

**Title:** Need to grant Special Category State status to Orissa-Laid.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO (DHENKANAL): Sir, about half of the Orissa State's population are living below the poverty line and about 40 per cent of the total population are the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. The agricultural labourers consist of 73 per cent of the total population. The infant mortality rate in the State is the highest in India and has reached to 97. The successive natural calamity and increasing loan burden has crippled the economy of the State.

The State Government and the Members of Parliament of that State have been drawing the attention of the Union Government for the last 35 years to the precarious financial position of the State and demanding Special Category status for that State and to provide special financial assistance and grant for its development. The Orissa Legislative Assembly has adopted a unanimous resolution in that regard in a special session on the 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1997.

In view of the need to rescue the State from the debt trap and to save the people from abject poverty, to remove the regional imbalance and the urgent for the accelerated development of the State, I urge upon the Union Government and the Planning Commission to find ways and means to focus special attention to Orissa as a Special Category State.