

**Title:** Need to take concrete steps for removal of regional imbalance in the country.

SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE (JORHAT): The Second National Family Health Survey 1998-99 of basic facilities reveal a glaring disparity among different States. While a small group of States attain remarkable improvement, the overall position continues to be dismal. At the national level, 72 per cent of households live in rural areas and 28 per cent in urban areas. While 40 per cent do not have electricity, 61 per cent go without piped water and 64 per cent do not have any toilet facility. It is true that access on all these counts has improved as compared to the First Survey of 1992-93 as electricity coverage figure has gone up by 9 per cent and the piped water availability has gone up by 6 per cent.

Considered State-wise, however, in Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab more than 95 per cent households have electricity, while less than 35 per cent in Bihar and Assam have this facility. While nine out of ten households own a house, one-third of all live in poor quality house.

I urge the Union Government to take a millennium determination to end this disparity and direct Planning Commission and other agencies to work for reduction in regional imbalance.