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Title: Need to provide assistance for the education of mentally challenged children.

DR. K.S. MANOJ (ALLEPPEY): Madam Chairman, I would like to raise a very important matter of urgent public importance regarding the need to provide assistance for the educational institutions for mentally challenged children.

The magnitude of the problem of mentally challenged children is more severe than our expectation. India holds the largest number of mentally challenged children in the world. Mentally challenged children account for 3 per cent of the population and, in fact, the largest number of mentally challenged children in the country is in Kerala.

Madam, 8th December was declared and celebrated as the 'Day of Mentally Challenged Children'. Apart from the celebration, the Government and the entire society need to give special attention to the care of these children, their education and their occupational rehabilitation. There is a need to establish more number of Special Schools for their education and training. There are 14 such institutions in my district Alleppey, including one residential institution out of which 13 are run by voluntary organizations. But the assistance given to such institutions by the Government is very meagre and namesake. Only two such institutions in a district is given Grant-in-Aid by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Due to this stipulation, many deserving institutions are denied Central assistance.

So, I would urge upon the Government, especially the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, to take necessary steps to provide financial assistance and other support to these special educational institutions considering the gravity of the situation. [\[R65\]](#)