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**Title:** Need to benefit more people under Annapurna Scheme in Orissa.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Due to inadequate rainfall and long dry spell in the month of June and July, 2002, in Orissa, a drought like situation emerged resulting in extensive crop damage in all the 30 districts. Government of Orissa has declared 283 Blocks as fully affected and the rest 29 Blocks as partly affected by the drought. Though the Orissa Government has sought assistance of Rs. 871.40 crore and 12.19 lakh metric tonnes of rice for taking up drought mitigation measures, only Rs. 90.52 crore has been received towards Central share of Central Relief Fund for the year 2002-03 and one lakh metric tonnes of rice has been provided to the State for taking up labour-intensive work. But there is a need to provide rice to the needy at a cheaper rate.

At present, only 64,800 beneficiaries are being covered under Annapurna Scheme. This is the only scheme through which food security is ensured for the aged destitute people. This coverage is extremely low in poor States like Orissa.

I would urge upon the Government to urgently cover another 50,000 more beneficiaries under this scheme in view of the unprecedented drought situation this year.