

Bill No. V of 2015

THE DROUGHT AFFECTED AND DROUGHT PRONE
AREAS (SPECIAL PROVISIONS) BILL, 2015

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BILL

to provide for the special provisions such as compulsory maintenance of food and potable water supplies for human consumption and fodder for livestock of the farmers, financial assistance for lost crops to farmers in drought affected areas of the country by the Union Government and for creation of water bodies like lakes, ponds, wells, rainwater harvesting, diversification of water intensive crops to low water intensive requirement crops, community afforestation programmes etc., as long term action plan for the drought prone areas of the country by the Union Government and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Sixty-sixth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the Drought Affected and Drought Prone Areas (Special Provisions) Act, 2015.

(2) It extends to the whole of India.

5 (3) It shall come into force with immediate effect.

Short title,
extent and
commencement.

Definitions.	2. In this Act, unless, the context otherwise requires,—	
	(a) “appropriate Government” means in the case of a State, the Government of that State and in other cases, the Central Government;	
	(b) “drought affected area” means any area situated in any part of the country which has got below normal rainfall in any season of a calendar year and which in the opinion of the Central Government has been affected by drought and declared, by notification in the Official Gazette, to be a drought affected area for such period as may be specified in the notification;	5
	(c) “drought prone areas” means the areas where average rainfall is consistently below normal and also include such areas which in the opinion of the Central Government are drought prone and declared as such, by notification in the official Gazette, in consultation with the Governments of the States where such areas exist for the time being;	10
	(d) “fodder” includes dry and green fodder generally fed to the livestock by the farmers and others;	15
	(e) “food” includes cereals such as wheat, barley maize, jowar, bajra etc., rice, pulses, edible oils and fuel for cooking;	
	(f) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act.	
Compulsory maintenance of food supplies in drought affected and drought prone areas.	3. The appropriate Government shall maintain uninterrupted food supplies in drought affected and drought prone areas for the inhabitants of such areas in such manner as may be prescribed.	20
Maintenance of potable water.	4. The appropriate Government shall maintain adequate supply of potable water through tankers and other means as it may deem necessary and appropriate, in the areas covered under this Act for such period as may be prescribed.	
Maintenance of fodder supplies.	5. The appropriate Government shall maintain adequate supplies of fodder in the area covered under this Act by procuring fodder from other areas or States, as the case may be, in such manner and for such period as may be prescribed.	25
Ex-gratia and financial assistance to farmers.	6. The appropriate Government shall provide ex-gratia and adequate financial assistance to farmers of the areas covered under this Act according to the estimated losses caused by withered crops and for revival of agricultural activities in such manner as may be prescribed.	30
Diversification of cropping pattern.	7. The Central Government shall with the help of <i>Krishi Vikas Kendras</i> and other such organisations and research centres working for the diversification of cropping system in the areas covered under this Act from water intensive crops to low water requirement crops to save the ground water and reduce the dependence on rains.	35
Creation of water bodies.	8. The appropriate Government shall promote the creation of traditional and other water bodies like lakes, ponds, wells, ditches, etc. for the collection of rain water in order to recharge the ground water in the areas covered under this Act.	
Promotion of rainwater harvesting.	9. The Central Government shall promote rainwater harvesting in the areas covered under this Act by providing the necessary technique and equipments free of cost through the village panchayats in such manner as may be prescribed.	40
Afforestation programme.	10. The appropriate Government shall promote community afforestation programmes, from time to time, in the areas covered under this Act as long term action plan of such areas in such manner as may be prescribed.	

- 11. The Central Government shall provide requisite funds, from time to time, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, for carrying out the purposes of this Act.** Central Government to provide funds.
- 5 **12.** The Central Government may give such directions to the Government of any State having areas covered under this Act within its territorial jurisdiction, as may appear it to be necessary for carrying out in the State of any of the provisions of this Act or of any rule made thereunder. Power to give directions.
- 13.** The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of any other law for the time being in force dealing with the subject matter of this Act. Act to supplement other laws.
- 10 **14.** The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act. Power to make rules.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Of late Marathwada and Vidharbha regions of Maharashtra and their adjoining areas are slowly turning into drought prone areas where truant monsoons are playing havoc very frequently. Normal rainfall has become rare in these regions of the State. Similarly, large number of areas in various parts of our vast country have either turned drought prone or have been affected by drought some time or the other playing havoc and bringing miseries to the people and their livestock in such areas. When drought conditions engulf any area, the worst sufferers are the farmers and other inhabitants, having no food to eat and water to drink for their survival, resulting in their exodus. In such areas, starvation deaths are very common. The worst sufferers are the mute livestock. Their owners leave them stray and without fodder and water ultimately resulting in their death. The farmers lose their crops and hopes. The indebted farmers do not have money to restart agricultural operations even if they want. Frustrated with dashed hopes, many of them take extreme step of committing suicides. Vidharbha region of Maharashtra has become synonymous with suicides of farmers.

It has been observed that in Maharashtra, Punjab and other parts of the country, the farmers have started growing water intensive cash crops to earn more money, resulting in decline of ground water levels to dangerous levels which makes such areas drought prone. Hence, diversification of crops from water intensive ones to crops needing very less water has become necessity of the day. Promotion of water bodies like lakes, ponds, wells ditches etc., rainwater harvesting and community afforestation programmes have become necessary for the drought affected and drought prone areas.

At the same time, it is necessary that the supply of food, potable water and fodder is maintained uninterrupted on priority so that people do not have to leave their places and their livestock is not left to die. The farmers need to be given ex-gratia and financial assistance so that they do not take extreme steps of committing suicide.

Hence this Bill.

RAJKUMAR DHOOT

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Clause 6 of the Bill provides for the ex-gratia and financial assistance to farmers. Clause 11 makes it mandatory for the Central Government to provide requisite funds. The Bill if enacted will involve expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India. Though, it is not possible to quantify the amount at this juncture it is estimated that a sum of rupees thirty thousand crore may involve as recurring expenditure per annum.

Non-recurring expenditure to the tune of rupees fifty-thousand crores may also involve.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 14 of the Bill empowers the Central Government to make rules for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. The rules will relate to matters of details only.

The delegation of legislative power is of normal character.

RAJYA SABHA

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to provide for the special provisions such as compulsory maintenance of food and potable water supplies for human consumption and fodder for livestock of the farmers, financial assistance for lost crops to farmers in drought affected areas of the country by the Union Government and for creation of water bodies like lakes, ponds, wells, rainwater harvesting, diversification of water intensive crops to low water requirement crops, community afforestation programmes etc., as long term action plan for the drought prone areas of the country by the Union Government and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

(Shri Rajkumar Dhoot, M.P.)