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Title : Need to take steps to prevent the measles deaths in the country.

SHRI B. MAHTAB : Anyway, I respect the decision of the Speaker and also of the Chair.

I would like to raise a very important matter of urgent public importance. Recently the United Nation Study has stated that though global measles deaths have fallen by 78 per cent in the past decade, the disease could come back if funds and political will are not sustained.

India alone accounts for three out of every four measles death in 2008 even after achieving the United Nation goal to reduce measles mortality by 90 per cent, and this we have achieved two years ahead of target. The annual number of deaths worldwide has fallen from 7,33,000 in 2000 to 1,14,000 last year. Vaccination has saved some 43 million lives during the past decade. Yet Somalia and Burkina Faso faired better than us.

So much has been achieved in the past several years and we should thank the people who have put in hard work and committed themselves for this programme but we should not forget that this is a highly contagious disease and can quickly take advantage of any lapse in effort. Attitudes fly in the face of facts. A single dose is administered at the age of nine months. It immunizes 85 per cent of children. The second dose, which is the booster shot, can protect 99 per cent almost life saving prescribed since 2004.

The hon. Minister of State in the Ministry of Health is also present here. I would like to get his indulgence here. Already six years have passed, and the second dose does not feature in immunization programme. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have made your point very well.

SHRI B. MAHTAB : Sir, what is alarming today is that WHO has recently cited a funding gap of 59 million US dollars for 2010. The combined effort of decreased political and financial commitment could result in a catastrophe. Let us not forget that even today, 450 deaths occur everyday because of measles in this world, which can be prevented.

I would urge upon the Government to create an atmosphere worldwide for better political and financial commitment so that measles can be eradicated. I am sure that India would gain the most as our mortality rate is the highest in the world. Thank you.