

nt>

Title: Need to introduce National Health Scheme for School Children in the Country.

SHRI T.R.BAALU (MADRAS SOUTH): Sir, despite five decades of Independence, millions of children suffer from avoidable diseases. Half a per cent to one per cent of the children have rheumatic heart diseases, a sequel of simple throat infection due to a bacteria called streptococcus. Eighty-five per cent of the children have worms; twenty-five per cent have vitamin deficiency. It is important to realise that several serious ailments start as apparently minor ailments.

Thus, children suffer both due to poverty and preventable diseases which create emotional, physical and economic problems for the child, family and the country.

We can change this scenario if every school in India is converted into a primary and preventive health care centre, blending education with medication.

In essence, one doctor must attend the school once a week. Minor ailments should be treated in the school premises, with inexpensive drugs stocked in the school premises. One or two teachers trained as teacher-doctors can be taught to identify minor ailments and assist the doctor. Post graduate training can be given to nurses who can be appointed as school health nurses, creating job opportunities especially for women. Donations towards school health programmes should be a hundred per cent exempt from income tax.

The World Health Organisation interested in assisting such a programme. A proposal for such a programme has been sent to the Union Minister of Health by me, as suggested by the famous Dr. Salomon Victor.

As the Corporation of Chennai has implemented this programme, I urge upon this Government to implement this scheme as a National Scheme which will take care of Child Health Care which will ultimately avoid the major ailments.