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Title: Need to expedite setting up of branches of scheduled commercial Banks in villages in Odisha having no banking facilities.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Odisha had about 48,000 unbanked villages on 1st April, 2012. According to the Reserve Bank of India guidelines, 5 per cent of these unbanked villages were to be covered by brick and mortar branches within a period of three years. As such, 2400 brick and mortar branches were to be set up in unbanked villages. About 100 such branches have been set up in the meantime. The pace of opening of these branches in unbanked villages needs to be expedited.

Further, this step alone would not be adequate considering the fact that as many as 4620 Gram Panchayats of the State today are unbanked. Each unbanked Gram Panchayat needs to be covered by a brick and mortar branch of a scheduled commercial bank within the 12th Five Year Plan period.

I would, therefore, urge upon the Government to issue suitable instructions in this regard which will help in their meaningful financial inclusion.