

Sixteenth Loksabha

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Title: Need to extend Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme to short service commissioned officers too.

SHRIMATI KIRRON KHER (CHANDIGARH): Thank you, Deputy-Speaker, Sir. ... *(Interruptions)*

There are 10,000 Short Service Commissioned Officers in the Army, and they do not receive medical benefits from the Government. ... *(Interruptions)* These Officers are commissioned to serve in the prime years of their life for 10 to 14 years and then released without medical benefits. ... *(Interruptions)*

In 2008, the Armed Forces Tribunal, Chandigarh had asked for the Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme to be extended to these Officers, and in 2009 the then Prime Minister had given an assurance in this very House that this Scheme will be extended to them. ... *(Interruptions)* However, nine years later, there has been no constructive action in this regard, and in 2011 the Government of that day filed an appeal in the Supreme Court against giving these medical benefits. ... *(Interruptions)*

This reluctance to extend medical benefits is very demoralizing for our Officers who spend the prime years of their life in service to the nation. The most affected, as a result of this, are our women Officers, since the armed forces rarely ever make permanent recruitment of women, and 76 per cent of women in the Army are on Short Service Commission. ... *(Interruptions)*

The Expert Committee on Defence in 2015, and the Standing Committee on Defence in 2018 have both recommended that the Contributory Health Scheme should be extended to the Short Service Commissioned Officers. ... *(Interruptions)*

I would request the Government to take expedited cognizance of this matter and extend medical benefits to those Officers with immediate effect. ... (*Interruptions*) This will go a long way in boosting their morale towards joining the service and staying in service for a longer number of years. Thank you, Sir. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Sharad Tripathi, Shri Bhairon Prasad Mishra and Dr. Kulmani Samal are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shrimati Kirron Kher.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE : Sir, the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs is here and he should respond on behalf of the Government on this very serious issue raised here. ... (*Interruptions*)

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He is going to respond.

... (*Interruptions*)

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please wait for a minute.

... (*Interruptions*)