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Title: Need to evolve a mechanism to check maternal and infant deaths in the Country.

SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA (MAVELIKARA): Sir, a study conducted by an NGO in 66 countries revealed that India ranks first in the number of maternal deaths and the country is among the first nations in the number of infant mortality. It is shameful that our country is even ahead of the underdeveloped countries like Ethiopia, Nigeria and Angola in maternal mortality rate. The country accounts for 48 per cent of the total maternal mortality in the entire world. The country also accounts for high infant mortality rate. The situation warrants a serious look at our policies and schemes towards the welfare of women and children in the country. It is essential to strengthen the primary healthcare system and for that the public investment in this sector should have to be increased significantly.

And also, the Government shift from the present Targeted Public Distribution System to universal PDS so as to help all poor and ordinary sections to have access to food at reasonable rate. Strengthening and expanding of Anganwadi centres would also help in a big way to combat the present dismal scenario. Hence, I urge upon the Government to take urgent measures in this regard.