

CIVICS

Chapter 2: Role of Government in Health



Role of Government in Health

Health refers to the state of being free from any illness or injury. Health does not only mean freedom from diseases but also implies clean drinking water, adequate food and clean surroundings for the people. A healthy mind ensures a healthy body. One also needs to remain free from any mental strain. A healthy mind and a healthy body lead to the development of the overall personality of an individual. In a democracy, people elect their own representatives who formulate policies aimed at the development of their constituencies. A democratic government is a welfare government whose basic work is to provide education and healthcare facilities to its people.

Health Care Facilities in India

Healthcare facilities include everything which requires care and services needed by the patients. It includes hospitals, primary health centres and laboratories for testing,

ambulance services, medicines, medical equipments, doctors, nurses and other health professionals. Some facts about health care services in India are:

- Though India has the largest number of medical colleges in the world, which produce more than 15,000 doctors per year, most of the doctors are settled in the urban areas. This impacts the health services in the rural areas.
- Though healthcare facilities have grown substantially over the years, lakhs of people still die due to malaria and tuberculosis.
- While many people visit India for medical treatment, we are unable to provide clean drinking water to all our people.
- India is the fourth largest producer of medicines in the world but more than half of the children in the country suffer from malnutrition as they do not get nutritious and adequate food to eat.



While India is the fourth largest producer of medicines in the world, more than half of the people of the country have no access to clean drinking water

The above facts give us the contrasting picture of the health care situation in India. India has a large number of doctors, clinics and hospitals. The country also has a **public health care system**. This means that many hospitals and health centres are run by the government to treat people across the country. India has also made great technological advancement in medical sciences. However we also see that the overall health situation in India is poor. We are not able to provide basic health care facilities to the people. In many places, people do get

clean drinking water due to which they suffer from various water borne diseases such as diarrhea, hepatitis etc. Let us understand the difference between the public and private health care services in India.

Public Health Services

India is a democratic country and according to our constitution, the primary duty of the government is to ensure the welfare of the people. One of the welfare activities of the government is to provide basic healthcare facilities to the people at low costs. Following are some features of the public health care system in India:

- The chains of hospitals and health centres in India which are run by the government are called public health services.
- These health centres not only provide treatment for common illnesses but also perform complicated surgeries.
- Health centres in the villages usually have a trained nurse and a health worker. They treat people suffering from common illnesses. They work under the supervision of doctors at the Primary Health Centre (P.H.C.).
- A P.H.C. looks after many villages.
- At the district level, a district hospital supervises the work of all the health centres in a particular district.
- In big cities, the government has opened many hospitals (known as governmental hospitals) which provide treatment to people belonging to all economic sections.



The chains of hospitals and health care centres in India which are run by the government are known as public health services



Public health care is so called as in public hospitals the cost of treatment and medicines are low. Most of the financial resources come from the taxes paid by the people.

Public health services are so named because of the following reasons:

- The health centres and hospitals have been set up by the government for providing health services to all the people.
- The financial resources of these hospitals come from a part of the taxes which are paid by the people.
- These health services are provided to the people at either low costs or free of cost. This

has been done so that even poor people are able to afford these services.

- Public health services make people aware of the consequences of diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, jaundice, cholera etc.

Awareness is spread among the people through campaigns, street plays, advertisements in the media etc.

Private Health Services

Private health services refer to those services which are offered by privately owned clinics or hospitals. These are either owned by an individual or by an organisation. Private hospitals are generally equipped with modern medical equipments and laboratories. Usually, many facilities such as ultrasound, X-ray etc. are located within the premises of these hospitals.



Private hospitals are generally equipped with modern medical equipments

The cost of treatment in private hospitals or clinics is high. Patients have to spend a large sum for every medical facility which is availed by them. Urban areas have many privately owned clinics and hospitals. Sometimes, many big companies run the private hospitals. They also manufacture and sell medicines.

Draw backs of Private Healthcare Services

- Health facilities in India are not equally accessible to all the people.
- While the private health services are increasing, the quantity and quality of public health services remains the same.
- Private health services are mostly concentrated in the urban areas.
- The cost of treatment in privately owned clinics and hospitals is so high that common people cannot afford them.
- In order to earn profits, many private hospitals encourage incorrect practices. The doctors recommend unnecessary tests and prescribe expensive medicines.



In the private hospitals, the cost of treatment is so high that common people are hardly afford them

Inequalities in Accessing Healthcare Facilities

- It has been estimated that only 20 percent of the total population of India can afford the medicines which are prescribed to them during their illness. It has also been reported that forty percent of the people who are admitted into hospitals due to their illness have to borrow money for their treatment.
- Poor people are more prone to illness as they are undernourished. They also do not have the basic amenities such as clean drinking water, clean surroundings and proper sanitation facilities. Further, expenditures on illness worsen their situation.
- Gender discriminations also affect the health of women. Since the health of women is not given any importance, they are not immediately taken to the doctor.

