

Request to take immediate steps to aid the states facing drought or drought-like conditions

SHRI N. REDDEPPA (CHITTOOR): A grave threat looms over our agriculture and food security enhancing droughts. India's changing climate has led to a 57 per cent increase in drought-prone areas since 1997. Warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicate a rising drought crisis in South Asia, endangering food availability and causing undernourishment. Flash droughts, caused by climate change, have further intensified the problem. Andhra Pradesh has already experienced deficit rainfall during the crucial southwest monsoon, risking major crop yields and food security in several districts.

Amidst this, the Central Government's recent reduction in financial support for drought mitigation raises concerns. Previously, both moderate and severe droughts qualified for assistance from the National Disaster Relief Fund. However, a 2016 revision now restricts aid to the States facing severe droughts. Furthermore, there is also a need for the Central Government to re-evaluate the existing criteria for the States to declare drought, making them more responsive to each State's unique challenges. These changes will ensure timely relief for farmers and vulnerable populations.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government to take immediate steps to aid the States facing drought or drought-like conditions. We must also work to advance our drought preparedness and management system as an integral component of our national disaster management strategy.

Thank you very much, Sir.