

(a) whether the Census 2001 has revealed that out of 192 million households, only 69 million households availed banking services;

(b) if so, the details of the banking outreach both commercial and cooperative banks in the rural sector;

(c) whether Government is aware that out of 138 million households only 42 million households which is only 30 per cent have access to banking service; and

(d) if so, the what steps are being taken by Government to make banking service accessible to entire rural India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA) : (a) to (d) Financial Inclusion is an important priority of the Government as only 37.6% of bank branches of Scheduled Commercial Banks are in rural areas and approximately only 40% of the country's population has bank accounts. During the last year, the Reserve Bank of India and the Government of India have announced various measures to increase the reach of banking services to the excluded population of the country. The Reserve Bank of India has recently permitted all Scheduled Commercial Banks excluding Regional Rural Banks to open branches in Tier-III to Tier-VI Centers (with a population upto 49,999 as per 2001 census), without having to take permission from the Reserve Bank of India. Further, 5.63 crores "No Frill Accounts" have been opened by banks upto December 31st, 2009. The Business Correspondent Model has been reviewed and certain additional entities such as individual Kirana/Medical/Fair Price Shop owners/PCO operators, agents of small savings/insurance companies, owners of Petrol Pumps, retired teachers and authorised functionaries of well run Self Help Group linked to banks have been allowed to engaged as Business Correspondents.

Grant for Arogyasri Scheme

2638. SHRI K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested the Central Government to give special grant for its prestigious scheme of Arogyasri; and

(b) if so, the amount of special grant given during the last two years and current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. On the request of the Government of Andhra Pradesh for providing financial support to the Arogyasri Scheme, a Committee has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Prof. Abhijit Sen, Member, Planning Commission to make an assessment of the scheme and give suggestions for further course of action.