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Title: Need to take steps to check high rate of infant mortality in the country.

SHRI P. VISWANATHAN (KANCHEEPURAM): India has made little progress in controlling child mortality. Approximately, two million children die below the age of 5 years in India annually. The children in UP, Bihar and West Bengal are more vulnerable than those in other States. The States has a high infant mortality rate of 47 deaths per 1,000 live births. The causes include diarrhoea, pneumonia and neo-natal problems and viral encephalitis. Besides these the following reasons also contribute to the high rate of infant mortality:-

- â€¢ Mal nutrition
- â€¢ Severe shortage of bag valve masks (Ambu masks)
- â€¢ Non availability of supportive medicines and doctors
- â€¢ Non-utilisation of medical ventilators due to lack of qualified personnel
- â€¢ Sub-standard ventilators with child inside are burning themselves
- â€¢ In certain case, overworking of medical professionals or understaffed
- â€¢ Lack of decent sanitation facilities.

The States with the highest infant mortality rates are Assam (64), Rajasthan (63), Uttar Pradesh (67) and Orissa (69). These figures are all above the national average. The States with low infant mortality rates are Kerala (12), Goa (10) and Manipur (14). While the health ministry has assured the Parliament there is no shortage of funds for implementation of childcare programmes, the question arises about its programmes and their effectiveness.

Since it is a grave concern for all, I request the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to look into the matter and take appropriate action to curtail the child death in the country.