

# THE *Social* BULLETIN



I Can & I Will

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## Message From CEO



We are overwhelmed by the response we have been receiving from our readers on the content and presentation of the past issues of our newsletter – The *Social* Bulletin. We are glad this tiny initiative is of some relevance to you. We strive to raise the bar of the standards of our content and writing inch by inch and make it even more useful and meaningful for all of you.

World Cancer Day is an international day marked on February 4 to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment. The editorial team has chosen the theme “Cancer” for this edition of the newsletter.

Therefore this month we took a moment to recognize some amazing people who have battled cancer, beaten it, and now giving their time and energy to help others impacted by the same. One such person interviewed by the team is Harmala Gupta, cancer survivor and social activist, who has pioneered cancer support services in India. After her brush with cancer, she founded first cancer support group in India, 'Cancer Sahyog' in 1990 and in 1996 she founded CanSupport. We have also tried to map for our readers the various central and state government's schemes in support of the cancer victims or their families. And then we have a *cancer* statistics section in the newsletter, with state-specific reported data on cancer and attempted to analyse reason for surge in the cancer cases in India.

And finally before I end, I would like to re-iterate that this newsletter is our voice and I would like to welcome all readers to contribute. We encourage and shall be happy to take contributions for our guest editorial on relevant sections. Kindly email us at [info@devinsights.co.in](mailto:info@devinsights.co.in).

Happy Reading!

# RISK FACTORS THAT CAUSES CANCER



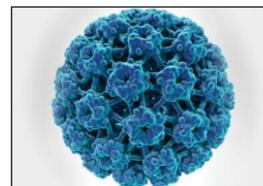
Tobacco



Alcohol



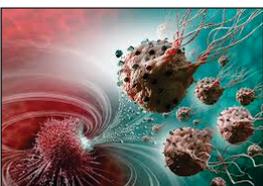
Smoking



Human Papillomavirus



Reproductive Factors



Certain Microbes



Occupational Exposure



Obesity



Unhealthy Diet



Family History



## Cancer Survivorship - Interview with Harmala Gupta

February 4<sup>th</sup> is World Cancer Day! This month we took a moment to recognize some amazing people who have battled cancer, beaten it, and now giving their time and energy to help others impacted by the same. One such person is Harmala Gupta, cancer survivor and social activist, who has pioneered cancer support services in India. After her brush with cancer, she founded first cancer support group in India, 'Cancer Sahyog' in 1990 and in 1996 she founded CanSupport.

Harmala worked in an honorary capacity as Founder-President and CEO of CanSupport till 2012 when she handed over to a professional management team. She continues to be the Founder-President and an active member of the Managing Committee. Harmala is also the Founder-President of Cancer Care India (CACI), a network of cancer support groups, which seeks to provide a nationwide platform for cancer advocacy and awareness.

She has published articles in national dailies and journals, and currently maintains a blog on the CanSupport website. She has participated in many conferences and workshops around the world where she has shared her vision and expertise as a social entrepreneur, cancer volunteer and support person. She is also the recipient of numerous national awards. In December 2005, she received an award for outstanding contribution to social service instituted by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, from the President of India and in November 2008, iCONGO (Indian Confederation of NGOs) conferred her with Karmaveer Puruskaar, a national award for social justice and action. Her latest award is the one she received in August 2019, where she was conferred with the "Healthcare Humanitarian Award" by FICCI in New Delhi.

Team of The *Social* Bulletin sat down with Harmala to trace her journey from cancer diagnosis to treatment state, and get her thoughts about her journey.



**TSB** What type of cancer were you diagnosed with, and when were you detected?

**HG** I was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, which is a cancer of the lymphatic system over 30 years ago.

**TSB** What events lead up to your diagnosis, or, how did you discover what you were suffering from cancer

**HG** I had a cough, felt tired, had pain in my back, had night sweats and had lost a significant amount of weight. I visited a doctor who suggested a had night sweats and had lost a significant amount of weight. I visited a doctor who suggested a blood test and when the results came in they raised suspicion of a disease, process at work.

**TSB Obviously, cancer puts your whole life on hold. Do you remember a specific moment when you were hit by this realization?**

**HG** Cancer rearranges your life. You learn to cope with this. It is a process that requires you to face your new reality and integrate it into your life. For me the turning point was when I realised that the answer I was seeking required me to ask the right question. Not “why me?” but rather “why not me?”

**TSB How long were you in treatment? What helped keep your spirits up and gave you support during this period?**

**HG** My treatment lasted about a year. I was treated at the Princess Margaret Cancer Institute in Toronto as I was studying in Canada at the time. I received support from loving members of my family, concerned friends, caring medical staff, fellow cancer survivors, volunteers in the hospital and strangers who smiled at me. I was especially heartened to meet those who had been through a similar ordeal as I was going through now and were well. They revived hope and the feeling that I could make a full recovery. The discovery of my spiritual side and my first-hand experience of the mind-body-connection gave meaning to my ordeal.

