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Title: \* Need to make available medicines at affordable prices to the people living in the country.

SHRI JOSE K. MANI (KOTTAYAM): India has a booming drug industry and has contributed to the development and production of generic drugs at low prices worldwide. But unfortunately medicines within India are overpriced and are unaffordable.

The margins in medicines are extremely high often to the extent of 1,000-4,000 per cent. Despite the growing number of competitors drug prices have not come down. A large number of people cannot afford medicines and have to pay significant amount of their wages or money taken on loan for purchasing medicines. The patients have to buy medicines irrespective of the high cost and medicines are sold at exorbitant prices. For instance, while an Atenolol 50 mg tablet used in the treatment of hypertension costs only 20 paise, it is sold for Rs. 4.

I, therefore, urge to the Government to bring all drugs under price control and formulations under a system of monitoring of their prices and affordability with a view to ensuring that even drugs not on the National Essential Medicines List are available at reasonable prices; the National List of Essential Medicines should be revised after every 2-3 years. I would also request to the Government to start retail outlets all over India for distributing medicines at affordable prices.

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