36
2.	Chhattisgarh	35.30	19.35
3.	Haryana	15.70	10.78
4.	Himachal Pradesh	4.32	3.44
5.	Jharkhand	20.42	4.14
6.	Karnataka	36.60	12.90
7.	Madhya Pradesh	77.50	18.89
8.	Orissa	50.98	11.13
9.	Punjab	92.02	16.69
10.	Rajasthan	49.20	45.00
11.	Tamil Nadu	7.39	4.51
12.	Uttar Pradesh	61.12	27.50
13.	Uttaranchal	5.65	2.25

3.10 From the Tables, it can be seen that unsown areas during Kharif 2002 due to drought in Tamil Nadu is of the order of 90.7%. Even out of 9.3% area sown in Tamil Nadu (7.39 lakh hectare) during Kharif 2002, 4.5 lakh hectare was damaged. In Rajasthan out of 49.20 lakh hectare net sown area 45 lakhs hectare was damaged. Also, the area sown in Rajasthan during Rabi 2002-2003 is less than 50%.

3.11 Explaining the reasons, the Ministry replied that for Tamil Nadu, it appears that the main reason for the area remaining unsown was the non-availability of water. While there is definitely a scope for diversification of crops, it needs to be pointed out that in a situation of total or near total absence of water, there is little scope for even going in for drought resistant crops in such situations.

Claims Under Crop Insurance

3.12 As per the information provided by the Ministry, the details of total claims reported, farmers covered and benefited during Kharif 2002 season in drought affected States implementing National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) are as under:

(Rs. in lakh)				
Sr. No.	Name of State	Farmers Covered	Farmers benefited	Total Claims Reported
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1684533	594760	23826.14
2.	Chhattisgarh	700143	514986	8379.80
3.	Gujarat	1168717	523611	82549.45
4.	Himachal Pradesh	63216	63072	443.13
5.	Karnataka	873589	442183	30941.12
6.	Madhya Pradesh	1195897	364838	11779.95
7.	Maharashtra	1793329	198911	2509.36
8.	Orissa	1204764	839345	34190.28
9.	Tamil Nadu	14896	11969	273.64
10.	Uttar Pradesh	559189	139975	1663.58
	Total	9258273	3693650	196556.45

Note: Due to discrepancies noticed by the Implementing Agency, some claims of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Orissa are under investigation.

CHAPTER – IV

CENTRAL ASSISTANCE FOR DROUGHT AFFECTED STATES

Constitution of Task Force

4.1 The Government has set up a Task Force on Drought Management under the Chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister with Finance, Agriculture, Rural Development and Food Ministries along with Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission as Members to lay down policies and issue guidelines to deal with drought situations.

4.2 The Committee pointed out that the Minister of Water Resources has not been included in the Task Force. The Department replied that since the task of dealing with the drought involves a very large number of Ministries, the composition of the Task Force has been kept as the barest minimum to ensure quick decision-making. Inputs from the Ministry of Water Resources have been obtained from time to time through the Secretary of the Ministry. The Prime Minister has also constituted an official level Task Force within the Ministry of Water Resources on 31.12.2003 to deal with issues of water-management during the current drought.

4.3 Giving the details of the initiatives to the decisions taken by the Task Force, the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation replied that the important decisions taken by the Task Force on Drought Management and the Action Taken/Status of implementation on those decisions (as in February, 2003) is indicated below:-

Important Decisions taken by the Task Force	Action Taken / Status of Implementation
(i) The States may keep the Members of Parliament actively involved in formulation and implementation of drought strategies by the State Governments, especially programmes relating to wage employment under Food	Agriculture Minister and Secretary (Agriculture & Cooperation) have written to Chief Ministers of affected States and requested them to form District Level

for Work Programme.	<p>Committee's (DLCs) and actively involve local M.Ps. / M.L.A.s in the Committee.</p>
	<p>The nodal Ministry (Rural Development) is already having a standing instruction in this regard.</p>
(ii) Modalities of moratorium on loans by farmers in the affected areas and other aspects of relief, e.g. write-off of interest, need to be properly studied and action initiated by Ministry of Finance in consultation with all concerned.	<p>Hon'ble Prime Minister has already announced waiver of interest on farm loans and postponement of recovery of dues during the current financial year.</p>
(iii) Availability of foodgrains under the "Special Component of SGRY" (for natural calamity affected areas) may be ensured.	<p>So far, 29.74 lakh MTs of foodgrains have been allocated to 13 affected States, under Special Component of SGRY.</p>
(iv) The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) shall forthwith write to the State Governments indicating that the SGRY allocations will be available on a priority basis for generation of employment in drought affected areas. MoRD will also specifically indicate relaxations in the existing guidelines of the SGRY with regard to implementing agencies and supervisory arrangements etc. on the lines of the "Special Component" of the SGRY. Such relaxations would be applicable only during the present drought.	<p>M/o Rural Development has already taken necessary action for relaxations in the guidelines for allocations under SGRY.</p>
(v) Additional allocations will be made to the affected States from the "Special Component" of the SGRY after utilization of both the instalments under the "normal" SGRY in accordance with the 'relaxed guidelines'.	<p>Necessary action taken by Ministry of Rural Development.</p>
(vi) Regarding the extension of Agricultural Input Subsidy <i>that the Ministry of Finance would work out the financial</i>	<p>Assistance amounting to Rs.364.98</p>

that the Ministry of Finance would work out the financial implications of bringing farmers other than small and marginal farmers within the purview of this subsidy.	crores released to the affected States towards Agriculture Input Subsidy for other farmers upto a limit of 2 hectares.
(vii) On interest waiver for loans obtained for agricultural purposes by farmers in affected areas, the officials of Ministry of Finance and Department of Agriculture & Cooperation would jointly work out the financial aspects of the proposal in concrete terms.	Hon'ble Prime Minister has already announced waiver of interest on farm loans and postponement of recovery of dues during the current financial year.
(viii) It was agreed that the proposal regarding supply of damaged food-grains free from fungal contamination and fit for poultry consumption by the FCI to the poultry sector at "export rates" would be finalized by Finance Secretary in consultation with the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying and the Department of Food & Public Distribution.	Necessary action taken by agencies concerned.
(ix) For financing of 1400 Goshalas for running cattle camps with an outlay of Rs.40 crore through the NGO sector would be discussed further by Secretary (AH &D)) with Finance Secretary and Secretary (Expenditure).	Hon'ble Prime Minister announced package of Rs. 25 crores for support to States through NGOs for Goshalas.
(x) The proposal regarding special support to Goshalas in drought affected areas was cleared subject to the condition that the Scheme should be implemented in identified areas of the drought affected Districts in Rajasthan, Haryana and Western UP.	As at (ix) above.
(xi) Transportation of fodder by Rail to scarcity areas in Rajasthan. (xii) Keeping in view the severity of the drought, the	Necessary action being taken by Railways and Food Corporation of India.

<p>cases of the States of Rajasthan and Karnataka for assistance from the National Calamity Contingency Fund may be finalized by the Inter-Ministerial Group and the High Level Committee on a priority basis subject to the completion of prescribed requirements.</p>	<p>Assistance from NCCF released to the drought affected States including Rajasthan and Karnataka.</p>
<p>(xiii) In order to be quite clear about the feasibility of large-scale transport of cattle from areas of distress to the canal areas by Rail, it was decided that the State Government of Rajasthan be asked to submit a detailed proposal containing the total operational plan for the purpose.</p>	<p>Detailed proposal from Government of Rajasthan is yet to be received.</p>
<p>(xiv) As regards allocation of foodgrains for relief employment, it was decided that Cabinet Secretary would consider all relevant issues to work out a cost-effective method of enabling States to meet the requirement of providing relief employment.</p>	<p>This was discussed in detail in the meeting held under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary on 24th December, 2002, which was considered by the Task Force in the meeting held on 28th December, 2002.</p>
<p>(xv) An exercise will be undertaken for Rajasthan for calculating foodgrain requirement for eligible people affected by drought in the State.</p>	<p>Such an exercise has been carried and will be considered by the Task Force in its next meeting.</p>

4.4 The Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture & Co-operation) in a written note furnished the following details about assistance provided to States affected by Drought during 2002-03 and period of visit by Central Teams.

