

FAILURE OF THE NORTHEAST MONSOON IN TAMILNAD DURING 1947 AND 1949.

The coastal districts of Tamilnad experienced "Drought" conditions during October to December in 1947 and 1949 due to the failure of the northeast monsoon rains, which normally yield about 60 to 70 per cent of the annual rainfall in the coastal districts and 30 to 40 per cent in the interior. In this connection the rainfall distribution during October-December in the 11 districts of Tamilnad in the three years 1947-49 in detail and of the northeast monsoon rains in the last eighty years in general was examined.

2. A table showing the district average rainfall and the percentage departures for the years 1947 to 1949 is given in the table below.

District	Normal rainfall Oct.—Dec.	Percentage departures from normal of Oct.—Dec. rainfall		
		1947	1948	1949
Chingleput	26.83	-68	-31	-69
South Arcot	25.23	-57	-19	-65
Tanjore	26.69	-52	-25	-54
Ramnad	17.67	-45	-2	-35
Tirunelveli	18.92	-59	+6	-38
North Arcot	15.21	-47	-7	-44
Salem	11.67	-18	+2	-21
Tiruchirapalli	15.20	-33	-11	-25
Madhurai	16.04	-14	-1	-38
Coimbatore	12.27	-37	+20	-29
Nilgiris	19.53	-18	+2	-25

3. (a) In 1947, the rainfall of the season was generally scanty. The coastal districts got less than 50% of the normal rainfall while in the interior districts the defect was less. The main defect occurred in November and December. There were no cyclonic storms in the Bay of Bengal in these months and even the few depressions which formed did not approach the Madras coast.

(b) In 1948, the rainfall was 20 to 30% in defect in the coastal districts but in the rest of the region, it was nearly normal on the aggregate.

(c) The rainfall of 1949 was considerably below normal in the coastal districts. The coastal districts of the North Tamilnad had less than 50% of normal rain, while those of South Tamilnad had about 60-65%. In the interior, the rainfall was 20 to 30% in defect.

4. An examination of the rainfall during October to December in the districts of

Tamilnad during the 80 years 1870 to 1949 shows that in the last 80 years all the Tamilnad districts were very badly affected by "Drought" in 1876, the rainfall being on the whole only about a third of the normal. In the years 1892, 1897, 1904 and 1938 also most of the districts received scanty rainfall, in fact less than in 1947 or 1949. During the period 1875 to 1946 there was no sequence of three consecutive years when the rainfall over the whole area was so deficient as in the years 1947-49. It would also appear that the rainfall during the northeast monsoon season is more variable in the coastal districts than in the interior.