

Title: Regarding need to formulate a comprehensive plan to save the lives of children suffering from congenital disease- Laid.

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL (VIJAYAWADA): One of the important priorities of the National Common Minimum Programme is to raise public spending on health from 0.9% of GDP at present to minimum 2-3% of GDP over the next five years. I take this opportunity to say that lives of lakhs of children suffering from congenital diseases and such other diseases can be saved with operations. But in majority of cases, the parents are from BPL and they cannot meet such costly treatment. Ultimately the children die. According to my survey, in my own constituency more than 5000 children are suffering from such ailments. In my own constituency, the cost would be around Rs. 50 crores and nation wide it would be Rs.25,000 crores. National Illness Assistance Fund provides financial relief to BPL patients suffering from life threatening diseases to receive treatment at any Super-Speciality or other Government hospitals. Total fund availability of the Society during the year 2004-05 is Rs. 2.48 crore including Government of India grant of Rs. 1.30 crore. During 2003-04, financial assistance of Rs. 78.54 lakh was granted to patients. This is very meagre amount. I am of the view that a system could be devised with the participation of insurance companies, Government hospitals, corporate hospitals, State Governments and Central Government. The funds on the above lines should be set up in all the States and districts with the Central participation/funding. It is, therefore, necessary that Government make matching grants to the States and districts for starting such funds. Provision can also be made for enabling Members of Parliament to contribute to such funds from their MPLAD fund.