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Title: Need to address the malnutrition problem in India.

SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Madam, according to the World Health Organisation, close to 1.3 million children die every year in India because of malnutrition, 48 per cent children under the age of five are stunted or too short for their age, which indicates that half of the country's children are chronically malnourished. The devastating combination of poverty, poor status of girls and women, food insecurity, especially in vital nutrient-rich foods, poor health services, and abysmal sanitary conditions simply cannot sustain healthy child growth. The existing response to malnutrition in India has been skewed towards food-based interventions and has placed little emphasis on schemes addressing the other determinants of malnutrition. Any intervention to address the problem of malnutrition should have the potential to prevent the occurrence of illness among children, which calls for ensuring safe water supply and sanitation, a widely neglected sector in rural areas and urban slums. Indians are also suffering from chronic micronutrient malnutrition which results from consistently consuming foods severely lacking in vitamins and minerals – particularly vitamin A, iron, iodine and zinc – which are essential for proper physical and mental development. Supplementation programmes, biofortification of crop, commercial fortification, and school-based deworming campaigns can prove highly beneficial to tackle this effectively. As governments worldwide tighten their belts and increasingly search for ways to fight this menace effectively, the value-for-money that can be achieved with micronutrient malnutrition interventions cannot be ignored.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Rama Kishore Singh – not present.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Sukhbir Singh Jaunpuria.

* Laid on the Table