S. No.	State	Date of submission of 1 st Memorandum for assistance	Assis-tance sought (Rs. In crores)	-:26:- Period of visit by Central Teams		Meeting of Ministerial Group (IMG)		Meeting of High Level Committee (HLC)		Assistance from NCCF provided (after adjustment of CRF) -Total (Rs. in crores)	Food-grains demanded * (lakh MTs)	Food-grains allocated for relief employ-ment ** (lakh MTs)
				First visit	Second visit	1 st Meeting	2 nd Meeting	1 st Meeting	2 nd Meeting			
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.
1.	Andhra Pradesh	26.8.2002	1860.00	8-12.9.02	4-6.2.03	3.10.02	26.02.03	16.11.02	23.3.03	123.51	25.00	16.15
2.	Chhattisgarh	7.8.2002	880.66	12-14.9.02	2-4.2.03	21.10.02	26.02.03	16.11.02	23.3.03	127.51	12.60	4.43
3.	Gujarat	20.1.2003	895.34	17-18.2.03	-	4.3.2003	-	23.3.03	-	-	1.95	1.48
4.	Haryana	6.9.2002	1895.98	26-28.9.02	-	21.10.02	4.03.2003	16.11.02	23.3.03	-	9.72	0.25
5.	Himachal Pradesh	19.8.2002	155.86	26 Sept to 1 st Oct. 02	23 rd to 25 th Jan. 2003	21.10.02	4.03.2003	16.11.02	23.3.03	14.35	0.19	0.10
6.	Jammu & Kashmir	27.8.2002	1623.98	23-26 Oct. 2002	-	18.12.02	-	13.02.03	-	-	-	-
7.	Jharkhand	5.8.2002	1467.25	18-20.9.02	-	8.10.02	4.03.2003	16.11.02	23.3.03	-	-	0.40
8.	Karnataka	26.7.2002	1562.85	3-5.9.02	15-17.1.03	3.10.02	26.02.03	16.11.02	23.3.03	207.65	11.09	6.65
9.	Kerala	21.8.2002	1035.07	8-12.12.02	-	30.12.02	-	13.02.03	-	-	1.00	0.52
10.	Madhya Pradesh	29.7.2002	819.62	2-5.9.02	15-17.1.03	3.10.02	26.02.03	16.11.02	23.3.03	171.66	8.50	7.10
11.	Maharashtra	6.8.2002	1730.61	17-19. 10.02	22-25.1.03	21.10.02	4.03.2003	16.11.02	23.3.03	20.00	2.32	2.32
12.	Orissa	5.8.2002	871.40	16-19.9.02	14-16.2.03	8.10.02	4.03.2003	16.11.02	23.3.03	5.29	12.19	6.44
13.	Punjab	19.9.2002	3529.44	9-11.10.02	7.02.03	21.10.02	4.03.2003	16.11.02	23.3.03	-	-	-
14.	Rajasthan	3.8.2002	7519.76	1-4.9.02	14-16.1.03	3.10.02	26.02.03	16.11.02	23.3.03	889.61	56.00	31.10
15.	Tamil Nadu	6.8.2002	1545.76	23-26.9.02	28-31.1.03	21.10.02	4.03.2003	16.11.02	23.3.03	332.09	9.00	3.50
16.	Uttaranchal	5.8.2002	401.81	6-9.9.2002	6-8.2.03	3.10.02	4.03.2003	16.11.02	23.3.03	-	-	0.50
17.	Uttar Pradesh	5.8.2002	7539.79	4-7.9.2002	16.1.03	3.10.02	4.03.2003	16.11.02	23.3.03	310.06	20.00	2.00
TOTAL:				35335.18						2201.73	169.56	82.94

All the demands were ad-hoc.

** Allocations were based on normative criteria adopted by the Task Force (Employment of one individual from 50% of rural BPL families for 10 days in case of severely affected States and 20% of such families in case of moderately affected States. For Rajasthan, employment has been approved for 100% of BPL families for 12 days for May & June).

Financial Assistance

4.5 The Government extend financial assistance to drought hit States under Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) and National Calamity Contingency Fund, (NCCF).

CRF is operated by the States. When asked about the funding pattern of the two funds and criteria for allocation for the same to the States, the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation replied that the CRF and NCCF Schemes are based on the recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission. Ministry of Home Affairs is now charged with the responsibility of monitoring implementation of the scheme.

4.6 Allocations from the CRF are made by the State level Empowered Committee headed by the State Chief Secretary in accordance with the prescribed list of items of expenditure and their scale. The same criterion applies to expenditure from NCCF. The approval process in the case, however, involves visit by Central Team, examination of the Team's findings by an Inter-Ministerial Group headed by the Agriculture Secretary, with a final decision thereon being taken by the High Level Committee headed by the Deputy Prime Minister.

4.7 CRF is shared between the Centre and the State in the ratio of 3:1. NCCF is entirely funded from the proceeds of surcharge on certain Central Taxes. During the current drought, norms have been relaxed to bring in unsown area under the purview of the Agricultural Input Subsidy. Similarly, this subsidy is normally restricted to small and marginal farmers only. For the current drought it has been decided to extend it to other farmers subject to a limit of 2 hectares.

4.8 The relief directly admissible to farmers in the event of drought is the Agricultural Input Subsidy. For the drought prevailing since July, 2002, the following amounts were found admissible for being paid as Agricultural Input Subsidy:

For small and marginal farmers (Kharif) = Rs.1490.91 crore

For other farmers (subject to a limit of 2 hectares) = Rs. 554.26 crore

For all farmers (Rabi) = Rs. 426.89 crore

Total **Rs.2472.06 crore**

4.9 State-wise details of release of Central share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for 2002-03 and assistance released from National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) as against the demand, is indicated below:

Details Of Assistance Provided To States Affected By Drought During 2002-03

(Rs. In crores)				
Sl. No.	State	Assis-tance sought	Assistance from NCCF provided (after adjustment of CRF)	Assistance under CRF
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1860.00	123.51	163.77
2.	Chhattisgarh	880.66	127.51	22.72
3.	Gujarat	895.34	-	133.46
4.	Haryana	1895.98	-	67.23
5.	Himachal Pradesh	155.86	14.35	35.96
6.	Jharkhand	1467.25	-	-----
7.	Karnataka	1562.85	207.65	61.66
8.	Kerala	1035.07	-	55.60
9.	Madhya Pradesh	819.62	171.66	51.78

10.	Maharashtra	1730.61	20.00	129.99
11.	Orissa	871.40	5.29	90.52
12.	Punjab	3529.44	-	101.47
13.	Rajasthan	7519.76	889.61	171.16
14.	Tamil Nadu	1545.76	332.09	84.87
15.	Uttaranchal	401.81	-	13.38
16.	Uttar Pradesh	7539.79	310.06	120.95

4.10 During the evidence the members expressed their concern regarding sanction of smaller amounts against large demands for relief assistance from states and stated that this was indicative of discrimination. The Ministry in a written reply clarified the position as under:-

“The procedure for sanctioning assistance from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) involves submission of Memorandum by the State Government. An Inter-Departmental Team is deputed in response to receipt of Memorandum. The Team, apart from visiting the affected areas, interacts with the officials of the State Government and examines reasonableness of assistance claimed with reference to the prescribed norms and rates of expenditure approved from CRF/NCCF. The recommendations of the Team are gone into by an Inter-Ministerial Group of officers and are subject to the final approval of the High Level Committee headed by Deputy Prime Minister.

The overall percentage was 11% of the demand, which is common among all the States. Two broad reasons for the wide gap between demand of a State and the amount sanctioned where (i) demand of cash assistance for relief employment was not acceded as, Central Government now provides foodgrains, free of cost, from the Special Component of the SGRY for the purpose, (ii) the amounts demanded for Agricultural Input Subsidy were, in most of the

cases, based on figures before Annawari/detailed survey were conducted. Based on the existing norms and actual figures of loss, the final amount admissible is likely to be closely tally with the amounts sanctioned.

Further, while the States make the demands based on their perceptions, the Central Government releases assistance on the basis of norms. There is, therefore, bound to be a variation in the amounts demanded and released.”

4.11 During the evidence, when the Committee enquired about the figures of the expenditure made from CRF specifically for drought relief, the Secretary was not in a position to give a definite reply. He clarified thus:

“the mechanism was like this. The funds through the CRF are released in two instalments of Central share in May and November, automatically, every year and this is available to the State Government for whichever calamity takes place whether it is flood, drought, earthquake, etc. Now, this year because of drought, the amount or the instalment, which was to be released in November, was released in August 2002.”

He further added that they do not split it into drought and other things because they do not have such mechanism today.

