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Title : Need to include all the districts of Orissa in the ' Backward Region Grant Fund Scheme' with a view to accelerate the Socio-Economic development in the region.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Planning Commission, Government of India has been indicating that Central assistance would be provided under "Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF)" to most backward districts in the country on the pattern of the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana. Given the multifaceted backwardness and persistent chronic poverty prevalent in Orissa, there is a growing demand from the people for stepping up of developmental activities in all the districts of Orissa. On the basis of the criteria fixed by the Planning Commission, such as productivity of cereals, agricultural, wage rate and percentage of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population, all the 30 districts should be included under Backward Region Grant Fund Scheme. All the 30 districts have high concentration of Scheduled Caste and or Scheduled Tribe population. Agricultural wage rates are very low and agricultural productivity is also very low. The yields of cereals population below poverty line as well as the depth of poverty is very alarming.

Therefore, there is an urgent need for substantial increase in public investment in all 30 districts of Orissa, especially Cuttack with a view to accelerate the socio-economic development. I urge upon the Government to include all the 30 districts of Orissa to be included in Backward Region Grant Fund Scheme (BRGF) from 2006-2007.