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Title: Need to take punitive steps to ensure strict adherence to rules and guidelines regarding free treatment of poor patients at private corporate hospitals/charitable hospitals availing government concessions in the country.

SHRI P.R. NATARAJAN (COIMBATORE): I would like to bring to the notice of the Government the sorry state of functioning of private corporate hospitals particularly private charitable trust hospitals. Nowadays as per the Government of India, Health Ministry's analysis, more than 70% of expenses towards cost of medicines and treatment are met from people's own pocket. The corporate hospitals which are availing benefits like F. S. I. concessions in electricity, customs duty, sales tax and land at concessional rates are reluctant to serve the poor patients which were agreed to by the corporate/charitable private hospitals while getting charity status or for availing such concessions from the Central and State Governments.

Some of the State Governments are providing cost free treatment to the poor patients in the empanelled private corporate hospitals by spending crores of rupees per year through some Government/private insurance companies. If ordinary poor patients go to the information counter of these private hospitals for availing such cost free treatment/surgery, they are misled, ignored and even ill-treated. These private hospitals are flouting the stipulation for reservation of beds.

In addition, charitable trust hospitals are supposed to transfer 2% of the total bill amount to Indigent Patient Fund. But, these accounts are not operated by the said private hospitals. This is the ground realities of cost free treatment/surgery which the ordinary citizen cannot avail. Even, these hospitals are not ready to be empanelled for Government, free health schemes on the ground that the presence of poor patients will affect their Star Status and not enable them to charge excessively. In my view, to achieve the goal of providing health care to the poor patients of this country in letter and spirit, the Government should make the present obligatory provisions mandatory on the part of these private corporate/trust hospitals.

Moreover, these hospital should have a proper notice board at the entrance detailing the rules and procedures for availing the cost free health scheme and the details of the mandatory provisions with regard to how many beds are used and how many are vacant etc. for the information of the ordinary people. Therefore, I request the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to develop an online portal and a departmental mechanism to monitor the strict implementation of mandatory provisions by these private hospitals.

Steps may be taken to enforce punitive action against these hospitals for not implementing the agreed mandatory provision in providing health care to the poor.