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Title: Need to allocate sufficient funds to tackle acute drought situation in Maharashtra.

SHRI GANESHTAO NAGORAO DUDHGAONKAR (PARBHANI): As many as 15 districts of Maharashtra have been affected badly by the State's worst agricultural crisis since 2003. Now the drought situation is unprecedented. Jalna is facing worst drought in decades. There is no water. Women are forced to wait and beg for water on the roads. Tankers have not reached Khedgon village for weeks. Many villagers in the region have locked their homes and migrated to towns like Aurangabad, Pune and Mumbai for work.

One of the biggest problems in this part of Maharashtra is that farmers have shifted from traditional crops to cash crops like cotton and sugarcane in the last decade because the returns are more lucrative. But they are more water-intensive. So, when a drought strikes, it is total destruction.

What made the situation worse is the non completion of irrigation projects for which the Maharashtra Government spent nearly Rs.70,000 crores in the past decade. According to an economic survey only 0.1 per cent of additional land has been irrigated. This is more a man made calamity than a natural one. Therefore, I urge upon the Central Government to release sufficient funds to the State of Maharashtra to tide over the situation to provide relief, water and to open fodder camps for the cattle immediately and link all Central Government's schemes like MNREGA and other social schemes with drought hit areas of Maharashtra.