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Speaking at the session on "Collaborating with Government in Achieving India's Health Goals" of CII Health Summit, Dr Jitendra Singh, minister of state for PMO, Public Grievances and Pensions, mentioned that the type of health interventions that are needed in North-eastern states like Mizoram, Meghalaya and Manipur are essentially different from those who live in North and Western part of India. The North Eastern States has higher incidence of head and neck malignancies. "We have to identify specialized doctors in these disciplines and train them to tackle the health challenges existing there", the Minister added.

Dr Singh who is also the minister of state for development of North Eastern Region, called for evolving a blueprint for inter-ministerial consultations to take the healthcare in India to the next level and also mapping the challenges which are region specific.

The minister also referred to higher incidence of life-style diseases in India such as diabetes which have to be tackled on a war footing. However, not many hospitals are equipped to treat the patients. Many have to travel long distances to get the right treatment. In this regard, he suggested strengthening the infrastructure with the primary health centres. Also, public private partnership can be sought to tackle the growing menace of non-communicable diseases.

Referring to the lack of hospital beds in the country particularly in the rural areas, the Minister said that the time had come that we have to introspect the skewed distribution of healthcare infrastructure.

Mentioning that all stakeholders should be actively involved in ensuring universal health, the Minister said that there are areas where private sector can contribute wholly on their own or in coordination with the Government. The Minister also called for enhancing the quality of medical education to equip the practitioners to handle the state of the art technology. "We are looking at revising the entire medical curriculum to make it relevant to the present time", he added.

'"There has been a substantial improvement in geographical and financial access to healthcare. However, access to healthcare through virtual platforms is at nascent stage in India. To meet the sector's current and future challenges, healthcare systems would require innovative solutions like mHealth tools, wearables and social media. This will also help in data aggregation in the sector,' said Dr Rana Mehta, Leader -Healthcare, PwC India. 'Integrating data with healthcare delivery has immense potential to increase the effectiveness of healthcare delivery systems and generate insights for the sector, 'said Dr Mehta added.