Foodgrains Assistance

4.12 On a query of the Committee about the demand and actual allocation of the foodgrains, the Ministry provided the following information:

(in lakh MTs)

Sl. No.	State	Food-grains demanded	Food-grains allocated for relief employment
1.	Andhra Pradesh	25.00	16.15
2.	Chhattisgarh	12.60	4.43
3.	Gujarat	1.95	1.48
4.	Haryana	9.72	0.25
5.	Himachal Pradesh	0.19	0.10
6.	Jharkhand	-	0.40
7.	Karnataka	11.09	6.65
8.	Kerala	1.00	0.52
9.	Madhya Pradesh	8.50	7.10
10.	Maharashtra	2.32	2.32
11.	Orissa	12.19	6.44
12.	Punjab	-	-
13.	Rajasthan	56.00	31.10
14.	Tamil Nadu	9.00	3.50
15.	Uttaranchal	-	0.50
16.	Uttar Pradesh	20.00	2.00

4.13 The Committee pointed out that the foodgrains allocated by the task force was much less than the foodgrains demanded by the States. The Department clarified that the additional requirements of Central assistance were being worked out; A Task Force of Ministry of Water Resources was working out Water Budget for Reservoir, accelerating handing over of successful exploratory bore-wells to State Governments and providing technical expertise in assessing the Ground-Water Supply position.

4.14 On a query of the Committee as to why the Central Government does not provide any assistance to these States which have not submitted any memorandum of demand, the Secretary DAC clarified:

“CRF is a permanent fund with a State. The Centre’s contribution to it goes automatically twice in a year. 50 per cent of it goes for the first time in the month of May and the remaining 50 per cent goes in the month of November. So, it goes automatically. There is

no demand required from the State. All that we look at is the utilisation of the previous year's Fund. That is a Fund available with all the States and the normal requirement of relief is met from that Fund".

P.M.'s Package

4.15 Hon'ble Prime Minister announced a special package for drought relief to farmers on 14.11.2002 with the following elements:

- Extension of Agricultural Input Subsidy, normally applicable to small and marginal farmers, to other farmers for the current drought subject to a limit of 2 hectares.
- Waiver of interest on loans for agricultural purposes by farmers in the affected areas. This is in addition to conversion of loans/debt relief announced earlier.
- The announcement of Prime Minister also included measures such as free transportation of water and fodder by Rail and augmentation of PDS, which seek to liberalise the dispensation already indicated.
- It will bear repetition that the above lists the important initiatives of the Central Government. The Department is also coordinating the activities of various Departments of the Central Government so as to provide requisite support to the States in dealing with the situation on a continuing basis.

4.16 In pursuance of the announcement made by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 14th November, 2002, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a Circular dated 15th November, 2002 advising banks not to recover any amount either by way of principal or interest during the current financial year in respect of Kharif crop loan. The principal amount of crop loan should be converted into term loan and be recovered over a period of minimum of five years in the case of

small and marginal farmers and fours year in the case of other farmers (as against three years stipulated in the existing guidelines) and interest due in the current financial year on crop loan should also be deferred. No interest should be charged on the deferred interest.

4.17 Hon'ble Prime Minister made another announcement in Parliament on 18.12.2002 regarding further relief to drought affected States. A statement of announcement and action taken thereon is as given below:

S. No.	Subject	Announcement Made	Ministry/Department concerned	Action Taken
1.	Waiver of interest subsidy	To waive completely, the first year's deferred liability of interest on Kharif loans, as one time measures	Department of Banking	Instructions issued by RBI to all Scheduled Commercial Banks and by NABARD to Regional Rural Banks in affected States.
2.	Agricultural Input Subsidy (AIS) for other farmers	AIS to cover other farmers too, for both sown and unsown areas, upto a ceiling of 2 ha.	Releases to be made based on assessment made by Ministry of Agriculture and in consultation with Ministry of Finance.	Funds amounting to Rs.364.98 crore released to the affected States.
3.	Assistance for support to gaushalas	Rs.25 crores will be provided to Deptt. of Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Ministry of Finance (Department of Expenditure) – such releases to be considered by a Committee of Officers from D/o AH&D, D/o Expenditure & PMO.	Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Ministry of Finance (Department of Expenditure) – such releases to be considered by a Committee of Officers from D/o AH&D, D/o Expenditure & PMO.	Necessary action to formulate the scheme being taken by Deptt. of Animal Husbandry & Dairying
4.	Free transportation of water and fodder.	Facility of free transportation to be extended upto June, 2003	Ministry of Railways	Orders issued by Ministry of Railways on 2.1.2003.
5.	Foodgrains to needy States	More foodgrains to be made available for generation of relief employment	Departments of Agriculture and Cooperation and Rural Development	27.74 lakh MTs allocated so far for relief employment
6.	PDS functioning	PDS functioning must be improved	Department of Food & Public Distribution	
7.	Water tanker trains	Additional water tanker trains to be run	Ministry of Railways	
8.	Task Force, etc.	Ministry of Water Resources to appoint a Task Force to assist affected States Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas to examine possibility of deep drilling rigs being employed for sinking deep tube wells	Ministry of Water Resources & Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas	Task Force constituted by Ministry of Water Resources on 31.12.2002 – First Meeting held on 9 th and 10 th January, 2003.

4.18 In pursuance of the announcement of Hon'ble Prime Minister made on December 18, 2002, it has been decided by the Government of India to waive completely, the first year's deferred liability of interest on Kharif loans as a one time measure. This instalment of deferred interest, which is to be waived by banks as per Government announcement, will be reimbursed by the Government of India. The balance amount of the deferred interest may be recovered in reasonable instalments thereafter. It was reiterated by the RBI that no interest should be charged on the deferred interest.

CHAPTER – V

FOOD FOR WORK PROGRAMME

5.1 The most severely affected sections during droughts are the landless agricultural labourers and small and marginal farmers. The main thrust of countering drought is through generation of additional employment. It has also been the experience that the Food for Work approach is the most effective measure of providing such employment during natural calamities. At present, the main vehicle for the Food-For-Work Programme is through the Special Component of the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY). Under this component, the Central Government meets the entire cost of foodgrains and the State Government meeting the other expenditure by dovetailing provision of suitable schemes and by utilizing relief funds. Unlike the “normal” SGRY, the implementation is with the district administration.

5.2 The Committee enquired from the Ministry about the schemes/projects taken up under the Food-For-Work Programme. The Ministry, in their written reply, stated that the system of Relief work is in operation for a very long time in accordance with the provisions of Relief Manuals/Codes of the States. These guidelines involve labour-intensive works, which do not generally require particular skills. At present, most of the relief works involve works such as widening and deepening of ponds, erection of Check Dams and Weirs, digging of water channels, construction of Kachcha Roads, tree plantation and minor repair of Roads, etc.

5.3 During the evidence, it was enquired as to whether wages and relief employment were adequate. The Ministry clarified that as per the guidelines governing the Special Component of the SGRY, the quantum of wages in relief employment is to be equivalent to the minimum wage prescribed in the State concerned. The only relaxation that is available in case of relief

employment is that the wage may have two components – foodgrains and cash with the value of foodgrains not exceeding 75% of the prescribed minimum wage rate and the cash component not being less than 25% of that component.

5.4 On the question of fixing wages, the Secretary DAC informed:

“On an average, the minimum wages are the wages paid in relief works. They are fixed by the State Government. For example in Rajasthan, the minimum wages are Rs.60/- That amount is divided into two parts; 25 per cent of it is the cash component. Foodgrains worth Rs.45 are given as wages. So, on an average, 5 Kg to 10 Kg foodgrains are given to the workers depending on how they price the foodgrains”.

5.5 During the course of evidence, members showed their concern regarding deployment of machinery for works under Special Component of Sampoorna Grameen Rozagar Yojana (SGRY). The representatives of the Department clarified that the use of Contractors has been specifically banned under both the programmes. Since emphasis is on wage employment, labour-displacing machines should not be used for works taken up under any of these programmes. Whenever reports are received about use of contractors and labour displacing machines in SGRY/Special Component works it is brought to the notice of the concerned State for remedial action. The representative stated that in view of the concern expressed in the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Cooperation, these instructions are being reiterated to all the States/UTs that contractors and labour displacing machines should not be used in SGRY/Special Component works.

5.6 Explaining the wage rate for SGRY, the ministry in a written note stated that the wage rate to be applied for works under the SGRY/Special Component is the minimum wages fixed in

each State/UTs. The wages are to be paid in cash and kind. A minimum of 5Kg. of foodgrains per day has to be given as part of the wages. The foodgrains component of the wages can go upto 75%. 25% of the wages has to be paid in cash. The price of foodgrains can be fixed up at BPL or APL rate or any rate between these two. In order to assess the progress of the work done, the wages are normally linked to task rate, which carries to nature of work. If the task required for the minimum wages is not accomplished, the wages paid per man day will be less than the minimum wages.

