

Need to accord the status of special category State to Super Cyclone hit Orissa

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO (DHENKANAL): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government of India to the need to accord Special Category State Status to Orissa. The super cyclone that swept the State of Orissa has caused extensive damage to one third of the State. 1.5 crore people have been affected. The agriculture, industry, trade and commerce, and infrastructure have been totally destroyed. The educational and health facilities are badly affected and the houses and shelter totally wiped out. Fifteen lakh families have become shelterless and a lakh children have been orphaned.

Relief, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction would require resources of astronomical proportion, maybe to the tune of Rs. 50,000 crore. Such a vast amount is beyond the financial capacity of an unprivileged State Government with a population comprising 58 per cent below the poverty line, 22 per cent S.T. and 19 per cent S.C. This is beyond the normal funding pattern of the Central Government, Planning Commission and Finance Commission. Orissa is not a Schedule VII State nor the Himalayan Hilly State. Thus, there is a need to evolve a mechanism to provide accelerated and added financial assistance and to accord Special Status Category to Orissa which has been prone to natural calamities like drought, famine, floods and cyclone continuously for the last three and half decades thereby narrowing and shrinking the State's resource mobilisation ability and capability further accentuating the regional imbalances in comparison to other States and the national average.

As such, I demand that the State of Orissa be declared a Special Category State.