

Regarding Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS)

SHRIMATI DIMPLE YADAV (MAINPURI): Thank you, hon. Speaker, Sir.

I would like to speak on a very important matter, and I believe that most of the Members of Parliament sitting in the House -- now, not present in the House -- are going to align with it. It is regarding the stepmotherly and unethical treatment being meted out to the ex-servicemen under the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme.

I am given to understand that presently the scheme is facing a shortfall of more than Rs. 5000 crore. Moreover, since September, 2023, the fund allotment to the scheme has been erratic and scarce compared to the projected requirements.

The Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) in spite of having a high per capita expenditure does not fix any issues and continues to be well-funded which is much appreciated but at the same time, this is leading to humiliation and discrimination against the ECHS patients in empanelled hospitals. At times, if in one family or in one friend circle or community, there are CGHS, ECHS, the State ESI and PSU members and when all of them approach the same empanelled hospital, the ECHS members are subtly turned away stating there is a lack of beds whereas others continue to be attended to.

In addition to this, the trauma of the illness and the financial distress is causing the proud soldier to face loss in the society and in the long run, it will be detrimental to the image of the soldiers of the nation as a whole.

Though this discrimination in fund allotment has been going on earlier also, this year, it has been monumental. The empanelled hospitals are forced to close the financial year due to the shortfall in each ECHS payments. In the long run, these hospitals will not be empanelled with ECHS again.

Most cancer and expensive medicines are not available in the ECHS clinics and the soldiers are being given non-availability certificates to buy from the market and they are told to claim this money and when these soldiers apply for reimbursement of money, this claim is not passed as they have no funds with the ECHS.

Sir, I would like the Ministry to take immediate steps regarding the release of complete requirement of ECHS funds so that the empanelled facilities can continue. At the same time, I would request the hon. Minister to look into the matter and to do the needful. The soldiers have given the prime of their life to the nation and I being the daughter of an ex-serviceman also, I understand their plight and their situation which these soldiers are facing. I do not want these soldiers to be humiliated and discriminated in old age.

Thank you, Sir.