5.7 On the issue of inclusion of the cost of material component in relief assistance, the Ministry informed:-

“Relief employment is intended not only to provide income transfer to the drought affected population but also to add to the capital assets of the community to either improve drought coping capabilities or to generally add to capital formation, particularly, in the social sector. In a situation where material cost is not funded from the relief funds, State Governments are obliged to find resources to meet this essential cost. Of late, States have come under severe financial stress finding it extremely difficult to identify resources to be deployed for the purpose.

It may be added that till the year 1999-2000, provisions were made to meet part of the material cost while sanctioning relief funds for employment generation. The practice had to be discontinued from the year 2000-2001 when the Eleventh Finance Commission Award came into force stipulating that expenditure of capital nature should not be met from relief funds. It is proposed to plead with the Twelfth Finance Commission that the status quo as obtaining till 1999-2000 be restored.”

CHAPTER – VI

SHORTAGE OF DRINKING WATER AND FODDER

Shortage of Drinking Water

6.1 The drought has created drinking water shortage in various States. When the Committee enquired about the steps taken to meet the shortage of drinking water, the representatives of Ministry of Rural Development informed that in case of drinking water supply from the Ministry of Rural Development, they normally go for schematic programmes. But every year this type of situation arising due to natural calamities like droughts, earthquakes and floods have been causing concern and, therefore, from the current year itself, they have set apart five per cent of the total funds available to meet such contingencies. This year from total outlay Rs.105 crore have been kept.

6.2 The Representative further informed:

“The Agricultural Ministry’s inter-Ministerial team that visits the States, they recognize the drinking water needs. Some of the States where there is greater demand for drinking water, we ourselves send a team to visit those States, check up and then to give us a feedback so that we can release funds to mitigate the drinking water scarcity problem. The amount of Rs.105.50 crore which have been set apart, we have released to six States. This fund that we have released is not for meeting the drinking water transportation needs because normally under the Calamity Relief Fund which the Agriculture Ministry places at the disposal of the State Government, meets the contingencies like transportation of water and all other associated programmes. In case they have exceeded their CRF, they will come to the National Contingency Calamity Fund. If still there are more problems in meeting the drinking water needs, States access the funds from the

Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme. We have released Rs.12 crore to Rajasthan, Rs.3.11 crore to Orissa, Rs.3.67 crore to Madhya Pradesh, Rs.1.57 crore to Karnataka, Rs.8.90 crore to HP, Rs.4.53 crore to Gujarat only on drought. We have also some of the proposals, which have been received including that of Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Chhattisgarh and some other States. We will be examining there in consultation with the inter-Ministerial group headed by Secretary (Agriculture) and wherever the needs come from we will be able to sanction. We have still Rs.50 to Rs.60 crore available with us in which we will be able to meet the situation.”

6.3 The Ministry in a written reply provided the status of States in regard to drinking water situations as under:

Bihar

All 105340 habitations are fully covered with provision of 40 lpcd drinking water supply facilities. With regard to the release of funds to Bihar under ARWSP, the current year allocation is Rs. 63.19 crore. However, over last 5 years (1998-99 to 2002-03), Bihar has been allocated Rs. 404.97 crore and has received only Rs. 83.93 crore. Bihar could not avail Rs. 321.04 crore due to non-reconciliation of figures indicated as utilized by the State Government and Audit Statement issued by AG. The current year allocation could be released only after receipt of Utilization Certificate and Audit Certificate as per the ARWSP guidelines.

Maharashtra

At present, 3620 road tankers are operated for meeting the drinking water scarcity in 11331 habitations. So far, 8420 borewells have been sunk. 2780 hand pumps and 1376 tubewells

have been repaired. Rs. 157.10 crore is the allocation for 2003-04 out of which Rs. 78.55 crore has been released.

Rajasthan

Rajasthan has 93946 habitations of which 31009 habitations are facing drinking water scarcity. In these habitations, alternate drinking water supply arrangements have been made. Four rail rakes are being operated by the Railways for supply of drinking water, 13599 road tankers are operated to supply drinking water in rural areas. So far, 2.61 lakh water sources have been repaired, 22163 borewells have been sunk. For the current year, out of Rs. 220.26 crore allocated under ARWSP and DDP components, Rs. 110.15 crore have been released. In respect of release of funds under 5% earmarked for mitigating natural calamities, last year Rs. 12.00 crore and in the current year Rs. 15.00 crore totaling Rs.27.00 crore have been released.

Karnataka

Out of 56682 habitation, only 13638 habitations have got less than 40 lpcd drinking water supply. Only 1780 habitations have acute drinking water scarcity for which 207 tankers have been deployed by the Government. So far 11356 hand pumps have been repaired 2117 tube wells have been deepened and 2236 new bore wells have been sunk. Out of Rs. 101.04 crore under ARWSP, Rs. 50.52 crore have been released. In 2002-03, Rs. 1.57 crore were released under 5% earmarked fund for drinking water scarcity mitigation.

Uttar Pradesh

There are 243633 habitations in UP which are fully covered with 40 lpcd drinking water supply. The State Government has already declared all the districts as drought affected. The Central Team which visited the State did not recommend any specific amount to be released to

UP. Under ARWSP Rs. 110.86 crore have been allocated of which Rs. 55.43 crore have been released. In the last year, Rs. 9 core released to UP for mitigating drinking water scarcity situation under drought affected areas.

The Committee were informed that a Task Force has been constituted on 31st December, 2002 by Ministry of Water Resources to assist the drought affected States and drinking water supply.

Fodder Shortage

6.4 During the drought, there is an acute shortage of fodder in the affected areas. In some places, cattle starve and die for want of fodder. The Ministry informed that Task Force has sanctioned 30000 MTs of Cattle grade feed for Rajasthan and has ordered free transportation of fodder to all drought affected states. During the evidence, when asked about the feasibility of conversion of sugarcane stock into pellets for fodder purposes, the Ministry stated:

“Dry fodder can be enriched and compacted into feed pallets. Sugarcane tops and wilted sugarcane stock is chaffed and fed as green fodder. There was a centrally sponsored scheme for assistance to States for fodder development, which was discontinued on the recommendation of the Core Committee on Zero Based Budgeting of the Planning Commission at the end of the 9th Five Year Plan. However, due to the drought situation two components of this scheme namely Enrichment of Fodder and establishment of Fodder Banks have been continued during 2002-03 and 2003-04. In the meantime, DAH&D has proposed a new scheme on Fodder Development, where enrichment of fodder, its compacting, storage and distribution have been included. The involvement of Joint Forest Management Committees is also proposed in the new scheme for utilization of surplus forest grass but the scheme is pending before the Planning Commission.”

CHAPTER – VII

MONITORING OF RELIEF MEASURES

7.1 At the instance of Ministry of Rural Development, State Governments had set up Vigilance and Monitoring Committees at State, District and Block Levels for supervising, exercising vigilance and monitoring the implementation of all programmes of the Ministry and also to look into the complaints of misutilisation of funds of various Poverty Alleviation Programmes in the districts. After reviewing the functioning of these Committees, the Members of Parliament have been given far greater role in the reconstituted Committees. The Ministry informed that at the district level, the Lok Sabha Members from those districts have been designated Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee. One Rajya Sabha Member from the State, opting for nomination in one of the District Level Committees, is also designated Vice-Chairman. During the evidence it was stated that the instructions regarding setting up of vigilance and monitoring committees was issued in December only, and all States did not follow the instructions.

