Tackling drought through farm ponds

- **For drought-prone districts of Maharashtra, farm pond on demand scheme comes to rescue of farmers**
- **Nearly a lakh farm ponds constructed since the launch of the scheme in 2016**
- **Nominated for Prime Minister Award-2017 under top ten innovation category**

In an attempt to address the drought problem of Vidarbha and Marathvada regions of Maharashtra besides 13 other districts, Maharashtra government in February 2018 came up with farm ponds on demand scheme as a flagship programme which has benefited several local inhabitants including farmers.

From a total of 4, 08,734 online applications received for creation of farm ponds, 2, 15,786 were given approval. Against the target of 1, 11,111 ponds set by the government, 90, 180 farm ponds have already completed and an amount of Rs. 369.48 has already been released to the beneficiaries. It is because of the grand success of the scheme that it was nominated for Prime Minister Award-2017 under top ten innovation category.

Farm ponds are considered one of the most successful techniques to provide water in drought-prone areas. A farm pond can capture rainwater, trap, filter and store tail water/surface run-offs from irrigation and store diversions from streams during peak winter flows to be used later for irrigation and other purposes. It can also provide frost protection, recharge groundwater which keeps and provide a wide range of additional economic and environmental benefits. The farm ponds are constructed at the lower side of the fields and the runoff from the higher side of the fields are channelized into the pond. Besides, pumping water from ponds uses much less energy than pumping groundwater. The construction of tail water return flow ponds, in turn, augments the flow of water into the farm ponds maximizing its

potential. This serves the twin purpose of recycling irrigation run-offs and recharging groundwater.

Under the scheme, any individual farmer having minimum .60 hectares land is eligible besides a group of farmers who want to create one common farm pond.