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Title: Need to improve the dietary and nutritional intake of people in the rural areas of the country-laid.

SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI (NIZAMABAD): Sir, the World Health Organisation report of 2002 on environmental health had pointed out that skeletal fluorosis is a crippling disability affecting millions of people in various regions of our country. Intake of fluoride in the water and foodstuffs is the primary factor in the incidence of endemic skeletal fluorosis.

It is opined that removal of excessive fluoride from drinking water is difficult and expensive. The national Institute of Nutrition had carried out a survey in eight States (715 villages) to assess diet and nutritional status of individuals in the rural areas. It was reported that the consumption of protective foods such as pulses, milk and fruits were woefully inadequate. It was also noted that only a third of the preschool and school age children were consuming diets adequate in protein and energy and the most common forms of morbidities among different age groups were fever, diarrhea, dysentery and acute respiratory infections.

Keeping such a disturbing trend in view, I would like to request the Hon'ble Health Minister, through you, Sir, to take the above facts with the seriousness it deserves, and initiate steps on war footing to improve the diet and nutritional status of individuals in the villages of our country.