7.2 An abstract of important parameters of relief measures at the beginning of June, 2003 is also given below: -

State	Relief Employment lakhs)		Water Supply Tankers		Cattle Camps No. Animals		Expenditure CRF/NCCF
	Works	Labour	Rural	Ur	No.	Animals	
A.P.	3.20	22.77	808	703	18	42424	588.15 crores
Chhattisgarh	0.18	25.19	-	583	1	428	41.93 "
Gujarat	0.02	5.91	1715	--	182	96229	172.94 "
Karnataka	NR	NR	NR	--	NR	NR	290.33 "
M.P.	0.24	4.79	---	---	19	5951	262.92 "
Maharashtra	0.10	6.55	6492*	---	1	1700	NR
Orissa	0.05	NR	6	78	--	--	98.11 "
Rajasthan	0.40	58.50	3044	903	1849	521729	538.39 "
Tamil Nadu	0.08	**	10640	285	---	----	269.09 "
Total:	4.27	123.71	22705	2552	2070	668461	2261.86

* No of habitations and not number of Tankers

** State has reported generation of 79.63 Lakh Man-days and not number of Workers

7.3 The Department in a written note gave the following brief of Relief Operations:-

- (i). Relief employment to 130 lakh/Month in May and June.
- (ii). Population benefited 7.5 crores.
- (iii). More than 60 crore man days generated.
- (iv). Average benefit of 150 kg foodgrains per family in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, MP, AP and Karnataka.
- (v). More than 45 lakh MTs foodgrains distributed.
- (vi). Employment loss of landless agriculture labour more than compensated.
- (vii). Deployment of 17,000 tankers for drinking water.
- (viii). 12 lakh tonnes water transported by Rail in Rajasthan.

- (ix). 4305 bore wells drilled.
- (x). 25 lakh tonnes fodder moved by rail/road.
- (xi). 2406 cattle camps caring more than 8.70 lakh cattle heads.

7.4 The Ministry, in a written note, gave an analysis of points emerging from the reports sent by the States and the interactions with these States during field visits and the periodic Video Conferences as below: -

Rajasthan: “An all encompassing demand for wage employment is evident from employment of 58 lakh persons per month with creation of 27 crore man-days while there was no relief employment last year. Similarly, last year no transport by Tankers and Rail was in evidence while this year, there are 3044 tankers and 4 Rakes per day. Fodder prices are higher by an average of 35% this year while milk procurement in April is 55% less than last year. Fodder prices are, however, showing a declining trend.

Movement of foodgrains in the State has not kept pace with allocations. From January to May 2003, against a planned movement of 20.20 lakh MT, 15.21 lakh MT has actually moved. The estimated total requirement during this period was approximately 17 lakh MTs, bulk of it being for relief employment generation. Situation in certain districts like Banswara and Jalore is being monitored closely by the Department of Food and Food Corporation of India. The figures for Rajasthan are indicative of a drought of extraordinary severity affecting employment, cattle care and drinking water supply.

Madhya Pradesh: Relief works have sharply increased this year. TPDS rice off-take has decreased while that of wheat has registered an increase of more than 100%. While fodder prices are stable, there is a sharp increase in the number of Tankers deployed this year. An analysis of

relief data furnished by the State clearly indicates continuing severe drought in Gwalior, Chambal and Ujjain Divisions as evidenced from increase in off-take of TPDS wheat and concentration of cattle camps in these areas. The crisis of Drinking Water Supply in the State is indicative of a chronic phenomenon of water shortages.

There is significant improvement in movement of foodgrains although the total movement was 11.61 Lakh MTs against the planned movement of 13.00 Lakh MTs till May 2003. The backlog in payment of food-grains as wages has shown a decline in most Districts.

Chhattisgarh: Information from the State clearly indicates improvement in drought situation but with high seasonal unemployment (No water Takers, stable fodder prices and the milk procurement with very large number of ‘relief works’). The availability of food-grains in the State is satisfactory thanks to the decentralized procurement arrangements.

Maharashtra: The number of relief works within the Employment Guarantee Scheme has increased sharply this year along with the number of Water Tankers deployed. There is no evidence of cattle distress with fodder prices and milk production figures being stable at more or less last year’s levels and a solitary cattle camp in the whole of the State. While the movement of foodgrains was 6.67 lakh MTs against the Planned target of 8.60 Lakh MTs for the period January to May.

Gujarat: Despite a large number of relief works (2194), there is very poor utilization of relief foodgrains till recently as the State Government was only giving 2 kg food-grains as wages. From late May, the wage rate has increased to 5 kg per day and the off-take has picked up very substantially. Fodder prices are higher this year by an almost 20% within a slightly higher milk

procurement. State has opened 400 Grass Depots making the supply position satisfactory. The highly differentiated nature of severe drought is evident from the fact that cattle camps are confined to Kachch, Rajkot and Surendranagar Districts.

Andhra Pradesh: The number of relief works are 30% less this year (32000 as against 42000 last year) but with number of workers 30% more this year. The Tankers deployed in Rural areas this year is less than last year while a contrary picture is in evidence for urban areas (734 rural habitations this year as against 924 last year and 703 Tankers in urban areas against 393 last year). This is indicative of the positive impact of ARWSP in the State and the state of poor maintenance of urban Urban Water Supply sector. In sum, the total picture is indicative of moderate drought.

Tamil Nadu: The losses of Rabi (Kurwai), which is the predominant crop, is not evidenced by the low number of man-days created. There is utilization of only 55% of allocated relief foodgrains although in the last one month the off-take has sharply increased. The off-take of TPDS foodgrains is 1.46 lakh this year while it was 1.77 lakh in April last year.

Orissa: Pace of utilization of relief foodgrains is poor (35% of allocations) relief works in 2002 were more than during the current year thereby indicating absence of acute drought conditions during the current year.

Karnataka: It is seen that the demand for relief employment, which had declined in February, has again picked up from April. Northern and Southern parts of Interior Karnataka have been experiencing acute seasonal water shortage which has exacerbated this year.”

7.5 The Ministry further informed that at the Central Government level, apart from analyzing the weekly reports, there is a weekly monitoring meeting taken by the Drought Relief Commissioner with representatives from the Railway Board, Departments of Food, Drinking Water Supply, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Ministries of Rural Development and Water Resources.

CHAPTER – VIII

LONG TERM MEASURES IN DROUGHT

8.1 Drought is a natural hazard, which has a slow onset. It evolves over months or even years, affects a large spatial region and causes little structural damage. The impacts of drought span economic, environmental, and social sectors. Drought's impacts can be reduced through mitigation and preparedness. Droughts are a normal part of virtually any climate, it is important to develop plans to deal with them in a timely manner as they progress. On the query of the Members about Role of Rain Water Harvesting in Drought Mitigation, the Ministry informed that in view of the fact that about 40 per cent of the total annual precipitation goes as run off, efforts are to be made to capture this precious rainwater for crop production and other use. Very high priority has been accorded by the Government of India to the holistic and sustainable development of rainfed areas on watershed approach as it constitute 61% of country's arable land and produce 45% of foodgrains production. A large number of projects for soil and water conservation are being implemented based on the watershed approach.

Ministry of Agriculture:

8.2 National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA)

It is the largest project in terms of scope and extent having major component of in-situ moisture conservation in arable land and productivity enhancement.

- River Valley Project and Flood Prone River Project (RVP & FPR)

Catchment areas of rivers are treated for soil and water conservation for enhancing productivity of degraded lands and reduces siltation in the reservoirs. It also promotes drought proofing

through in-situ and ex-situ moisture conservation. Tentative outlay for 10th plan is Rs.800 crore to treat 1.2 million hectare.

- Watershed Development Project for Shifting Cultivation (WDPSC)

This programme is under implementation in North –East States. It promotes soil and water conservation in shifting cultivation areas and encourages settled agriculture by Jhumia families.

Tentative outlay for 10th Plan is Rs.100 crore to treat 0.1 million hectare.

Department of Land Resources:

8.3 Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP)

This programme is under implementation mainly in the drought prone area. It aims at mitigating the effects of drought.

- Desert Development Programme (DDP)

It aims at combating the desertification in desert area.

- Integrated Wasteland Development project (IWDP)

This programme aims at development of waste land mainly in non-forest areas and putting such waste land to sustainable use and increasing biomass availability specially that of fuel wood, fodder, fibre, fruits and small timber.

Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF):

8.4 Integrated Afforestation and Eco-development Project Scheme (IAEPS)

This programme aims at rehabilitation of degraded forest area.

8.5 The Ministry further clarified that the target of watershed development under perspective plan of Planning Commission is 63 million hectare at Rs.72750 crore in 20 years, but current rate of coverage is highly inadequate. For effective coordination among the implementing

Ministries/Department, it has been proposed to have single National Initiative for all the programmes of watershed.

8.6 When asked about the permanent solution to reduction in the level of ground water, the Department stated that in order to find a solution to arrest the decline in ground water level, Central Ground Water Board prepared a Master Plan on Artificial Recharge to ground water. The Master Plan aims at providing area specific artificial recharge techniques to augment the ground water reservoir based on the twin important requirements of source water availability and capability of ground water reservoir to accommodate it. Out of total geographical area of 3287263 sq. km. of the country, an area of 448760 sq. km. has been identified for artificial recharge.

