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Title: Need to universalize Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) by providing sufficient Anganwadi Centres in the country.

SHRIMATI MINATI SEN (JALPAIGURI): India ranks 94<sup>th</sup> in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2007 mainly because of prevalence of under-nourishment in children, who are supposed to be the future assets of the country, in spite of the fact that we have Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Schemes/project way back in 1975-76. The then planners had felt that the organization of early childhood services be regarded as an investment in the future economic and social progress of the country. The Government has admitted that only 60 million children out of 164 million children have received supplementary nutrition under ICDS Scheme as on June 30, 2007. This is because there are not sufficient numbers of Anganwadi centers to extend total coverage of this service to the children. The UPA government had committed to "universalize ICDS Scheme to provide a functional Anganwadi centre in every settlement to ensure full coverage for all children." Even the Supreme Court had to intervene and in its order in 2006 directed the Government to sanction and operationalise 14 lakh Anganwadi centres by December, 2008.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government to universalize the ICDS Scheme and provide sufficient Anganwadi centres in the country.