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Title : Regarding need to review by the Central Government of its decision to recover from the State of Orissa the funds released from NCCF for the flood victims.

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI (BHADRAK): Madam, Speaker, I would like to thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to highlight a few things about my State of Orissa.

The other day, I was referring to the damages caused to different parts of the State of Orissa in the year 2007-08 and I was not referring to the cyclone of 1999. ...(*Interruptions*) I repeat that I was referring to the damages and floods of the year 2007-08 and not to the cyclone of the year 1999. The hon. Minister of Finance was present then. He is present here now also. I must clarify that I was referring to the damages and floods of the year 2007-08 that took place in the State of Orissa. The then Home Minister of the Central Government hon. Shri Shivraj Patil visited the affected areas and made an on-the-spot study. Having visited the areas affected by floods in the river Subarnarekha as well as Mahanadi, he declared or rather announced an assistance of Rs.500 crore. But, unfortunately, the Government at the Centre released only Rs.89.89 crore. Since the then hon. Home Minister announced that they would be giving Rs. 500 crore to the State of Orissa, the State Government authorized the different Departments and they went on executing different projects and restoration measures. But, subsequently, that was refused.

Madam, I am very sorry to state here this. A letter has been dispatched from the Centre to the State Government saying that from the NCCF, this amount was not eligible and the State Government has to return back. That means, the money has to be recovered from the State Government of Orissa. This is something unheard of...(*Interruptions*) The then Home Minister of the Central Government assured us and a letter was dispatched to the State Government of Orissa releasing Rs.89.89crore. Accordingly, the State Government incurred the expenditure in respect of relief and restoration work. But again, if the Centre and the Ministry of Finance of the Central Government say that the money is to be recovered from the State Government of Orissa, I must say that this is quite unheard of...(*Interruptions*) So, I would request, through you, Madam, the hon. Minister who is present here that he should clarify the position because this is not a matter of prestige.

Further, the hon. Chief Minister of Orissa has written two letters drawing the attention of the hon. Prime Minister of India but no reply has reached the State. The other day, the hon. Finance Minister was kind enough to say that money advanced to the State of Bihar should not be recovered. Similarly, because the State Government of Orissa has got the assurance and got the letter with it, it incurred the expenditure. Again, if the Central Government asks for recovery of the money, it is quite unfortunate and this is certainly a joke on the people of Orissa. So, I would request the hon. Finance Minister, who is present here, that he should clarify the position and assure the House and the people of Orissa that this money would not be recovered because that has been spent as per the direction, as per the assurance and as per the letter received from the Central Government. Thank you...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BAIJAYANT PANDA (KENDRAPARA): Madam, I myself and Shri Pinaki Misra, Shri Yashbant Laguri and Dr. Prasana Kumar Patasani – we all associate with it...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Madam, the hon. Minister is here. Will he be kind enough to reply?...(*Interruptions*)

MADAM SPEAKER: I cannot compel the Minister to respond. You know it is Zero Hour. You have made your point.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: The other day he assured the other State of the Indian Union. Why should he not do it in respect of our State?

Should I take it that he is not kind enough towards the State of Orissa? ...(*Interruptions*)

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Madam Speaker, the other day, I listened. I did not respond. I went back to my office, checked up the position and after finding out the actual facts, I could clarify the position after one or two days. He has just now raised the issue clearly that he is not referring to 1999 and he is referring to 2007. I must ascertain the fact. During the 'Zero Hour' I cannot instantly react or respond. Like instant coffee it is not possible. But I have already assured him by raising my hand that I would look into it and at the appropriate time I will come and explain the position.