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title: Need to take steps to tackle the drought situation prevalent in various parts of the country.

SHRI MUTHAMSETTI SRINIVASA RAO (AVANTHI) (ANAKAPALLI): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on the distressing drought situation in several States, including Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Due to scanty rainfall and consecutive droughts for the past three years, States are reeling under drought situation. According to Press reports, the Centre has released Rs. 4,000 crore for seven drought-hit States from the National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF), and Andhra Pradesh has received Rs. 280.19 crore. I do not know how much other States have got. I would request you to please release more funds for drought and drinking water.

The water table has come down deeply. Villagers are walking a few kilometres from their homes to fetch drinking water every day. They are taking bath once in ten days. There is migration of villagers from rural areas to urban areas in search of livelihood, mainly heading towards construction work.

In order to discourage migration of villagers from rural areas to urban areas, I would suggest that additional days of work under MGNREGA to households in drought affected areas be provided immediately. There is a severe fodder shortage for animals. That means higher production costs for producing milk particularly in Rayalaseema area. Our State Government has released Rs.3 crore.

Therefore, what is required to be done is long term solution. The Government should encourage rain water harvesting; rather it should be made mandatory. The Government should not allow private contractors for digging bore wells but only certified contractors should be allowed. In every rainy season the Government should finance and motivate citizens to plant more and more trees. At the same time, the rain water should not be released into the sea. It should be stored in tanks, ponds and dams. The allocation of budget for irrigation should be enhanced considerably.

I hope that the Government will pay attention to my suggestions and tackle the drought situation under the able leadership of the hon. Prime Minister.