



## Report on the Exclusive Round Table Discussion on Improving Cancer Treatment for Children in Nepal

**Date:** 20th November 2024

**Venue:** Hotel Aloft, Kathmandu

**Organized by:** Ramesh Gupta Memorial Trust (A CSR Initiative of Ramesh Corp.)

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An exclusive roundtable discussion was held on 20th November 2024 at Hotel Aloft, Kathmandu, organized by the Ramesh Gupta Memorial Trust. The event focused on fostering a dialogue surrounding the Nepal government's recent declaration to provide free cancer treatment for children under the age of 14. It brought together prominent stakeholders, including hospital directors, pediatric oncologists, and representatives from UNICEF, WHO, INGOs, and various NGOs, to explore collaborative approaches and challenges in improving childhood oncology outcomes in Nepal.

### Opening Remarks and Mission Overview

The event commenced with inspiring remarks by **Mrs. Manju Gupta, Founder of the Ramesh Gupta Memorial Trust**, who expressed heartfelt gratitude to the participants for their dedication to improving childhood cancer care in Nepal. Mrs. Gupta emphasized the importance of collaboration among all sectors to address the challenges faced by children and families affected by cancer.

The event was further moderated by **Mr. Rohit Gupta, the Chairman of the Ramesh Gupta Memorial Trust**, who took the opportunity to **highlight the impactful work and significant achievements of the Trust** since its establishment and expanded on the organization's "**Mission Zero -Curing Childhood Cancer in Nepal,**" a bold vision to eradicate childhood cancer and make effective treatment accessible to all affected children. He shared a personal account of the

trauma his family experienced when his father was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, illustrating the emotional and psychological toll of childhood cancer on families. Mr. Gupta highlighted the urgent need for comprehensive support systems, including psychological care, to improve the well-being of both patients and their families.

## **Key Highlights of the Discussion**

The roundtable session began with a critical assessment by **Mr. Sanjay Agrawal, Director of the Ramesh Gupta Memorial Trust**, who celebrated the government's initiative to provide free cancer treatment for children under 14 at government hospitals. While commending this step, Mr. Agrawal pointed out several challenges in ensuring the effective implementation of this policy. He emphasized that free treatment, although essential, is not enough to guarantee high survival rates. A holistic approach is required, focusing on infrastructure, early diagnosis, specialized medical equipment, trained healthcare professionals, and emotional support for families.

Following his remarks, Mr. Agrawal facilitated the discussion, inviting honorable guests and experts to share their insights on the topic of curing childhood cancer in Nepal. The conversation focused on collaborative strategies to overcome the barriers to effective cancer care;

## **Stakeholder Contributions**

Throughout the event, various experts provided insights into improving childhood cancer treatment in Nepal:

1. **Dr. Kailash Pd. Shah** emphasized the need for continued government support and suggested measures such as providing free lodging and travel for families of children undergoing cancer treatment, as well as offering job opportunities to ensure financial stability for affected families.

2. **Dr. Bishownath Adhikari** focused on the importance of supportive and palliative care, as well as the establishment of a cancer registry and fellowship programs in nursing to improve the quality of care.
3. **Dr. Sucharita Tuladhar** called for the improvement of diagnostic services and the training of pathologists to ensure accurate diagnosis at shared care centers.
4. **Dr. Ritu Lamichhane** stressed the need for expanding diagnostic facilities and increasing the size and scope of existing shared care centers.
5. **Dr. Ujjawal Chalise** proposed sharing resources with regional hospitals such as Bhaktapur Cancer Center to improve treatment access.
6. **Ms. Rubi** highlighted the importance of available data on childhood cancer to shape effective healthcare policies.
7. **Dr. Sudhir Sapkota** suggested providing free transportation for children and families, alongside improved social awareness, job opportunities to boost family morale during treatment and Collaboration between foundations to organize event.
8. **Dr. Yuba Nidhi Basaula** emphasized the importance of ensuring the continuous availability of medicines, developing standardized treatment protocols for all types of childhood cancer, providing comprehensive support for families during treatment, and enhancing diagnostic capabilities to ensure early and accurate detection, ultimately improving care and outcomes for children with cancer.
9. **Dr. J.P. Jaiswal** emphasized expanding transportation and accommodation services to ensure families are supported throughout the treatment process.
10. **Ms. Nisha Jyoti Shrestha** advocated for investment in human resources and nursing training to improve healthcare delivery.
11. **Dr. Anil Ojha** underscored the need to enhance infrastructure and develop standardized treatment protocols for all forms of childhood cancer.
12. **Ms. Sweta Agrawal** highlighted the need for collective efforts to address the challenges in childhood cancer care and emphasized the importance of collaborating with the Max Foundation to provide necessary medicines for shared care centers, ensuring better treatment access.