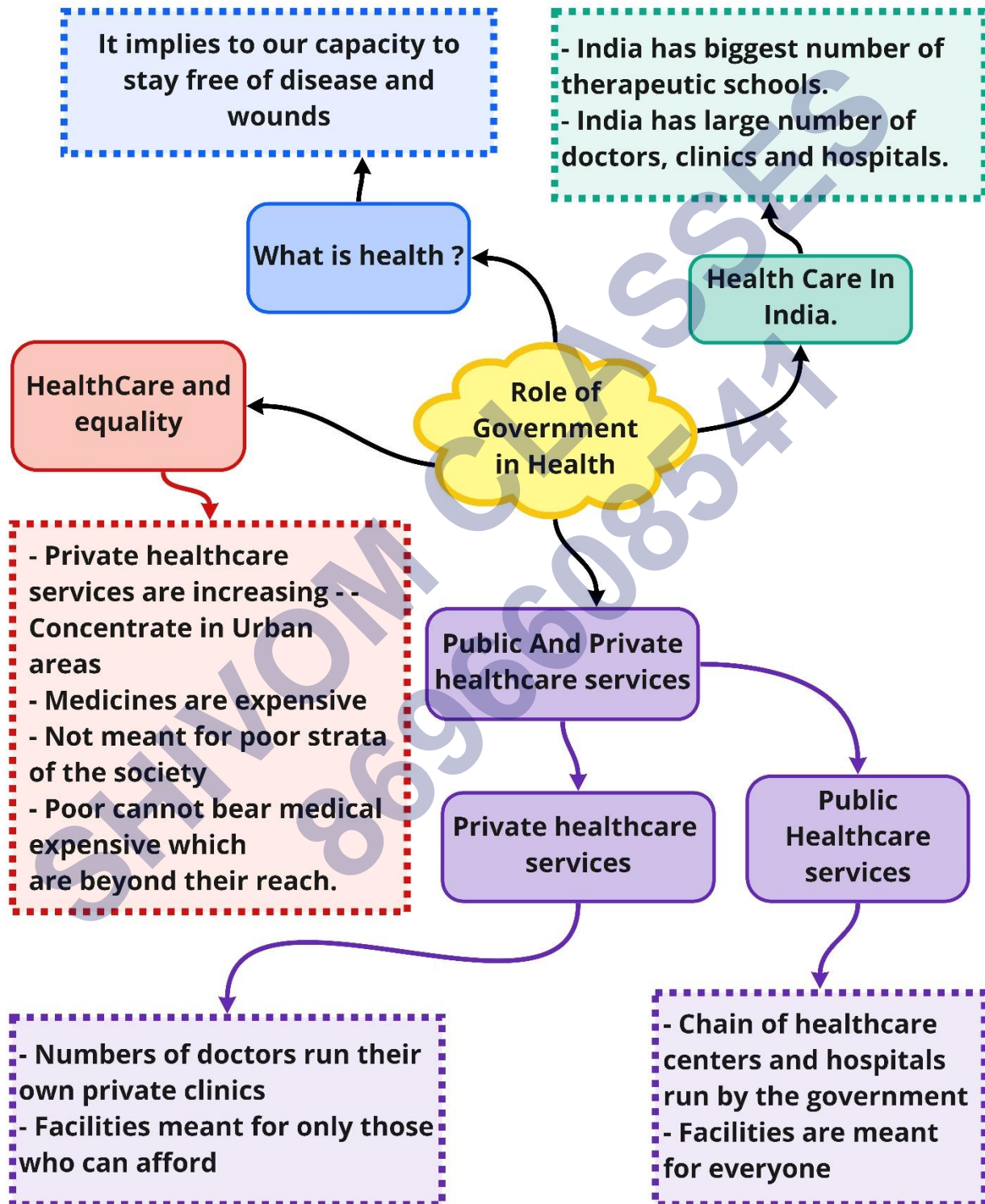
Steps Which Can Be Taken to Improve the Situation

- The government needs to provide quality healthcare services to the people especially to the poor sections of the society.
- Since most diseases emanate from unhygienic surroundings and lack of proper sanitation facilities, people should be made aware of the advantages of living in clean surroundings.
- This can be achieved through media advertisings, campaigns, street plays etc.
- One of the effective methods to improve the health services for the people is to allocate budgets to the panchayats. In this way, the panchayats can ensure that proper planning and execution is carried out for the provision of clean water, food, women's health etc.
- The State Government of Kerala followed this method when it allocated forty percent of its health budget to the panchayats. This step improved the general health status of the people at the village level. However, they faced some problems such as shortage of medicines and insufficient number of medical professionals.
- Another method of improving the health standards of the people was tried by the Government of Costa Rica. It decided not to have an army. The money which was to be used for maintaining an army was instead spent on the health, education and fulfilling the general needs of the people.
- The Costa Rican government spent money on providing clean drinking water, proper sanitation facilities, nutritional food and housing facilities to its citizens.



