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Title: Drought situation in Orissa and other parts of the country.

SHRI B. MAHTAB: Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of this House and also of the Government relating to the failure of monsoon in large parts of Eastern India, especially, Orissa.

Out of 30 districts of Orissa, agricultural activities have been seriously affected in at least 11 districts because of deficient rainfall. Orissa received 16 per cent less rainfall this monsoon -- down from the average normal of 773.6 mm -- till mid-August. Of the 314 blocks of Orissa, only 91 had received normal rainfall in June, July and August. Large tracts of Orissa, especially, 16 districts have scanty rainfall. In nine districts, it is less by between 30 per cent and 80 per cent and in other districts it is 30 per cent less. Here, I am told that the coastal districts of Orissa including, Sir, in your Constituency at Chandwali has very less rainfall. The saplings are not being transplanted; the paddy crop has already withered away in Sambalpur, Bargarh and Sundargarh districts; and the farmers of Orissa are facing tremendous difficulty. It is not only the case of the State of Orissa, which is hit by deficient rainfall. The State of Bihar is facing drought-like situation; in Jharkhand, the rainfall has been 45-60 per cent below this year; in West Bengal, there is an average shortfall of 33 per cent rainfall; and the Eastern part of Uttar Pradesh is also facing tremendous drought-like situation. This drought stricken districts of South Bengal is worsening the situation day after day even in Orissa. Eastern States face a spectre of drought for the second year. That is why, I need to support from the Central Government. The Central Government should come out with full vigour to support respective State Governments because the States are now looking to the Centre for support of providing seedlings, of providing seeds and also providing other measures. Unless it is done immediately, the farmers will be facing great difficulty. Therefore, I urge upon the Government, through you, that the Government of India should come out with support for paddy cultivators.