**TSB What motivated you to embark upon a journey where you opened an NGO to support people diagnosed with cancer? Is there anything you're a little nervous about initially? How did the inception happen?**

**HG** The fact that there were no support service for people diagnosed with cancer in Delhi, including patient friendly cancer information and that cancer survivors in India hide their diagnosis and coped in silence prompted me to start an NGO to support people living with cancer. When I further realised that the vast majority of patients came with advanced disease the idea of providing them and their families with palliative care services at home was born. I had apprehensions initially as to how I would be received by the medical community. Fortunately, by and large they were supportive.

**TSB How can one reach out to you?**

**HG** You can call our helpline numbers: Delhi/NCR: 01141010539, 9899011212; Amritsar: 9501887956; Bathinda: 9315905178. The timings are: Mon to Fri; 9.30am to 5.30pm.

**TSB Today, CanSupport's home-based palliative care programme is the largest in India. You and your organisation have come so far. How does it feel?**

**HG** I feel fortunate and blessed that as a team we have been able to provide high quality services and compassionate care free of cost to thousands of underserved people who otherwise would have faced unremitting pain and suffering. We have ensured their quality of life till the end and have helped their caregivers cope.

**TSB What “words of wisdom” and/or advice would you give any young adult facing Cancer or another life-threatening illness?**

**HG** Treat cancer like you would treat any other illness. It is no longer a death sentence. Today, we have many long term survivors like me living productive life across countries. Keep the focus on your dreams and ambitions. But above all, remember to be kind and thoughtful both to yourself and to others. It is the secret of happiness and a life well lived.



## Financial aid and resources

### Ayushman Bharat



Rs. 1200 Crore allocated for 1.5 Lakh health and wellness Centres. National health protection Scheme to provide Hospitalisation cover to over 10 Crore poor and vulnerable families

### 'Prime Ministers National Relief Fund (PMNRF)



This fund is recognized as a Trust under the Income Tax Act and the same is managed by Prime Minister or multiple delegates for national causes. Assistance from PMNRF is also given to meet the expenses partially for medical treatment like heart surgeries, kidney transplantation, **cancer treatment**, etc.

### Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi (Ran)



Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is giving financial assistance to the poor patients for treatment at different hospitals in all over the country under this scheme. 'Health Ministers Cancer Patient Fund (HMCPF) has been set up for providing financial assistance to the poor patients suffering from **cancer**.

### State Illness Assistance Fund (Siaf)

All State Govts./UT Administrations have been advised vide Ministry of Health & Family Welfare letter dated 11/11/96 to set up an Illness Assistance Fund in their respective States/UTs. Grant-in-aid from Central Government would be released to each of these States/UTs (with Legislature) where such Funds are set up.

The State/UT level Funds could also receive contributions/donations from donors, as mentioned for RAN.

## Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS)



Applicable for retired Central Government employees and dependents. For providing better cancer treatment facilities to CGHS beneficiaries, one private hospital in Hyderabad and 10 Private hospitals in Delhi have been empanelled in June 2011 under CGHS exclusively for Cancer treatment as per the rates of Tata Memorial Hospital for Cancer Surgery. In addition, patient can avail cancer treatment at approved rates from any hospital, where facilities for cancer treatment are available.

## Railway concession for cancer patient and one bystander



Travel for the patient is totally free. The bystander has to pay only 25% of the actual II class fare. This concession is applicable only for travel from nearest hometown station to treating cancer hospital/cancer institute and back.

## Air concession for cancer patient



Patient has to pay 50% of the basic fare of the normal economy class. This concession is applicable only for those persons who are resident of India and suffering from cancer and are travelling for the purpose of medical check-up/treatment.

## RASHTRIYA SWASTHYA BIMA YOJNA (RSBY)



Below Poverty Line families, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guaranty Act (MGNREGA) job card holder families, Beedi Workers, Domestic Workers, Street Vendors etc. 2. Smart cards will be issued to every BPL & eligible MGNREGA job card holder family in their respective NP / AMC Ward / Villages/ Panchayats. Both Public and Private hospitals are eligible for empanelment under RSBY.

**Note:** For more details log on to <http://cancerindia.org.in/financial-aid-and-resources/>



## India under Cancer attack

There has been a growth of more than 300% in cases of common cancers from 2017 to 2018 posing a major challenge to the medical fraternity. According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's NPCDCS data in the year of 2018 the cases of common cancers were 1,68,122, which is much higher than previous two years. In 2016 and 2017 the reporting was 29,158 and 39,635 respectively. According to a report in the Economic Times, the availability of better health cover for cancer under Ayushman Bharat has improved the access of people to cancer treatment. This may have played a pivotal role in increasing the reporting of cancer cases. Additionally, few other reports suggests that