The State Governments, by allocating money to the panchayats, can improve the general health standard of the people in the villages

Class : 7th Social Studies (Geography)
Chapter - 2 : Role of the Government in Health



Important Questions

➤ Multiple Choice Questions:

Question 1. Costa Rica is a country in:

- (a) Europe
- (b) South America
- (c) North America

Question 2. The healthiest country in the American continent is:

- (a) Brazil
- (b) Canada
- (c) Costa Rica

Question 3. The services that are easily available in rural areas is:

- (a) Public services
- (b) Private services
- (c) None

Question 4. In 1996 the state that gave 40% of the entire state budget to Panchayats is:

- (a) Tamil Nadu
- (b) Karnataka
- (c) Kerala

Question 5. Health care is divided into:

- (a) 6 categories
- (b) 2 categories
- (c) 3 categories

Question 6. Which country has the largest number of medical colleges in the world?

- (a) United states of America
- (b) India
- (c) China

Question 7. In India about how many people die from tuberculosis every year?

- (a) 5 lakh
- (b) 2 lakh

(c) 7 lakh

Question 8. RMPs are found in:

(a) Urban areas

(b) Rural areas

(c) Posh areas

Question 9. what do you mean by 'medical tourist'?

(a) People from other village

(b) Foreigners came for medical treatments

(c) Indian goes for medical treatments in other countries

(d) None of these

Question 10. where do most doctors prefer to settle?

(a) Urban areas

(b) Rural areas

(c) Foreign region

(d) None of these

Question 11. How many people die by tuberculosis every year?

(a) 2 lakh

(b) 3 lakh

(c) 5 lakh

(d) 1 lakh

Question 12. which one is not a water borne disease?

(a) Diarrhea

(b) Hepatitis

(c) Worms

(d) Cancer

Question 13. what does PHC means?

(a) Private health center

(b) Public health center

(c) Primary health center

(d) All of these

Question 14. How many children die every year in India?

- (a) 2 million
- (b) 5 million
- (c) 1 million
- (d) 4 million

Question 15. what do you mean by an OPD?

- (a) Operation patient department
- (b) Out Patient Department
- (c) Out premier department
- (d) None of these

➤ **Fill in the blanks:**

1. In India _____ cases of malaria are reported every year.
2. Registered Medical Practitioners are referred by _____.
3. _____ is a service that is organized by an individual or company for its own profit.
4. _____ health concerns are generally ignore(d).
5. Government uses _____ money for providing many public services.

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F):**

1. Ranjan got costly medical treatment.
2. Private services are concentrated in rural areas.
3. If people do not get adequate food to eat or have to live in cramped conditions, they will be prone to illness.
4. The private health service is a chain of health centres and hospitals run by the government.
5. Adequate healthcare is available to all in India.

➤ **Very Short Questions:**

1. What do people in a democratic country expect the government?
2. Where do most doctor prefer to settle?
3. Name some water borne diseases.
4. What problem do rural people face whenever they come in a grip of an illness?

5. What do we need to prevent and treat illnesses?
6. What do you mean by a public health care system?
7. What happened to Hakim Sheik?
8. Why did Hakim Sheik file a case in the court?
9. Who got costly medical treatment—Aman or Raryan?
10. What did the court ask the State Government in Hakim Sheik case?

➤ **Short Questions:**

1. What do you mean by proper and adequate health care facilities?
2. Differentiate between public health care system and private health care system.
3. Why government hospitals are less expensive as compared to private hospitals?
4. Describe the function of public health system.
5. Why it is important to pay taxes to government?

➤ **Long Questions:**

1. Compare public health services with those of private health services.
2. What is Costa Rican approach? Explain.
3. What major changes were made by the Kerala government in the state in 1996?
4. What did the court say in the case of Hakim Sheik?
5. How can you say that adequate healthcare is not available to all?

