

Bill No. VII of 2016

THE SPECIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE
STATE OF MAHARASHTRA
BILL, 2016

A

BILL

to provide for special financial assistance to the State of Maharashtra for containing growing desertification in Marathwada, Madhya Maharashtra and Vidarbha regions caused by consistent deficit rainfall and drought conditions by way of traditional water conservation through lakes, ponds wells, rainwater harvesting and afforestation involving villagers and their Panchayats and for the implementation of development works such as housing, drinking water, roads, sanitation, creation of grain and fodder Banks, skill development and welfare schemes for the women, children, senior citizens and poor people living in these regions of the State and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

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

1. (1) This Act may be called the Special Financial Assistance to the State of Maharashtra Act, 2016.

Short title
and com-
mencement.

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

Special financial assistance to State of Maharashtra.

2. (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, there shall be paid such sums of money out of the Consolidated Fund of India, which shall not be less than One Lakh Crore rupees, every year, as the Parliament may by due appropriation made by the law in this regard provide, as special financial assistance to the State of Maharashtra.

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(2) The special financial assistance under sub-section (1) shall be provided to meet the costs of works to contain the desertification in Marathwada, Madhya Maharashtra and Vidarbha regions of the State and of such development works and welfare schemes as may be undertaken by the State Government of Maharashtra for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

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(3) Without prejudice to the generality contained in sub-section (2), the works to contain desertification and development may include,—

(a) creation and maintenance of water conservation bodies such as check dams, digging of open wells, ponds and desiltation of such bodies from time to time;

(b) encouraging and providing irrigation facilities to the farming sector and promotion of drip irrigation facility in these regions;

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(c) capping of water guzzling sugarcane area and promotion of traditionally grown crops like *jawar*, *bajra*, sunflower, pigeon pea or tur, mulberry, potato, etc.;

(d) promotion of rain water harvesting as a movement;

(e) afforestation particularly on vacant or barren and waste land with the help of villagers and village Panchayats including community afforestation;

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(f) promotion of growing fodder and setting up fodder Banks at conspicuous places;

(g) creation of foodgrains Banks at conspicuous places to help the farmers and other villagers;

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(h) initiating welfare measures for improving the conditions of agricultural workers, senior citizens, women, children and poor people living in these regions;

(i) improving the health and education standards of the children particularly of the girl child;

(j) creation of employment opportunities in the villages for employment throughout the year and particularly for the period of natural calamities;

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(k) providing potable water for the villagers and livestock;

(l) providing skill development training to the youth particularly the unemployed ones;

(m) creation of good quality infrastructure of roads, electricity, schools, colleges and transport;

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(n) establishing community centres;

(o) establishing cold storages and warehouses for the farmers;

(p) such other provisions as the State Government of Maharashtra may deem necessary for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

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Power to remove difficulty.

3. If any difficulty arise in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the President of India may, by order, make such provisions not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act which appears to him to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty.

Act to supplement other laws.

4. 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.

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STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Maharashtra, known for its valour, rich traditions and culture, prosperity and development both in urban areas and rural areas, is presently suffering the worst at the hands of mother nature and rain god. Recurring droughts have made the State a epicenter of the farmer suicide. The situation is more precarious in *Marathwada* and *Madhya* Maharashtra where droughts have been a frequent occurrence during the past fifty years. During the current year rain deficit in these regions hovered between 40 to 50 per cent which has created a near emergency situation. Suicides by farmers is at its peak. The frequent droughts are resulting in desertification of the regions where quality pomegranates, grapes, sweetlime, and other fruits used to be grown in plenty and exported for earning precious foreign exchange. These regions used to grow bumper crops of Cotton, Soyabean and traditionally grown crops such as *jawar*, *bajra*, sunflower and pigeon pea or Tur and other pulses and oilseeds. The traditional crops could survive the scorching weather but the crops that have replaced them are less hardy so the same rainfall deficit has a greater impact. For instance, cane has become the bane of Marathwada region which requires an annual rainfall of 2500 mm against the 644 mm which the region got this season. Water guzzling cane has resulted in steep fall in ground water level and resulted in growing desertification. This trend has to be stopped through massive water conservation with check dams and other structures to arrest rain water run off. The traditional methods of water conservation through digging of open wells, ponds, lakes and such other bodies and time to time desiltation of such water bodies needs to be undertaken. Rain water harvesting has to be promoted as a mass movement in these regions.

Afforestation on a large scale particularly on barren and wastelands has to be promoted in these regions involving villagers and village Panchayats by providing incentives. This can certainly arrest the desertification in these regions.

Unfortunately these regions of the State are not much developed in comparison to other regions of the State in terms of infrastructure facilities like that of potable water, roads, electricity, sanitation and other development indicators such as employment, per capita income and education particularly of the girl child. Welfare measures for the senior citizens, widows, physically handicapped or infirm do not exist in these regions of the State. As a welfare State, the Government has to provide all these facilities and work towards containing the desertification and give the requisite push to the much desired development.

But all this require massive financial resources which are beyond the capability of the State Government of Maharashtra. Although the State Government is doing its level best to contain the desertification of these regions in the State under a programme called *Jalyukt Shivar* under which check dams and other structures are being constructed and water bodies are being desilted. Subsidies given by the State have encouraged the digging of open wells. Massive central financial assistance is required by the State of Maharashtra to overcome the financial crunch and the Central Government should provide special financial assistance to Maharashtra.

Hence this Bill.

RAJKUMAR DHOOT

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Clause 2 of the Bill provides for special financial assistance to State of Maharashtra to be paid out of the consolidated Fund of India by the Central Government every year which shall not be less than one lakh crore rupees to be spent by the State Government of Maharashtra to contain desertification of Marathwada, Madhya Maharashtra and Vidarbha regions and also for development works and welfare schemes. The Bill if enacted will involve expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India. Recurring expenditure of a minimum rupees one lakh crore may be involved per annum.

Non-recurring expenditure is likely to be involved.

RAJYA SABHA

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to provide for special financial assistance to the State of Maharashtra for containing growing desertification in Marathwada, Madhya Maharashtra and Vidarbha regions caused by consistent deficit rainfall and drought conditions by way of traditional water conservation through lakes, ponds wells, rainwater harvesting and afforestation involving villagers and their Panchayats and for the implementation of development works such as housing, drinking water, roads, sanitation, creation of grain and fodder Banks, skill development and welfare schemes for the women, children, senior citizens and poor people living in these regions of the State and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

(Shri Rajkumar Dhoot, M.P.)