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Title: Need to release funds for linking Thamirabharani river to Karumeni and Nambi rivers in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI S.S. RAMASUBBU (TIRUNELVELI): In Tamil Nadu, the areas including Nanguneri, Radhapuram and Sathankulam are drought affected due to scanty rainfall. On an average in a year, these places in Tirunelveli district receive less than 500 mm of rain. During rainy season, Karumeni and Nambiar rivers flow through these areas and around 252 ponds are benefitted by these rivers. In Tirunelveli district, Thamirabharani is a perennial river and every year 13000 million Cubic feet of surplus water from this river flow into the sea. Surplus flood water from Thamirabharani river should be routed to Karumeni and Nambi rivers by digging a canal with a storage capacity of 3200 cubic feet. Government of Tamil Nadu had started a scheme at a cost of Rs. 369 crore in the year 2008-09 for digging a canal starting from Vellankuzhi and connecting Karumeni and Nambi rivers for taking the surplus flood water to the drought affected Thisayanvilai and ML Theri. It was decided to implement the canal digging work in four phases. For completion of four phases distance of 73 kilometers need to complete. Now the work is stalled. It is learnt from the State Government of Tamil Nadu that the scheme of interlinking of rivers is being implemented by 90% financial assistance from the Union Government. There is inordinate delay in completing this project. Moreover, the farmers are migrating towards towns to work as daily wagers as drought-like situation has affected their agricultural activities. In order to protect poor farmers and to mitigate their problems relating to drinking water facilities in this area, the scheme for diversion of surplus Thamirabarani river water should be completed on war-footing.

I shall, therefore, urge upon the Union Government to issue necessary directions to release 90% of funds immediately, which is its share, for implementation of canal digging work for channelizing surplus water from Thamirabharani river to Karumeni and Nambi rivers which could help to irrigate 23,040 hectares of land in Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu.

