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Title: Regarding increasing number of cancer patients in the country.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): Sir, I stand to place before this House a very serious situation, that is, spreading of cancer irrespective of States, place and age. It has become a threat not only to the patients but also to the nation as a whole.

In an answer given by the then Minister of State in the Ministry of Health in 2012 in the House, it was mentioned that there were about 28 lakh cancer patients, and in 2012, 6,83,000 deaths were registered due to cancer.

Over one million cases are registered every year.

There are number of reasons which have been cited. The absence of trained Oncologists is the main reason. There are 1,000 trained Oncologists only in India. The ratio of doctors and patients is only one per 2000.

When a person is affected with cancer, he and his family are upset financially, mentally and physically. The main reason is lack of medical facilities. We have a number of excellent centres like the Tata Institute of Mumbai, the Vellore hospital in Chennai, AIIMS in Delhi, RCC in Trivandrum and also in Bengaluru and Manipal. But, at the same time, these hospitals are insufficient to meet the increased demands of cancer patients.

Cancer treatment facilities should be extended to all district hospitals throughout India.

Palliative care centres should be started in all Panchayats. Kerala is a good example for that.

Early detection cancer centres should be started throughout the Panchayats, the Municipalities and the Corporations. If it is done, we could save lakhs of lives.

Now-a-days, even the life saving medicine for cancer is costlier. There should be strict restrictions on the price of cancer medicine, and it should be cheaper and made available in all places.

There should be a comprehensive health plan to combat cancer, and such treatment should be made free especially for the people who become the victims.

The Prime Minister's National Relief Fund is really a relief but, at the same time, the norms prescribed create much hardship and difficulties. In the case of cancer and other major diseases, there should be relaxation in the norms. Due to the emergency nature of the disease, the patients may not be able to submit the documents before the operation takes place. Such cases are not considered now-a-days. So, irrespective of the submissions of the documents, it should be considered and accounted.

A multi-disciplinary approach to cancer treatment is essential and this has to be made available in all cancer centres. The services of a trained surgeon and a clinical oncologist are needed to plan a most appropriate treatment.

HON. CHAIRPERSON : Karunakaranji, taking into account, the seriousness of the issue, I have given you enough time. Please conclude now.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN : I am just concluding.

Radiotherapy services are still the mainstay of treatment. It is not possible for the patients to travel for a long distance to take these facilities.

An essential drugs list has to be prepared for cancer chemotherapy and chemotherapy services should be available in all centres.

Considering the gravity of the situation, I would request the Government to take all necessary steps. Thank you.

HON. CHAIRPERSON:

Shri P.K.Biju is associated on this issue raised by Shri Karunakaran.