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Title: Regarding Central Assistance to KBK Region of Odisha.

**SHRI SAPTAGIRI SANKAR ULAKA (KORAPUT):** The KBK comprising Koraput, Nabarangpur, Malkangiri, Rayagada, Sonepur, Balangir, Kalahandi and Naupada districts, is one of the poorest and most backward regions of the country. Despite years of focused development, intervention by both Central and State Governments, large proportion of rural poor and tribals in KBK region continue to face chronic hunger and reportedly starvation deaths. Reduced forest cover, farmer distress, no visible employment opportunity — people are forced to migrate to other States in search of jobs.

As per one National Family Health Survey, only 47.38% women in the KBK region are literate against the State average of 67.4%, while the literacy level among men in the region is 72.93% against the State's 84.3%. In case of institutional delivery, the region with 76.48% lags behind the State's average of 85.4%.

Central assistance for Area Development Programmes like Special Plan for KBK, Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) and Integrated Action Plan have been discontinued. The Central Government has discontinued ST/SC scholarship scheme thus depriving beneficiaries in the tribal region. Schemes delinked from support of the Centre during the budget 2015/16 include: National e-Governance Plan, Backward Regions Grant Funds, Modernization of Police Forces, Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyaan (RGPSA), Scheme for Central Assistance to the States for developing export infrastructure, Scheme for

setting up of 6000 Model Schools, National Mission on Food processing & Tourist Infrastructure. Though the State Government has launched its own Biju KBK Plan, it is not sufficient. Justice Puncchi Commission on Centre-State relation has recommended for higher Central transfers to backward states for improving the physical and human infrastructure.

Will the Government of India provide a special package to the KBK region outside the framework of “Aspirational Districts” for continuation of some of the previous programmes from the budget provision available with NITI Ayog?