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Title: Need to fill up the vacancies of Doctors and Nurses in various hospitals in the country.

SHRI C. RAJENDRAN (CHENNAI SOUTH): I would like to raise an important matter of public importance regarding the health of the people of this country due to huge shortage of doctors. There is an acute shortage of doctors and paramedical staff; and it is assuming alarming proportions. According to the latest data on rural health statistics, a huge number of posts sanctioned for medical staff in primary and community health centres are lying vacant. In the case of primary health centres, there are 5,300 vacancies of doctors; 7,300 vacancies of health care workers and 1,700 health assistants. The situation is grim in community health centres, where about 4,000 posts of specialists, 5,000 posts of pharmacists, and 5,600 posts of lab technicians are lying vacant. There is also a dire need of 10,000 nurses.

Secondly, as per the Planning Commission's study, the country is short of six lakh doctors, 10 lakh nurses. It reports that the doctor to patient ratio is one is to 10,000. This is a crisis.

The reason for shortage varies from State to State. But this is an integral part of the National Rural Health Mission; in spite of this, the situation is very serious. Experts in this field feel that more than the vacant positions, the doctors also do not attend to the patients which is a genuine cause of concern.

Hence, I request the Minister of Health and Family Welfare to ponder over this issue in all seriousness, and fill up the vacant posts so that poor people are taken care of better.