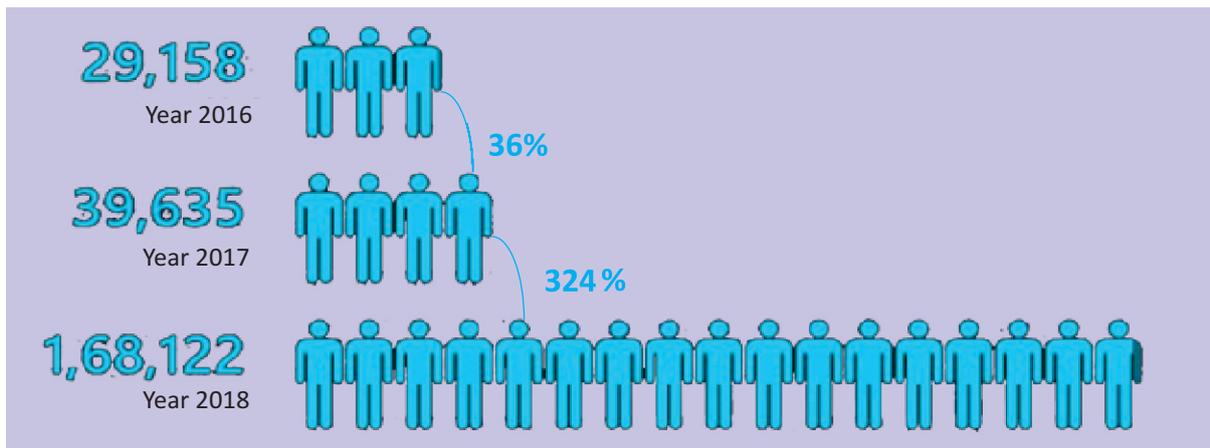


Figure 1: No. of persons diagnosed with Common Cancer. Source - MHFW

declining environment conditions and increase in consumption of tobacco, smoking etc., are the key reasons behind increased incidences.

In recent years it was also observed that many organizations have launched campaigns for increasing the awareness level about breast cancer. Such campaigns could have also contributed to early reporting of incidents.

Few facts related to Cancer are listed below:

- There are more than 100 types of cancers and almost any part of the body can be affected.
- Cancer is the second most common cause of death in India, next to cardiovascular disease.
- More women in India die from cervical cancer than in any other country. Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women.
- 2,500 persons die every day due to tobacco-related diseases in India.

Top five states with highest prevalence are:

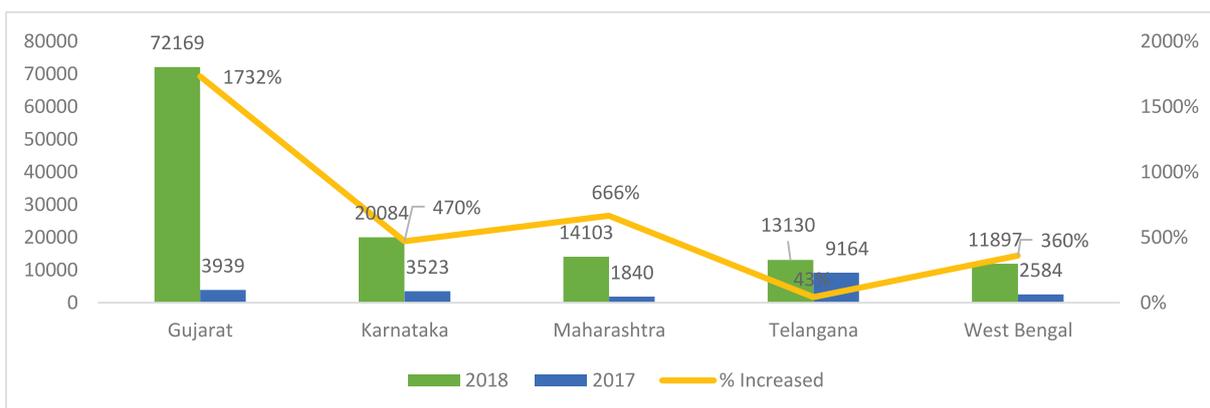


Figure 2: No. of persons diagnosed with Common Cancer. Source - MHFW

# Announcement Corner

This newsletter is intended to reinforce and encourage increased awareness and enhance interaction among all of us. If you wish to be a contributor of content in The *Social* Bulletin, you may write back to us at [info@devinsights.co.in](mailto:info@devinsights.co.in). The theme of upcoming month March is Women's Day.

## AWARENESS RIBBONS FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF CANCER



All Cancers  
*Lavender*



Head & Neck Cancer  
*Burgundy/Ivory*



Ovarian Cancer  
*Teal*



Bladder Cancer  
*Yellow*



Kidney Cancer  
*Orange*



Pancreatic Cancer  
*Purple*



Brain Cancer  
*Gray*



Leiomyosarcoma Cancer  
*Purple*



Prostate Cancer  
*Light blue*



Breast Cancer  
*Pink*



Leukemia Cancer  
*Orange*



Sarcoma/Bone Cancer  
*Yellow*



Cervical Cancer  
*Teal/white*



Liver Cancer  
*Emerald*



Stomach Cancer  
*Periwinkle*



Childhood Cancer  
*Gold*



Lung Cancer  
*White*



Testicular Cancer  
*Orchid*



Colon Cancer  
*Darkblue*



Lymphoma  
*Lime*



Thyroid cancer  
*Teal/Pink/Blue*



Esophageal Cancer  
*Periwinkle*



Melanoma  
*Black*



Uterine Cancer  
*Peach*

Image Courtesy - cancerindia.org

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