MASTER PLAN AT A GLANCE

1	Area Identified for Artificial Recharge	448760 sq. km
2	Volume of water to be recharged	36453 MCM
3	Total number of structures proposed (in lakhs)	
	• In Rural areas	2.25
	• In Urban areas (Roof top rain water harvesting)	37.00
	Total	39.25
4	Estimated Cost (Rs in Crore)	
	• In Rural areas	19876
	• In Urban areas	4587
	Total	24463
		Say 24500

8.7 During the evidence when asked as to what is the permanent solution for Drought, the Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Co-operation stated:

“Drought is there for hundreds of years and relief measures are being taken but there is no permanent solution as yet. Now we have tried watershed development programme as one of

the permanent solution. If the States implement this programme properly with the funds made available by the Centre the severity and recurrence of drought could be controlled to much extent. For this we need more funds for watershed development programme.”

Crop Diversification

8.8 Diversification is intended to give a wider choice in production of variety of crops to farmers. Diversification in India is generally viewed as a shift from traditionally grown less remunerative crop(s) to more remunerative crop(s). With the advent of modern agricultural technology, specially during the period of Green Revolution in late sixties and early seventies, there is a continuous surge for the diversified agriculture in terms of crops, primarily on economic considerations.

8.9 Crop Diversification is of immense value in the context of the following:

- Efficient use of resources (Example, crops in command area for rational sharing of water and also types of crops as per availability of water)
- Crop diversification in dark and grey areas where groundwater exploitation is high (high water requiring crop to low water requiring crops to low water requiring crops)
- For sustainable land use and in areas of depleting soil fertility (Example, Rice-Wheat cropping)
- For efficient natural resource management
- Diversification is also meant for reducing risk in rainfed areas (shift to drought resistant/tolerant crops)
- Provide wider choice to farmers to optimise overall farm income.

8.10 Crop Diversification for Drought proofing – Measures taken during 2002 –2003

Diversification from normally grown crops to other crops e.g.

- 4 lakh ha. cotton crop to soybean in Maharashtra
- 4 lakhs rabi/summer rice area to pulses and 1 lakh of kharif rice area to maize in Andhra Pradesh
- 2.5 lakh ha.cotton to soybean and pulses and 0.5 lakh ha from Tobacco to Bengal Gram in Andhra Pradesh
- 2 lakh ha area of upland rice to maize and pulses in Chhattisgarh
- 0.60 lakh ha area of small millets to maize in Madhya Pradesh
- 0.60 lakh ha cotton area to pulses in Tamil Nadu

8.11 During the evidence, Agricultural Commissioner stated that in case of drought, if we have a very large diversified crops that will also give a kind of insurance against risk because if you go for a very large number of crops in a given area, some crops will be susceptible, to some extent, to moisture, some crops will be drought tolerant, and some crops will be drought resistant, and they have different capability of growing themselves in the given environment. “We feel that if the crop diversification is taken up in a proper spirit in these States, which are chronically affected by the drought, that will be good for these States”, he stated.

8.12 There are also certain issues connected with the crop diversification. Certain crops, like rice and sugarcane take a lot of water for growing. If these crops are replaced, to some extent, by crops which will be requiring less water or consume less water, a lot more crops could be grown and better harvest could be obtained from these crops.

Inter-Linking of Rivers

8.13 The Government has formulated a National Perspective Plan which envisages inter-linking of various peninsular and Himalayan rivers so as to have inter basin transfer of water from surplus to deficit areas. The Union Government has constituted a Task Force under the Chairmanship of Shri Suresh P. Prabhu, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha with Shri C.C. Patel as Vice-Chairman and Dr. C.D. Thatte as Member-Secretary to expedite the inter-linking of Rivers and to draw up a programme for ensuring the implementation of the link project with a reasonable time.

PART – II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS

EFFECT OF DROUGHT ON INDIAN ECONOMY

1. The Committee note that the Indian Economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, which constitutes 27% of country's GDP. About 70% of country's population is engaged in agriculture related activities. Whenever the agricultural production has fallen, GDP has witnessed a downswing due to high proportional dependence on agriculture.

Monsoon has been, and still is, the life force that drives Indian agriculture. Though the small deviation in the monsoon has not resulted in any major decline in the agricultural production, yet large deviations ($\pm 20\%$) have had an adverse effect on the agriculture production.

The drought of 2002-03 is estimated to have adversely affected agricultural production, which is about 19% less than the last year, which in turn has affected the overall GDP growth. As this sector plays a key role in determining consumer demand, drought impact has a knock on effect on industry and on services sector. Cascading effect of drought is felt in the fiscal sphere also. The Committee, therefore, are of the strong view that the drought problem has to be tackled through concerted efforts by all sectors of economy to help agricultural producers and the poor in agriculture. Drought mitigation deserves the utmost priority and should be the concern of one and all. The Committee recommend that proper initiatives

should be taken by generating rural wage employment through programmes so that the damages and sufferings due to drought can be contained to some extent.

FORECASTING BY IMD

2. The Committee find that in the months prior to the expected start of the rainy season, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) makes predictions about the onset date and rainfall potential of the monsoon using a statistical model based on 16 parameters which indicate the potential strength of monsoon circulation. In their press release dated 25.5.2002, IMD predicted for a normal south-west monsoon season for the year 2002 for the country as a whole. However, the prediction has come out to be inaccurate as most parts of the country faced drought like condition during 2002-03. The Committee feel that had the Meteorological Department made somewhat accurate predictions, the farmers could have acted accordingly and saved their money, seeds and labour.

The Committee have been informed by IMD that long range predictions for four month season cannot be 100% accurate as these are based on statistics, hence, some error is inevitable. While noting the Department's constraints, the Committee feel that there is an urgent need to review the whole system of making weather predictions by IMD in consultation with other related departments and methodology used in other countries.

The Committee were informed that IMD has recast its long-range forecast model by excluding those parameters which have lost their relationship with the monsoon rainfall and adopting new parameters. The updated model that incorporates two more parameters has a model error of 4%. The Committee hope that the new model of IMD would be more accurate with a better scientific base. In this connection, the Committee also recommend that funds should not be a constraint in acquiring/adopting new technology/infrastructure

as the early warning of the impending drought can ensure better preparedness to mitigate its effects to some extent. The Committee desire that IMD should formulate a detailed plan indicating the financial implications involved and place it before the relevant authority to acquire the latest modern technologies.

The Committee were further informed that IMD is developing Coupled Atmosphere Ocean model for which more ocean data is required for better model designs. The Committee recommend that the Government should allocate adequate funds to agencies involved in collecting ocean data for analysis by the IMD so that the Meteorological Department is in a better position to have relevant and timely data to be able to make more accurate predictions.

DECLARATION OF DROUGHT

3. The Committee note that the declaration of an area, district or the entire State as drought-affected is a State subject. It is entirely upto the States to decide the time of declaring any district/region as drought-hit. The Committee find that there is no fixed criteria for making the announcement and it varies from State to State. The Committee are unhappy to note that during the drought of 2002-2003, some State Governments, particularly Tamil Nadu, have made inordinate delays in declaring the drought-hit areas in their States. This delay in announcements resulted in the late initiation of relief measures by the State and getting relief from the Centre thereby aggravating the difficulties/ hardships being faced by the poor farmers. The Committee, therefore, recommend the Central Government to impress upon the States to declare the affected areas as drought-hit well in time so that timely relief reaches the farmers and the poor.

The Committee, further, recommend that the Central Government should also keep a watch on the situation in the States and, in case, they find any delay in making drought declaration by States, they should take up the matter with them at the highest level.

TASK FORCE

4. The Committee note that various steps have been taken by the Centre to deal with the drought situation. A Task Force under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister and with Ministers of Finance, Agriculture, Rural Development and Food along with Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission as members was constituted to lay down guidelines to deal with drought situation. The Task Force during its 12 sittings held in this connection took various important decisions in regard to allotment of foodgrains, financial assistance etc. to the affected States.

The Committee are, however, constrained to find that foodgrains and funds sanctioned by the Task Force were much less than the actual demands of the States. The overall percentage of financial assistance sanctioned was 11% of the demands placed by the States. The reasons for wide gap between demands of States and assistance sanctioned was that the demand of cash assistance by States for relief employment was not acceded to by the Central Government.

The Committee were informed that as per the policy of Government of India, relief employment is to be generated from the special component of Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana, which envisages provision of foodgrains to be paid as wages subject to the condition that the foodgrains component cannot exceed 75% of total wages with balance 25% being paid in cash. While the entire cost of foodgrains is to be borne by the Central Government, the remaining expenditure must be the responsibility of State Government concerned.

