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Title : Need to provide funds and implement 'The Hogenakkal Integrated Drinking Water Project' in Dharmapuri District of Tamil Nadu with a view to solve acute drinking water problem in the region.

DR. R. SENTHIL (DHARMAPURI): Dharmapuri district is one of the most backward districts in India. This district receives very low rainfall and has always been suffering from water scarcity. The people of this district depend on agriculture and with such low rainfall, the agriculture does not generate sufficient income for the people. Hence, they migrate to nearby Karnataka, Bangalore in particular for their livelihood. But the most important problem is drinking water itself. The ground water is at a very low level. The State Government spends money on digging bore wells. But most of them are failures and are losses. Digging wells are also of no use.

The only option for drinking water for this district is 'The Hogenakkal Integrated Drinking Water Project'. The project was planned more than 40 years ago. It was about to be started in 1999, with Japanese aid. But following Pokhran nuclear experiment, Japan withdrew its aid. Hence it could not be started.

The cost of the project is Rs. 1,060 crore. The Tamil Nadu State Government is not committed to this project. Hence, I request the Government of India to consider the plight of the people of this district and execute the project from its own funds. The Government of India has sanctioned funds for the 'Desalination Project' in Chennai. In a similar fashion, the Government could fund this very important project. We request the hon. Minister of Rural Development to consider our request.

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15.00 hrs.