

**Seventeenth Loksabha**

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Regarding Railway Projects in Odisha

SHRI SAPTAGIRI SANKAR ULAKA (KORAPUT): Thank you, Chairperson Sir, for giving me this opportunity to raise a very important issue. It is about a Railway project in my constituency, Koraput in Rayagada district. We have Naupada-Gunupur-Therubali railway line. Extension of Naupada-Gunupur railway line is pending for quite some time. In 2017-18, this was approved in the Budget. But the Rate of Return (RoR) was very less. So, it was not approved. The Railways had demanded that the State Government should share 50 per cent of the cost and provide land free of cost. That has already been done and the DPR has been submitted. But unfortunately, the Government is sitting on this project and approval of DPR by the Cabinet is only pending. It is a very tribal dominated area. It is inhabited by tribals. Southern Odisha is the most important region. I am not sure why the delay is there. I would request the Government to approve the project immediately. At the same time, there are two stations in Rayagada district, in Sambalpur Division: Ambodala and Therubali. These are very important stations. The trains used to stop before COVID-19. But after COVID-19, the Express trains have stopped stopping in these stations. In Ambodala, we have Rourkela--Jagadapur Express, Howrah--Jagadapur Express, Dhanbad--Alleppey Express, Korba Express, Samta Express, and Hatia-Yashwantpur Express. These were stopping before COVID-19, but now they are not stopping. Similarly, in Therubali, we have Korba Express, Samta Express and Junagarh Road--Bhubaneswar Link Express.

We demand that these trains should stop at this important railway station.

Lastly, I would like to speak about the Rayagada Railway Division. When the East Coast Railway Zone was divided, the Government had promised that Rayagada Rail Division will come up. Due to politics, this Division has not come up yet. I would request the Government to set up Rayagada Rail Division immediately. This is a highly needed project of the southern Odisha. Thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity.