

MSF for the health care of people in remote areas

ANJANA

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Peter Paul De Groote has dedicated his life to serve the people, who are ravaged by armed conflict, epidemics, health-care exclusion and natural or man-made disasters.

Groote is General Director of MSF India, which is largely known as Doctors Without Borders / Médecins Sans Frontières, an international humanitarian non-governmental organization (NGO).

A Dutch national, Groote has been working with the organisation for the past 25 years, and has travelled to far-flung places worldwide to treat people,

where a hospital still seems a distant dream.

Sharing his experience of working in India, Groote explained about the problems that people have been facing in the country's remote areas. "In India, one of the major problems is the lack of hospitals and non-availability of drugs," he said.

"We think people, who are in difficult situation, should have the right to access healthcare. So, as an organisation, we ensure that everyone, regardless of cast, creed, geography, race, class or colour, has access to healthcare," added Groote.

He also said that more than 80 per cent of the medicines,

the MSF use to treat people, are affordable generic medicines from India, which is often called as the 'pharmacy of the developing world'.

"If we provide medicines that are ten times more expensive than they are now, then we can treat less people," he said, adding that the original drugs is quite expensive, so for us it's important to provide generic drugs, which is affordable. The MSF treats people free of cost, and are currently working in Manipur, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Telangana, and Mumbai. In these areas, the NGO, diagnoses people who are suffering from

HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, mental health, malnutrition, respiratory tract infection, hepatitis C, kala-azar among others. MSF has treated 9,174 people suffering from malaria in Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh and Telangana; 13,114 patients of kala-azar in Bihar, 11,374 cases of acute fever in West Bengal.

The organisation also counselled 3,278 people on mental health in Kashmir and 8,498 people in Manipur. "In 2016, it provided 5,490 vaccinations against TB, hepatitis B, DTP, polio, measles and tetanus in line with the Ministry of Health's immunisation programme," the data added.