ANSWER KEY –

➤ **Multiple Choice Answer:**

1. (b) South America
2. (c) Costa Rica
3. (a) Public services
4. (c) Kerala
5. (b) 2 categories
6. (b) India
7. (a) 5 lakh
8. (b) Rural areas
9. (b) Foreigners came for medical treatments

10. (a) Urban areas
11. (c) 5 lakh
12. (d) Cancer
13. (c) Primary health center
14. (a) 2 million
15. (b) Out Patient Department

➤ **Fill in the blanks:**

1. 2 million
2. RMPs
3. Private
4. Women's
5. tax

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F):**

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. False

➤ **Very Short Answer:**

1. People in a democratic country expect the government to work for their welfare.
2. Most doctors prefer to settle in urban areas.
3. Diarrhoea, worms, hepatitis.
4. They have to travel long distances to reach a doctor.
5. We need appropriate healthcare facilities such as health centres, hospitals laboratories for testing, ambulance services, etc.
6. This is a system of hospitals and health centres run by the government.
7. One evening in 1992, he accidentally fell off a running train and suffered head injuries.
8. Hakim Sheik filed a case in the court because of the indifferent attitude of various government hospitals that refused to admit him.

9. Ranjan got costly medical treatment.
10. The court asked the State Government to give Hakim Sheik the money that he had spent on his treatment.

➤ Short Answer:

1. Proper and adequate health care facilities mean adequate number of health centres and hospitals, laboratories with proper facilities for testing, quick ambulance service and blood bank facilities. All these services and facilities should be easily accessible to people.
2. Public health care system runs by government, it is less costly. It involves government hospitals and health care centres, while private health care system is run by people. It is expensive and involves private clinic and hospitals.
3. Government hospitals are run by the taxes and fund collected by government from people. They are for welfare of people to provide better service without any profit. While a private hospital is run by a private person who bears all its expenses on his own.
4. To provide quality health care service at low cost to people, it also includes taking necessary action against spread of various diseases like malaria, TB, cholera, jaundice etc.
5. Because government uses tax money to provide services for benefits of public. Like defence, police judicial system, road and highways construction etc. it also funds some developmental programmes related with health and education. Tax money is used for relief and rehabilitation in case of natural disaster like floods, tsunami, earthquakes, etc. Space, missile and nuclear programmes are also funded from tax money.

The reasons behind it are:

- i. She cannot skip work when her daughter is ill.
- ii. She does not have enough money to take her to doctor.
- iii. She has to stand in a line in the government hospital for her turn to show her daughter to then doctor.

➤ Long Answer:

1. Public Health Services and Private Health Services – Comparison:

- i. Public health services are run by the government while private health services are managed by the individuals or companies.
- ii. Public health services provide health care facilities either free or at a low

cost so that even the poor can seek treatment easily. Thus, money-making is not a goal of public health services. So far private health services are concerned, they are run mainly for profit. They usually prescribe expensive medicines. It is common for private doctors to prescribe unnecessary medicines, injections or saline bottles when tablets or simple medicines can suffice.

- iii. Public health services are found both in rural and urban areas. But private health services are concentrated in urban areas.
 - iv. We often find huge rush at the government hospitals. People have to wait for hours in a long queue. But private hospitals are maintained properly. People don't face such long queues there.
2. Coasta Rica is a country in North America. It is considered to be one of the healthiest countries in the countinent. The coasta Rican govt, gave much importance to the health of its citizens. It took an important decision and decided not to have an army. In this way it saved money and began to spend this money on health, education and other basic needs of the people. The costa Rican government believes that a country has to be healthy for its development and pays a sincere attention to the health of its people. The Costa Rican government provides all the basic services and amenities to all the people of the country. It provides clean drinking water, sanitation, nutrition and housing. Health education has been made an important part of the education and at all levels students are provided knowledge about health. The Costa Rican approach towards health is praiseworthy and inspiring.
 3. The Kerala government made some major changes in the state in 1996. It gave 40% of the entire state budget to panchayats so that they could plan and provide for their requirements. This made it possible for a village to make sure that proper planning was done for water, food, women's development and education. In this way water supply schemes were checked, the working of schools and anganwadis was ensured and specific problems of the village were taken up. Health centres were also improved.

Inspite of all these efforts, some problems such as shortage of medicines, insufficient hospital beds, not enough doctors still exist and these are needed to be solved.

4. The court said that the difficulty that Hakim Sheik had to face could have cost him his life. If a hospital cannot provide timely medical treatment to a person, it means that the protection of life is not being given. The court also said that it was the duty of the government to provide the necessary health services, including treatment in emergency situations. Hospitals and medical staff must fulfil their

duty of providing essential treatment. As various government hospitals refused to admit him, the State Government was asked to give Hakim Sheik the money that he had spent on his treatment.

5. We can say without any doubt that adequate healthcare is not available to all in our country. The reason is that private services are increasing but public services are not. As a result private services are mainly available to people. But these services are concentrated in urban areas and are very expensive. Poor people hardly afford them whenever there is illness in the family, they either borrow money or sell some of their possessions to pay for the expenses. Thus, medical expenses cause great hardship for the poor. Therefore, they avoid to go to a doctor unless it is very urgent. It has been found that women are not taken to a doctor in a prompt manner. Their health concerns are easily ignored. Many tribal areas have few health centres and they do not run properly.

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