

Title: Need to take steps to prevent high rate of child mortality.

SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE (JORHAT): Sir, India has fared again poorly in the development indices of children in the State of World Children 2001 Report. India's under five mortality is estimated to be 98 per 1000 live births. Though a slight improvement on last years' performance, the overall infant mortality rates, hovering around 72 per 1000 live births for the last few years, continue to cause concern for India is home to a third of the world's malnourished children. Forty-seven per cent of children under three are still underweight. Only 55 per cent of them are breastfed and only 33.5 per cent between the age group of six to nine months receive complementary foods in addition to breast milk.

Worse still, the maternal mortality rate at a high 407 per 100,000 live births has a direct adverse impact on the growth and development of the child contributing to a high rate of mortality within the first month of life which further pushes up the infant mortality rate.

This is a grim situation. The Report has urged Governments to give the highest attention to the most opportune period in a child's life -- from birth to age three as choices made at this time will affect the entire development process of the country. This is for Government's immediate attention and action.

(ends)

1325 hours

The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch till

Fourteen of the Clock.