13. **Dr. Suman Panthi** emphasized the need to improve the quality of care for childhood cancer patients and shared that efforts are underway to develop standardized treatment protocols, aiming to ensure consistent and effective care across all healthcare facilities.
14. **Dr. Budhi Setiawan** highlighted the critical need for psychosocial support for children undergoing cancer treatment, emphasizing the importance of addressing their emotional and psychological well-being. He also stressed the necessity of ensuring that every child has access to timely and effective cancer treatment, regardless of their circumstances.
15. **Ms. Paera Preccero** suggested that a collaborative effort should be established among all stakeholders to strengthen childhood cancer care. She also emphasized the need for extending more psychological support to both children undergoing treatment and their families, helping them cope with the emotional challenges of cancer treatment.
16. **Dr. S.P. Kalunee** called for greater collaboration between hospitals and care providers to support more patients.
17. **Dr. Prakash Nidhi Tiwari** recommended expanding bone marrow transplant centers and focusing on infection prevention to improve survival rates.
18. **Mr. Bishop Joshi** proposed establishing an emergency fund for urgent patient needs and encouraged efforts to track families for continuity of care.

## Key Recommendations

1. The roundtable discussion concluded with a series of actionable recommendations aimed at **Improvement in Care Quality**: Enhancing the quality of medical services at hospitals and shared care centers to reduce infections and improve diagnostic capabilities.
2. **Transportation & Accommodation**: Providing free or subsidized transportation and accommodation to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for families.
3. **Job Opportunities for Families**: Offering employment opportunities to families in areas where treatment is provided to help reduce the economic burden and boost morale.
4. **Psychological Support**: Expanding psychological support services for both children undergoing treatment and their families to help them cope with the emotional toll of the illness.
5. **Collaboration & Coordination**: Strengthening partnerships between government bodies, hospitals, INGOs, and the private sector to ensure comprehensive access to care across the country.
6. **Capacity Building**: Training healthcare providers in pediatric oncology and equipping hospitals with state-of-the-art medical technology.
7. **Public Awareness**: Launching a nationwide campaign to raise awareness about childhood cancer, its symptoms, and the availability of free treatment options.
8. **Bone Marrow Transplants**: Establishing more bone marrow transplant centers and providing these services at affordable or no cost.

**List of Attendees;**

## List of Participant

S.N	Name	Represent from	S.N	Name	Represent from
1	Dr.Sudhir Sapkota	(Sr. Paed. Oncologist-Kanti children's Hospital, Kathmandu)	11	Dr.Sunil Gajurel	Consultant - Sukraraj Tropical Hospital
2	Dr. Ritu Lamichhane	( Paed. Oncologist-Bhaktapur cancer Hospital, Bhaktapur)	12	Dr. Bishownath Adhikari	Paed. Consultant- Kanti children's Hospital
3	Dr. Sucharita Tuladhar	( Paed. Oncologist--Patan Academy of Health Sciences, Lalitpur)	13	Mr. Samrat Rayamajhi	( WCC programme coordinator-Nepal)
4	Dr. Prakash Nidhi Tiwari	(Sr. Paed. Oncologist-Nepal Cancer Hospital)	14	Ms. Rubi Rajak Chhetry	(Director -RGMT)
5	Dr.Ujjawal Chalise	( Director-BhaktaPur Cancer Hopsital, Bhaktapur)	15	Mr. Samith Shrestha	Coordinator- Leonardo Edward Shrestha Foundation Nepal
6	Dr. kailash Pd. Shah	( Sr. Paed. Oncologist, Kathmandu)	16	Ms. Piera Freccero	Word Child Cancer
7	Dr.J. P. Jaiswal	(Director-RGMT and Sr. Consultant -Cardiology and Physician)	17	Dr. Simone Di Vicenz	Director -People In Need
8	Dr. Nisha Jyoti Shrestha	Oncology Unit Head-Kanti Children's Hospital	18	Ms. Sweta Agrawal	Programme Coordinator-Max Foundation
9	Dr. Anil Ojha	Oncology Unit head at Patan Academy of Health Sciences	19	Dr. S.P. Kalaunee	Chairman-AIN, Nepal
10	Dr. Yuba Nidhi Basaula	Director-Sukraraj Tropical Hospital	20	Mr. Bishop Joshi	Secretary- TACC
			21	Dr. Budhi Setiawan	Chief of Health Division- UNICEF

## **Conclusion**

The roundtable discussion, held by the Ramesh Gupta Memorial Trust, marked a significant step forward in Nepal's efforts to improve childhood cancer care. The event emphasized the need for a comprehensive, collaborative approach to ensure that all children, regardless of financial status, have access to life-saving treatment. The actionable recommendations put forth during the discussion will guide future initiatives to improve healthcare infrastructure, medical resources, and support systems for affected families. Through these collective efforts, Nepal aims to provide a better future for children battling cancer and move closer to the vision of "Mission Zero-Curing Childhood Cancer Nepal."

The event concluded with a cocktail dinner, offering participants an opportunity for informal networking and further discussions. The Ramesh Gupta Memorial Trust expressed its gratitude to all those who attended and contributed to this fruitful exchange of ideas.

## **Thank You Note**

Special Thanks to Mrs. Sakshi Bansal Gupta Ms. Niru Dhougoda, Mr. Basant Raj Pandey, Eco Advertising, Ms. Nurina Shrestha, Mr. Milan Pandit, Mr. Uggen Mannadhar and Mr. Sugam Chhatkuli for making this event more impactful and successful. Thank you again.









RAMESH COFFEE

Ramesh Gupta Memorial Trust

MISSION ZERO

CURING CHILDHOOD CANCER

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

NOV 20 2024

Aloft  
SARAWANG TRAVEL

Mr. Bishop Kozhik  
Secretary, SACCC

Dr. Suresh Ch. Nair  
Secretary, SACCC









