

# DROUGHT MANAGEMENT

The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation coordinates the Central Government's response to the management of drought in a crisis management mode. In other words, all the measures required to be taken by the Central Government to assist States in dealing with a drought situation are coordinated by this Department. In order to effectively discharge this responsibility, a very close watch is kept on the weekly rainfall scenario reported by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) during the South-West Monsoon and also early signs of emerging droughts. The Department also stimulates research and investigation (including documentation of managing the crisis) relating to drought. Recently, the responsibility of coordinating relief measures in the event of hailstorms and pest attacks has also been assigned to this Department.

**18.2 Scenario in Various States:** During the South-West Monsoon (1 June 2006 to 30 September 2006), the country as a whole received 886.6 mm of rainfall against the normal rainfall of 892.2 mm, with a deviation of -1 per cent. The South-West Monsoon rainfall was excess/normal in 26 out of 36 meteorological sub-divisions and the remaining 10 sub divisions registered deficient rainfall.

**18.3** During the year, the State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh reported drought/drought-like situation of varying magnitude. The State Government of Bihar also submitted a report on monsoon failure resulting in drought-like situation in parts of the State.

**18.4** Senior officials from this Department visited Assam, Nagaland and West Bengal for preliminary assessment of the situation. In Assam, rice is the major crop, and the area coverage under rice was less during 2006 than it was during 2005. No serious problem of drinking water or fodder was anticipated. The State Government took mitigating relief measures which included free distribution of POL to the needy farmers where shallow tube wells/low lift pump facilities were available for providing irrigation to paddy crop and distribution of certified black gram seeds to the farmers in the affected areas. In Nagaland, while no serious problem of drinking water or fodder was noticed, the State Government was advised to make area-wise and crop-wise surveys. In West Bengal, areas covered by Kharif paddy and jute were affected, but there was no report of shortage of drinking water in the affected areas. Steps taken by the State Government to assist the affected farmers included assistance to meet the cost of installation of tube-wells for irrigation and repair; and renovation and restoration of different minor irrigation installations. Steps taken by the Government of Bihar to mitigate the drought situation in the affected areas included directions to ensure replenishment of water in rivers in command areas; directions to maintain a steady supply of electricity where irrigation was not possible through rivers; directions to ensure the constant supply of diesel to the farmers to enable them to run their diesel pump-sets; provision of subsidy on supply of

diesel to the affected farmers; and issue of guidelines to the farmers to take steps to safeguard moisture and adopt crop diversification.

18.5 There was some damage to crops in certain areas in Nashik and other districts of Maharashtra due to a hailstorm in November 2006. A three-member team from the Department visited the affected areas for assessment of the situation.

18.6 **Memoranda for Central Assistance:** The State Government of Karnataka had submitted a revised memorandum for drought seeking Central Assistance to the tune of Rs 1262.95 crore from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) and 5.74 lakh MTs of food grains from the special component of Sampurn Grameen Rozgar Yojana for relief employment. An inter-ministerial central team was constituted to visit the State for on-the-spot assessment of the situation. The recommendations of the central team and that of the inter-ministerial group were considered by a high-level committee for approving the quantum of Central Assistance required to be given to the State Government. As an interim measure, 1 lakh MT of rice was approved for the State to initiate necessary relief employment works in the affected areas.

18.7 In response to the Memorandum for drought relief received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh, an inter-ministerial central team has been constituted to visit the state for assessment of the situation.

18.8 The Government of Rajasthan has proposed to provide relief employment to the affected population in the drought declared areas during January to June 2007, and their request for allocation of food grains is under consideration.