

**Need to extend the salary ceiling limit beyond Rs.21,000  
for ESI coverage**

SHRI M. SHANMUGAM (Tamil Nadu): Sir, at present, ESI scheme is restricted to employees whose salary is up to Rs.21,000. Now-a-days, reaching Rs.21,000 level is not a difficult thing, given the cost of living and, therefore, most of the people are suddenly going out of the ESI coverage. The system should be devised on par with EPF Pension scheme. Even though the salary may increase, still they should be able to continue in the ESI Scheme, by giving them the option to continue. In that way, the entire working class will get the ESI benefit and there will be more number of insured persons. Monetary benefit will also increase. Rule 52 of the Employees State Insurance (Central) Rules, 1950 gives exemption from payment of employee's contribution under section 42 of ESI Act, and therefore the employees in the unorganised sector need not pay contribution and they can be given universal coverage. I understand, there is a proposal to cover the unorganised workers under the provisions of ESI for which the scheme is proposed to be framed by the Union Government. I would, therefore, demand that the Government should come forward to do this at the earliest possible period so that all the workers in the unorganised sector are covered under the ESI scheme for availing benefits.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The following hon. Members associated themselves with the Special Mention matter raised by the hon. Member, Shri M. Shanmugam: Dr. V. Sivadasan (Kerala), Shri A. A. Rahim (Kerala), Shri P. Wilson (Tamil Nadu), Dr. Fauzia Khan (Maharashtra), Dr. Sasmit Patra (Odisha), Shri Sandosh Kumar P (Kerala) and Dr. John Brittas (Kerala).

Now, Dr. V. Sivadasan on 'Concern over issues faced by IT and ITES sector employees.'

**Issues faced by IT and ITES Sector employees**

DR. V. SIVADASAN (Kerala): Sir, the IT and ITES workers are facing increasing exploitation with adverse effects on health and well-being. They are made to work much more than eight hours, and this destroys their psychological and physical well-being. Erratic patterns of shift in work affects the sleeping patterns of the workers and causes irreparable damage to their health. The companies do not provide proper paid holidays. Adhocism and arbitrariness reign supreme. Unrealistic targets are set before the workers, and they have no control over the conditions of work. In the BPO

jobs, even washroom visits are fixed and controlled. Washrooms are segregated by seniority. Some washrooms are even password protected. It is reported that performance metrics are designed in such a way that targets are almost impossible to achieve, and this creates hostile relations at work. The superiors often forced the junior staff to make them toil for long hours. Employees are made to compete with one another for retaining their jobs. The privacy of the employees is not respected, and they are under constant surveillance. Verbal and physical abuse at some workplaces is rampant. There are no safeguards for the people with disabilities and the workers point out that the culture of abuse results in strengthening the discrimination based on caste, religion, gender and sexuality. Workers are reduced to mere machines. There is an urgent need to address these problems faced by the IT, ITES and BPO workers. I urge the Government to look into it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The following hon. Members associated themselves with the Special Mention matter raised by the hon. Member, Dr. V. Sivadasan: Shri M. Shanmugam (Tamil Nadu), Shri P. Wilson (Tamil Nadu), Dr. Fauzia Khan (Maharashtra), Dr. Sasmit Patra (Odisha), Shri Sandosh Kumar P (Kerala) and Dr. John Brittas (Kerala).

Shri Sanjeev Arora; not present. Now, Shri Sujeet Kumar on 'Demand for Comprehensive National Programme on Cancers affecting women.'

### **Demand for a comprehensive National Programme on Cancers affecting Women**

SHRI SUJEET KUMAR (Odisha): Sir, I seek to draw your attention to rising incidence of cervical and breast cancers among women, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive national programme to increase testing and awareness. According to the latest data from the WHO, cervical cancer ranks as the fourth most prevalent cancer in women globally, and the second most common in India. Notably, breast cancer has surpassed cervical cancer, emerging as the most frequent cancer in India, with approximately 1,78,000 new cases diagnosed annually. Shockingly, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer every four minutes, and a life is lost to it every eight minutes in our country. Despite the alarming prevalence of cases, the testing rates are abysmal, with only 1 per cent of Indian women undergoing screening for cervical and breast cancer, in stark contrast to the WHO recommendation of at least 70 per cent. As of 2019-21, the screening rates for cervical and breast cancer in India stand at a mere 1.2 per cent and 0.6 per cent respectively. This is in sharp contrast to