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Title: Need to bring a Special Action Plan for the KBK region of Orissa.

SHRI KALIKESH NARAYAN SINGH DEO (BOLANGIR): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am a Member of Parliament from the area called KBK, which comprises undivided districts of Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput. These areas, if you remember, were subject of a lot of news items way back in the eighties when a child was said to have been sold for a mere ten or fifteen rupees. This area is probably one of the most poor and backward regions of the country. In fact, a study done by the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation has listed them as amongst the the top ten most backward Districts of the country. Poverty levels are over 87 per cent. More than 68 per cent of the villages in these areas have over 50 per cent population of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Human indicators are at the lowest in these areas. The year 1995 onwards the KBK Long-Term Action Plan was put into place which was followed up by a Revised Long-Term Action Plan, as a result of which now poverty levels have dropped by almost 24 per cent from 87 per cent to almost 62 per cent. Ninety-nine per cent of the funds allocated for this programme have been utilized and spent.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the UPA Government has put a lot of focus on developing backward regions of the country. Bihar has got special packages, Bundelkhand has got special packages, and I support that. Other areas such as those should get these packages. However, it is extremely important that the KBK region gets the package which has been asked for by the State Government. The State Government of Orissa has put up an eight-year perspective action plan to the Planning Commission for approval, to the tune of Rs.4,550 crore. I would urge the Government to ensure speedy approval of this action plan.