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Title: Need to provide relief package for drought affected districts of Tamil Nadu.

SHRI P. LINGAM (TENKASI): During the year 2012-13, Tamil Nadu witnessed unprecedented severe drought. Monsoon failure during Kharif and Rabi seasons and non-release of Cauvery river water to Tamil Nadu by Karnataka have led to a pitiable situation leading to loss of crops. Union Government failed to insist upon Karnataka to release water of Cauvery river to Tamil Nadu. The farmers were forced to take loan from money-lenders, who charged exorbitant rates of interest. The farmers pledged their jewels and houses and at times they even sold them so as to arrange for irrigation and to protect their crops. Because of losses due to drought, farmers were compelled to commit suicides. In this situation, the State Government of Tamil Nadu announced all the districts in the State except Chennai as drought affected and executed relief measures. The State Government provided financial assistance to the drought affected farmers as a relief measure. Jobless agricultural labourers of the Cauvery Delta region were provided work under Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Scheme for more number of man days by the State government. The State Government has demanded Rs. 19,555/-crore from the Union Government as drought relief package. The Union Government had also sent a central team to review the drought situation in the State. Even though there is adequate monsoon rainfall this year, the drought like situation still prevails in Tamil Nadu. The farmers could not cultivate again due to want of money and the problem continues to prevail.

In order to make farmers in Tamil Nadu to engage in agricultural activities, I, through this august House, urge upon the Union Government to provide immediately a relief package of Rs. 19,555/- crore to the drought affected districts of Tamil Nadu, as demanded by the State Government.