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Title: Regarding malnutrition in the country.

SHRIMATI P.K. SHREEMATHI TEACHER (KANNUR): Madam Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to raise an issue of urgent public importance today.

Madam, I would like to highlight the pitiable condition of children in our country. Malnutrition is almost certainly the top concern across the country. Each year, about 1.3 million children die in India because of malnutrition according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Malnutrition claimed several lives of children in different parts of our country and the deaths continue to occur across the country. According to the UNICEF Report, about half of under five children death occurs in only five countries and unfortunately India is one among them. India accounts for the highest number of death of children under five years of age with 50 per cent of such deaths caused due to malnutrition. Even higher rates of stunting are found in children in rural areas and are more likely to be stunted. India is one of the highest ranking countries in the world for the number of children suffering from malnutrition and it is really a big national shame.

Lack of basic sanitation and proper nutrition supplement food in India are seen as a key reason for severe child malnutrition burden. There are currently over one million Anganwadis run by the Government across India. But it has also failed in providing supplementary nutrition. More than half of the Anganwadis are functioning in rented premises and have no toilets and some do not even have proper drinking water facilities.

I have already pointed out this alarming issue in the House and I request the Government to have a re-look into the Budget for 2015-16 and to give malnutrition the priority. Nutrition in children is so important that it should be taken up with the seriousness and urgent measures need to be taken in this regard because, Madam, 'the tomorrow of our country lies in the health of today's children'.

Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER:

Dr. Kirit P. Solanki,

Adv. Joice George,

Dr. A. Sampath,

Shri P.K. Biju and

Shri M.B. Rajesh are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shrimati P.K. Shreemathi Teacher.