Addressing the Drought Situation

What is the issue?

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- With low rainfall this season, the country is most likely to witness a drought situation this year.
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- Tackling drought must be the immediate priority for administrators across the country.
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What is the rain deficit scenario?

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- The actual deficit last monsoon was modest, barely 10%.
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- But the post-monsoon rainfall (October to December, 2018) or PMR has registered a 44% deficit.
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- This national average deficit conceals shortages in some regions where it is much higher.
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- E.g. In Marathwada, the deficit is 84%, and in Vidarbha, 88%.
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Why is it so significant this time?

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- The next nearest rains are six months away, and there is no guarantee that June will see the onset of a normal monsoon.
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- This low-rain and no-rain situation is going to aggravate the water crisis.
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- By April-May, this drought could be tormenting millions in several States, including the urban India.
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- Years of policy-driven, corporate-driven water transfers from rural to urban, agriculture to industry, poor to rich and so on have made the country-side chronically water-scarce.
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- But the failure of rains this time is so serious that ‘drought’ now means not just a farm crisis but a national crisis.
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- This is more likely to affect towns and cities no less than villages.
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- In urban regions, the piped water supply could falter and water cans could cost even more than they do today.
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What does it call for?

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- There is massive waterlessness that has hit the country already.
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- It calls for addressing and being prepared for a drought situation, beyond the popular agrarian distress and farm-loan waivers debate.
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- There is a crucial need to address the water-starved, food-short, livelihood-broken, rural India’s agrarian distress.
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- The policy makers should thus make drought relief, water-use, food security and massive earth-related programmes an absolute priority.
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Source: The Hindu

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