The Committee, however, find that the drought-ridden States are in a poor financial health and hence are not in a position to pay 25% of their contribution of cash assistance. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should take a more liberal view taking into consideration the financial condition of the States and relax their norms so that the relief programmes do not suffer for lack of funds with the States. For the States which are not financially strong the Government should consider providing 100% central assistance.

From the material furnished, the Committee find that there has been considerable time lag in the visit of Central Team to the affected areas from the date of receipt of Memorandum for relief assistance by the State. The Central Government started receiving Memoranda for assistance from States from the beginning of August but the Central teams started visiting the affected States only from the 2nd week of September. The Committee strongly feel that there should be a quick response to the request by the States as immediate relief is needed by the States to cope up with the drought situation. The Committee, therefore, recommend that central team be sent to States within ten days of receipt of request by the States to enable early release of assistance to the affected States.

CRF/NCCF

5. The Committee find that Central Government is providing financial assistance to States under Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) and National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) based on the recommendations of Eleventh Finance Commission. CRF which is a permanent Fund with the State and the Centre contribution in the ratio of 1:3 goes automatically to the Fund. The States meet their requirements for various calamity relief (including drought) from the Fund and when they exhaust their own calamity relief funds, they approach the Centre for NCCF, which is wholly funded by the Centre. The Committee are, however, constrained to find that the Ministry of Agriculture was unable to furnish the information regarding the amount spent from CRF on drought relief by each State.

The Secretary (Agriculture) informed the Committee during evidence that they have no mechanism whereby they can split the CRF in drought relief and other calamity relief. The Committee strongly disapprove it as this does not give a clear picture of relief money being spent by States for drought mitigation. The Committee are, therefore, of the strong view that Central Government should maintain the data of complete break up of CRF spent on various activities by the States and also monitor them as to whether the CRF has been utilized by States judiciously and on areas, which needed priority.

DRINKING WATER

6. The Committee find that paucity of drinking water is the most acute problem associated with the drought. The drought 2002 has created a severe drinking water shortage in affected States. The Committee note that action has been taken by Central as well as State Governments to meet the drinking water shortage by transporting the same through tanker trucks and railways to the water scarcity areas, However, this is not sufficient to meet their requirements. The Committee find that the Task Force under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, has been set up on 31.12.2002 to help drought affected States to tide over the acute water scarcity. The Committee are unhappy at such a late setting up of Task Force on an issue of such a grave concern. They, however, hope that the Task Force would suggest concrete steps to overcome the problem.

The Committee note that the Ministry of Rural Development has set apart 5% of the total funds available under Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) to meet contingencies arising due to national calamities like drought, earthquakes and floods. The total outlay for 2002-2003 was Rs.105 crore. The funds are released when the States exceed the CRF and NCCF. The Committee were informed that as on 25.02.03 Ministry has still Rs.50 to 60 crore available with them under the programme. The Committee desire that the Government should not wait for exhaustion of funds under CRF and NCCF by the State, but should immediately allocate funds available under ARWSP to tackle the problem of drinking water shortage in the drought affected States. Since most of drought hit

States are experiencing acute drinking water scarcity problem, the Committee desire the Ministry of Rural Development to expedite the release of funds under the programme. The State's civic bodies should also ensure that there is just distribution of water with prevention of wastage and minimal losses in transportation.

MONITORING COMMITTEE

7. The Committee find that in one of the meetings taken by the Task Force in August, 2002, it was decided that the States may keep the Members of Parliament actively involved in formulation and implementation of drought strategies, especially programmes relating to wage employment under the Food for Work programme by the State Government. In pursuance of the decision, the Minister for Agriculture and Secretary (Agriculture) have written to Chief Ministers of the affected States requesting them to form district level committees and to actively involve local MPs/MLAs in the committees. As per the instructions issued at the district level, the Chairman of the committee is one of the MPs and the other MPs of that district are the members of the committee. As informed by the Ministry, these instructions were issued only in December 2002 and the Department was following it up. The Committee are dismayed that though the decision was taken by the Task Force as early as in August, the instructions were issued only in December and the Committee have been informed that although these committees have been constituted, the meetings of the committees have not been convened. The Committee, therefore, recommend the Ministry to write to States at the Task Force level that if they are not able to implement this formula, they are not going to release the next installment of foodgrains or funds. The Committee further desire that there should be permanent such committees within the States which should monitor the utilization of funds and other assistance released by the Central Government for various calamities or other relief programme.

FOOD FOR WORK PROGRAMME

8. The Committee find that the Food for Work programme is being undertaken by the Government in various drought affected States. The Committee are of the view that Food for Work programme is the biggest plank of the drought relief strategy. This massive programme has to be implemented effectively and efficiently so as to reduce the impact of drought on the lives of affected people. The programme involves various Ministries, Departments, Organizations and State Governments, which are responsible for allocation, release, transport, distribution, etc. of foodgrains. The Committee opine that there is an imperative need for proper coordination among various Departments and Agencies so as to make the programme a success. The Committee while appreciating the performance of various agencies during the drought observed that there were occasional shortcomings in some areas. The problems like inadequate supply of foodgrains, non-lifting of foodgrains by some States, poor quality of foodgrains, etc. came to the notice of the Committee during the examination of the subject. The Committee desire that these issues should be settled by the Task Force/concerned Departments promptly as and when they arise so that the programme runs smoothly and efficiently.

MONITORING OF DISTRIBUTION OF FOODGRAINS

9. The Committee find that Central teams visit States to monitor/ take stock of the utilization of foodgrains by the States. The Committee are of the view that these Central teams should also interact with the MPs/MLAs of the area and make a joint inspection of foodgrains position in the State to see that allotted amount of money and foodgrains reach the really affected people.

INCLUSION OF MATERIAL COMPONENT IN RELIEF ASSISTANCE

10. The Committee have noted that till the year 1999-2000, the schemes of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) and National Fund for Calamity Relief (NFCR), then in vogue, provided for meeting the cost of material component of employment generation works from the relief assistance provided under these schemes. The recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission (EFC), however, debarred meeting the cost of expenditure on works of Capital nature, like material component from the funds provided under CRF and National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF). There is no provision for material component under the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana Scheme (SGRY) implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development. The State Governments are also not in a position to earmark funds for this item from their resources. The Committee are distressed with this situation, because if the labour construct a road with sand and there is no provision to make it concrete or permanent structure, then it will get washed on the advent of rain. They find that it is a very serious problem and is a sheer wastage of manpower, funds and valuable resources of the country. The Committee, therefore, recommend that there should be at least 30% material component so that whatever work is done with relief funds, its permanent structure remains at least for few years and is helpful during the drought situations. The Committee desire the Department to take up this matter with the Twelfth Finance Commission to meet the cost of material component of employment generation works from the relief assistance.

MINIMUM WAGES

11. The Committee note that as per the guidelines, the quantum of wages in relief employment is to be equivalent to the minimum wages prescribed in the State concerned. The wages are task-linked. But the Committee have noticed that very few labour get the prescribed minimum wages. There are some cases when the labourers are exploited and they don't receive wages as per their toil. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Central Government should have proper monitoring to ensure that the workers receive at least the minimum wages as prescribed by the State and higher wages in proportion to the work done.

USE OF MACHINES IN SGRY

12. The Committee note with serious concern that in some parts of the drought affected areas, reports have been received about the use of contractors and labour displacing machines in the Sampoorna Grameena Rozgar Yojana/ Special Component of SGRY. The Committee are of the opinion that since the SGRY programme is specially meant for enhancing wage employment only labour intensive works should be taken up under these programmes. During the drought situation, these programmes are the only hope for the poor farmers, landless agricultural labour and other poor. Therefore, under no circumstances machinery should be deployed for works under SGRY. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Government should take up with States for strict adherence of this guideline of SGRY. In this connection, the Task Force should also monitor that no contractor or labour displacing machines are employed and in case of any violation, penal action should be taken against the person/organisation concerned.

