

entities carrying on questionable/unauthorised activities including mobilisation of money / deposit. SLCC has been recently reconstituted in May, 2014 to ensure regular participation of senior functionaries and to facilitate cohesive and effective information sharing amongst the participants. The SLCC meetings are now chaired by the Chief Secretaries of the State Governments and Administrators of the Union Territories. The frequency of the meetings has also been increased, which are now being conducted on quarterly intervals as against half yearly earlier. These measures are intended to have a far reaching impact in ensuring effective information sharing amongst the participants at regular intervals to quickly identify and take effective action against entities indulging in unauthorised and suspect business involving fund mobilisation from gullible public.

Chit Funds are registered, regulated and supervised under the Chit Funds Act, 1982, which is administered by the respective State Governments. Chit Funds are classified as Miscellaneous NBFI, under the Section 45-I (f) read with Section 45-I (c) (v) of RBI Act, 1934 and are exempted from the requirement of registration with RBI to obviate dual regulation. Any complaint received by RBI against any chit fund company is, therefore, forwarded to the State Government concerned for appropriate action.

Opening of bank branches in Odisha

3361. SHRI A.U. SINGH DEO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that only 41 per cent of rural households in Odisha are covered by bank accounts and 4597 Gram Panchayats in the State are without any bank branch;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether steps have been taken by the Ministry for opening brick and mortar bank branches in each of these 4597 unbanked Gram Panchayats within the target period of five years;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether Government will consider issuing such directives to Scheduled Commercial Banks to open brick and mortar bank branches in each of these unbanked Gram Panchayats by March 2019, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JAYANT SINHA): (a) to (e) Under Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) survey of households was undertaken to identify those households, which did not have any bank account. It has been identified in the survey done by banks that the coverage of households with bank accounts in Odisha is 78% as on 30.11.2014. State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) of Odisha had prepared an action plan for covering 4597 unbanked Gram Panchayats to be covered by bank branch or Business Correspondent by the end of 2018-19. In the meanwhile, under the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana, rural areas in the country have been divided into Sub Service Areas (SSAs) and banks have been asked to cover SSAs by either branch or fixed point interoperable Business Correspondent. SSAs have been made in such a way that one SSA caters to about 1000-1500 households and each village has access to bank facility within a reasonable distance. In the case of Odisha, as on 30.11.2014, out of 6309 SSAs, 955 are covered by Brick and Mortar branches and 4330 by Business Correspondents.

Service tax on foreign remittances

3362. SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government charges service tax on remittances of Non-resident Indians (NRIs);
- (b) if so, since when such remittances are being taxed;
- (c) the revenue target kept and collections made since the tax become enforceable;
- (d) whether any representation has been received from NRIs for removing or for waiving off such a service tax; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JAYANT SINHA): (a) Remittances being a transaction in money, does not constitute "service" for the purpose of levy of service tax. Therefore, remittances *per-se* do not attract service tax. Service tax would apply only to a taxable activity, if any, undertaken in the taxable territory, by a service provider in relation to such remittances.

- (b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.