

Regarding Cancer care in India

SHRI RAJMOHAN UNNITHAN (KASARAGOD): Sir, Dr. Siddhartha Mukherjee in his book 'The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer' wrote:

'Cancer is an expansionist disease; it invades through tissues, sets up colonies in hostile landscapes, seeking "sanctuary" in one organ and then immigrating to another.'

This disease devastates not only the patient but his family and finance as well. The financial toxicity of cancer care in India is a matter of grave national concern. Every year, millions of Indians are pushed into poverty while battling cancer. Precision medicine, immunotherapy, and targeted treatments remain out of reach for low and middle-income families. A genomic test can save a patient, but most of them cannot afford it.

Public insurance schemes including Ayushman Bharat cover only inpatient costs for cancer treatment, leaving diagnostic tests, outpatient care, and posttreatment expenses to be paid out-of-pocket. Many affected families sell all their assets and exhaust their savings, yet the survival remains uncertain.

Hence, I urge the Government to introduce a Universal Cancer Insurance Scheme, covering full treatment and non-medical costs. Cancer must not be a death sentence for the poor. Thank you, Sir.