FODDER

13. The Committee observe that there has been acute shortage of fodder in drought hit States due to which there has been a great loss of livestock in the rural areas. Though the Central Government has taken measures to transport fodder to Rajasthan and other States by trains and Hon'ble Prime Minister has also extended a package of Rs.25 crore for support to States for Gaushalas, these are not adequate to feed the entire cattle population in drought ridden States. The Committee find that technologies exist whereby dry fodder can be enriched, concentrated and compacted into feed pellets and sugarcane tops and wilted sugarcane stock is chaffed and fed as green fodder. In India, a few farmers have started using sugarcane tops for fodder but still most of the farmers burn them in their farms, which is a great loss to the country. The Committee desire that the Ministry should make a detailed study of the technologies prevalent in other countries in this regard and work out a suitable technology for implementing in Indian conditions and extensively popularising the same among farmers. The Committee further note that a new scheme proposed by Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying on Fodder Development, where enrichment of fodder, its compacting, storage and distribution have been included, is pending before the Planning Commission for consideration. The Committee desire that keeping in view the great fodder shortage during the drought for 2002-03, the Planning Commission should consider and give early approval to the scheme.

CROP INSURANCE

14. The main objective of National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) is to protect farmers against crop losses suffered on account of natural calamities, such as drought, flood, hailstorm, cyclone etc. The farmers who have suffered great losses due to the drought have great expectation from the NAIS scheme to mitigate their hardships. The Committee were informed that insurance claim for Kharif 2002 were received in April, 2003 and about 37 lakhs farmers would be benefited with total claims of Rs.196 crore. The Committee desire that prompt insurance claims should be paid to the farmers so that they can take up next sowing of crops. The Committee would further like to emphasize their earlier recommendations made in various reports that panchayat level should be taken as a unit for insurance so that more and more drought affected farmers are able to get the compensation.

The Committee further note that due to discrepancies noticed by the Implementing Agencies, some claims of States of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Orissa are under investigation. The Committee desire that these may be settled and paid urgently so that the genuine claimants do not suffer.

The Committee find that crop is insured by Insurance Agencies one month after it is sown. The Committee are of the view that one month is a long period and the crops can get damaged by natural calamity in the intervening period. They desire that this period should be reduced and the crop should be insured 15 days after it has been sown.

WAIVER OF INTEREST ON AGRICULTURE LOAN

15. The Committee note that Hon'ble Prime Minister of India had announced on 14 November, 2002 that interest on both Kharif Crop loan and agricultural term loan for the year 2002-2003 would be deferred and would be rescheduled into term loans to be recovered over the next 5 years in the case of small and marginal farmers. In order to further mitigate the hardships of farmers in drought affected States, Hon'ble Prime Minister announced on December 18, 2002 to waive off completely, the first year's deferred liability of interest on Kharif loans as a one time measure. The Committee feel that this waiver is not enough to mitigate the hardships of the farmers. They, therefore, desire that the whole interest should be waived on agricultural credit in drought affected areas to provide relief to the farmers.

WATERSHED PROGRAMMES BY ONE DEPARTMENT

16. The Committee note that drought is a periodic phenomenon in India. Almost 70% area of the country is drought prone. The Committee, therefore, feel that there is an imperative need to make these areas drought proof so that the people are not put to hardships.

The Committee also note that as a long term measure for drought proofing, the Government is implementing various schemes for holistic and sustainable development of rainfed areas on watershed approach as it constitutes 61% country's arable land and produce 45% of foodgrains production. Many projects aimed at conserving soil and water are being implemented based on watershed approach by different Departments viz.

- (i). Department of Agriculture and Co-operation
- (ii). Department of Land Resources
- (iii). Ministry of Environment and Forest; and
- (iv). Ministry of Water Resources

The Committee are constrained to find that since the inception of the various programmes in 1975, the area treated is only 276.13 lakh ha with a total investment of Rs. 9892 crore. Keeping in view the target of watershed development of 63 million hectare in 20 years under the perspective plan of Planning Commission, the current rate of coverage is grossly inadequate. For accelerated implementation of watershed programme, there is a need to allocate more funds. The Committee, therefore, recommend to the Planning Commission to provide more funds for

watershed programme so as to achieve the targets set up by the Planning Commission itself so that the treated areas acquire a measure of drought proofing. The Committee, further, feel that having the watershed programme under various Departments result in wastage of funds and overlapping of work. The Committee, therefore, recommend that for effective co-ordination among all the schemes/projects, all the watershed programmes should be handled by one single Ministry/Department. The funds should be provided to one nodal Ministry and be implemented and monitored by that Ministry so as to ensure proper utilisation of funds and resources.

SCHEME ON GROUND WATER RECHARGING

17. The Committee note with serious concern the depleting ground water level, which is the main cause of sufferings of the farmers during the drought situation. In this connection, the Committee in their various Reports on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Water Resources have been recommending for an early approval and implementation of proposed scheme on ‘Artificial Recharge of Ground Water’ so as to have a holistic and scientific augmentation of ground water resources which can be a great help during the hour of need.

The Committee note that the Central Ground Water Board has prepared a master plan on Artificial Recharge to Ground Water aimed at providing area specific artificial recharge techniques to augment the ground water reservoir based on twin important requirements of source water availability and capability of ground water reservoir to accommodate it. The Committee desire the Government to urgently consider the plan and place it before the Planning Commission together with the proposed scheme on ‘Artificial Recharge of Ground Water’ and vigorously pursue with the Planning Commission for their early approval and implementation. The Committee further recommend that the works under Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana(SGRY) should be extended to include the works under artificial recharge to ground water.

CROP DIVERSIFICATION

18. The Committee find that crop diversification by switching from normal crops to other crops, which can better withstand the effects of drought as an important measure of drought proofing. In the recent drought, the diversification of crop from normally grown crops to other crops was resorted to in some States. The Committee feel that as a long term measure, in certain areas where drought is somewhat permanent feature, the farmers should be encouraged to diversify from more water intensive crops to some other crops which are of short duration and require less water as for instance oilseeds and pulses so that more crops could be grown and there are less suffering due to drought. To motivate farmers to take up these crops, the related infrastructural and marketing facilities like oilseeds mills, etc. may be established in the vicinity. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Department should work out detailed crop patterns that can be adopted by farmers in drought prone areas taking into consideration the availability of various related factors like irrigation, marketing and processing facilities etc. and popularise them with the farmers through KVKs and other extension agencies. The Committee further recommend that ICAR should intensify research in developing new varieties of seeds which are drought resistant and for these programmes separate funds should be earmarked.

FREQUENTLY DROUGHT AFFECTED AREA

19. The Committee find that districts in some States are somewhat permanently drought affected and experience consecutive droughts for several years putting the people to great hardships. The Committee desire that Government should urgently chalk out a separate well-formulated long-term programme to combat drought in these areas. The programme which should involve various Ministries/Departments should be implemented by a single nodal Ministry and Planning Commission should make available adequate separate funds to implement the programme.

RAINWATER HARVESTING

20. The Committee are happy to find that 2003 has come out to be a good monsoon year. Most of the States are receiving good rainfall except some States like Karnataka and Kerala, which have received deficient rainfall, as a result, the water reservoir position in these States continues to be of concern. Keeping in view the experience of the last year monsoon, the Committee strongly feel that States receiving good monsoon should make its maximum use for the future needs. Rainwater harvesting, which is a major tool for meeting future water needs, should be taken up in a big way. The Committee also desire that more check-dams should be constructed and other traditional methods of conserving water may be adopted. The Committee desire the Government to chalk out a nation-wide programme with the involvement of NGOs and local bodies to harvest rainwater so as to increase the ground water level position so that in times of water scarcity, this can be made use of.

STUDIES ON DROUGHT

21. The Committee are of the view that there is a need for long-term studies for assessment of drought. The various strategies/methods employed by central Government/local bodies to mitigate drought should be studied and evaluated. It will help during the occurrence of drought situation in future. The various Ministries/Departments should also make an evaluation of their own schemes on drought mitigation and modify them in the light of experience gained. Since drought is a recurring phenomenon in India, the Committee desire that Government should set up a Committee to extensively examine the above issues and bring out a comprehensive plan both for the short term and long term measures to be undertaken by Central and the State Governments in the drought prone States.

Inter Linking of Rivers

22. The Committee note that the Union Government has constituted a Task Force under the Chairmanship of Shri Suresh P. Prabhu, MP to expedite the inter-linking of rivers and to draw up a programme for ensuring the implementation of the link with a reasonable time frame. The Committee feel that this plan of inter-linking of rivers which envisages inter-basin transfer of water from surplus to deficit areas is very important and when implemented will provide an effective solution to the problem of drought. Therefore, they desire the Government to expedite this plan which besides mitigating the sufferings of people due to drought will also provide additional irrigation benefits to large area, so essential for boosting up the agricultural production.

New Delhi;
20 October, 2003
28 Asvina, 1925 (Saka)

S.S.Palanimanickam
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Agriculture