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Title: Need to relax conditions for drought relief works in Maharashtra.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI (PUNE): Maharashtra is facing one of the worst droughts in the past 40 years. Out of 34 districts in Maharashtra, the worst affected are Pune, Satara, Solapur, Ahmednagar, Beed and Nasik, which do not have enough drinking water reserves to sustain human lives and cattle stock even for a fortnight. Severe drought has compelled people of 3,905 villages in 12 districts of the State to migrate to neighbouring States of Gujarat, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

The Maharashtra Government has launched multiple programmes including animal camps, drinking water supply through tankers and works under the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme. The State Government has mandated drip irrigation for sugarcane cultivation as sugar mills are the backbone of the state economy and which provide livelihood to lakhs of people.

In this background, Maharashtra Government has urged the Union Government to relax some of its conditions for drought relief so that help can be provided to larger area. The state has also sought the Central Government's help to recover pending electricity dues in drought affected areas as well as increasing the grant for every cattle head from Rs. 32 to Rs. 80.

I urge upon the Union Government to accede to these requests of the Maharashtra Government and issue necessary instructions in this regard without any further delay.