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title: Need to open bank branches in all the gram panchayats of Odisha.

DR. KULMANI SAMAL (JAGATSINGHPUR):I would like to state that by the end of 2014, Odisha had as many as 4597 gram panchayats without any bank branch. The gram panchayats in Odisha have an average geographical area of 25 square kilometers. This is a reasonable size for having a bank branch so that people would not have to travel long distance.

In this regard, the State Level Banks Committee has also decided to open brick and mortar branch in each of the 4597 unbanked gram panchayats of the State within a period of 5 years, i.e. by the end of 2019.

Government of Odisha on their part have taken a decision to provide 400 to 500 sq. ft. built up space in each of the gram panchayat building free of rent for 5 years for opening of bank branches and issued direction in this regard to the district collectors. The State Government have also decided that all bank transactions pertaining to each gram panchayat area shall be handled through bank branches to be opened in the unbanked gram panchayats. This will help in Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) under various Government schemes as well as transfer of Pension through the bank account without causing any inconvenience to the old pensioner. The Jan Dhan Yojana could also be successful by opening of banks in all the gram panchayats.

Hence, I urge upon the Government to expedite the process to cover all the gram panchayats of Odisha with bank branches so as to complete the project within the stipulated time.