

Title: Need to sanction adequate funds for early completion of Teesta Irrigation-cum-Energy Project of West Bengal.

SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN (COOCHBEHAR): Sir, I would like to draw the kind attention of the Government towards Teesta Project (an Irrigation-cum-Energy Project) of West Bengal, which is one of the biggest irrigation projects of India. The project's work started sometime in 1977 and the authorities could complete hardly one-third of the work during the last 25 years due to paucity of funds. The Left Bank Canal work had not yet been started. The initial estimated cost of the project was only Rs. 69.72 crore. The expenditure of Rs. 833 crore have been spent on the project till date by the West Bengal Government from its limited resources whereas the Central Government's aid/loan for the purpose was only Rs. 105 crore. It is needless to mention that if the project would have been completed, at least nine lakh hectares of area of Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, North Binajpur, South Dinajpur and Malda could have got irrigation facility. Not only this, it would have been proved as a life-line project for the backward areas of northern part of West Bengal, where the majority of the population belong to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward communities. As the completion of the project has been delayed considerably, Rs. 700 crore more are required to complete this project as on date.

I am, therefore, to request the Central Government to take early steps for the release of sufficient funds for this purpose and also release an aid of at least Rs. 100 crore for this project on priority basis.