

State seeks Rs 630 crore from Centre



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Mowsam Hazarika 23 August 2009 8067 views

The State Agriculture Department has demanded an assistance of Rs. 630.61 crore from the Central Government to overcome the impact of the drought-like situation it has faced this monsoon. The demand of the State Government was placed before the Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar on 22nd August, 2009 by a high-level delegation of the State Agriculture Department led by Agriculture Minister of the State Pramila Rani Brahma, through a memorandum. The Union Agriculture Minister though did not make any commitment before the State delegation, however, suggested that the State could use the Central allocations made under different heads to overcome the situation. It needs mention here that the Union Agriculture Ministry had held a meeting of the State Agriculture Ministers at New Delhi on 21st August, 2009 on the impact of the drought and drought-like situation faced by the states.. In the meeting, a detailed discussion on the roles of the Central and state governments in this connection, was held. The State delegation said in the memorandum that the State was experiencing drought-like situation since March, 2009. The overall rainfall deficit in the State has been recorded as (-) 35% by 30th June, (-) 27% by 31st July and (-) 17% by 15th August. Even though the deficit was reduced to (-) 17% by the 15th of August, yet there was a wider variation in rainfall deficit in the various districts of the State ranging from (-) 20% to (-) 69%. The State Government had declared all the 27 districts affected by a drought-like situation on 22nd July, 2009.

This deficit rainfall caused widespread damage to Kharif crops in the State. Crop area of about 8.70 lakh hectares has been affected covering 15.95 lakh farm families in 15,362 villages. It has been expected that 15.90 lakh hectares out of targeted 18.00 lakh hectares would be covered by the end of the season and 2.10 lakh hectares (12% of targeted area) may remain uncovered during Kharif, 2009. Moreover, Winter Paddy seedlings of 60,000 hectares have been affected by this situation. In some cases, sali paddy seedlings had to be raised more than once.

Government of Assam has proposed certain measures to overcome the present crisis arising out of the drought-like situation so that the loss incurred by the farmers can be compensated. These include short term measures like — tractorization of Rabi crop fields , distribution of diesel to drought-affected farmers , distribution of seeds , distribution of fertilisers , subsidy for electrically-operated pump sets and deep-tube wells under RKVY , among others.

The long-term measures proposed by the State for the purpose of overcoming the situation include — additional subsidy to STW / LLP under existing AACP programme , installation of one lakh number of additional STWs (diesel / electrical) , flow and lift Irrigation , flow irrigation facility under National Food Security Mission (Rice) , among others. The State has sought an assistance of Rs. 230.68 crore for the short-term measures and Rs. 399.93 crore for the long-term measures, from the Central Government .

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BY MOWSAM HAZARIKA

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