

Chapter – 2: Role of the Government in Health

- Democracy – people expect government – work for their welfare
- Through – education, health, employment, housing, development of roads, electricity
- This chapter – examine meanings and problems – related to health

What is health?

- Ability to remain free of injuries and illness
- Health – not only about disease
- Other factors – affect health – clean drinking water, pollution free environment, proper food to eat, proper health care services
- All of us – active and in good conditions – whatever we do
- Not healthy – being inactive, dull, anxious, scared
- Free of mental strain
- All these factors – part of our health

Healthcare in India

- India – largest number of medical colleges – largest producers of doctors – 30,000 new doctors – every year
 - Most doctors – settle in urban areas – people – rural areas – walk long distances – reach doctor – number of doctors : population – very low in rural areas
- Healthcare facilities – grown so much – 1950 – 2717 government hospitals – 2017 – 23,583 hospitals
 - 5 lack people – die of diarrhea every year – almost unchanged since Independence – 2 million cases every year – malaria – number isn't decreasing
- India – many medical tourists – some hospitals – compete with the best
 - Clean drinking water – not available to all – 21 % communicable disease – water borne
- India – 3rd largest producer of medicines – large exported of medicines
 - 50 % children – do not get adequate food to eat and are undernourished
- Prevent and treat illness – appropriate healthcare facilities – health centres, hospitals, laboratories, ambulance services, blood banks, etc.
- Run such services – health workers, nurses, qualified doctors, health professionals – advise, diagnose, treat illness
- Need medicines and equipment for treatment
- India – large number of doctors, clinics, hospitals
- Imp. knowledge and experience – running public healthcare system
- This system – hospitals and health centres – government run
- Ability – look after health – large sections of populations
- Phenomenal (lot of) advancement – medical sciences – many new technologies and treatments
- How poor – health conditions are
- All positive developments – not able to provide proper health care to all people
- This is the paradox – something opposite to what we think

- Our country – money, knowledge and people with experience – cannot make necessary healthcare available to all

The cost of a cure

- Two friends – Aman and Ranjan
- Aman
 - Poor family
 - Fell ill – went to government hospital – long queues – took a lot of time
 - Doctor performed – blood tests – gave a fever medicine
 - Treatment – did not cost much
- Ranjan
 - Rich family
 - Fell ill – went to private hospital – building – so posh – like a 5 star hotel
 - Doctor performed – many tests – gave a lot of medicines
 - Treatment – cost too much

Public and private health care services

- Health care facilities – two categories –
- Public health care services
 - Chain of health centres and hospitals – run by government
 - Linked together – cover both – rural and urban areas – cover all problems – common illness to special services
 - Village level – health centres – nurses and a village health worker
 - Trained in dealing – common illness – work under doctors – Primary Health Centre (PHC)
 - Such a centre – cover – many villages
 - District level – District hospital – supervise all health centres
 - Large cities – many government hospitals and specialized hospitals
 - Called public – many reasons
 - Provide service to all – government set up – hospitals and health centres
 - Resources – needed to run – paid by people as tax
 - Meant to provide – quality health service – either free or low cost
 - Prevent spread of diseases – TB, malaria, jaundice, cholera, diarrhea, chikungunya
 - Organized by government – help from people
 - According to Constitution – primary duty of government – ensure – welfare of people – provide health services
 - Government – safeguard – Right to Life – if hospital – cannot provide treatment on time – fundamental right – violated
 - Case of Kolkata – a daily wage worker – got hurt in head – different government hospitals – denied treatment – admitted to private hospital – cost of treatment – very high – filed a case
 - Court ordered government – compensate him
 - Court also said – government's duty – provide necessary health services – including treatment in emergency situations

- Private health care services
 - Wide range – available
 - Lots of doctors – run private clinics
 - Rural areas – Registered Medical Practitioners (RMPs)
 - Urban areas – many doctors – provide specialized services
 - Hospitals and nursing homes – privately owned
 - Laboratories – perform tests and special facilities – X-ray, ultrasound, etc
 - Shops – buy medicines
 - Not owned or controlled by government
 - Patients – pay a lot of money
 - Large companies – run hospitals – manufacture and sell medicines

Healthcare and equality: Is adequate healthcare available to all?

- India – private sectors – increasing – public sectors are not
- Private sector – concentrated in urban areas – cost of treatment – high – medicines – expensive
- Many people – cannot afford – borrow money for treatment
- Some private services – incorrect practices – earn more
 - Inexpensive alternatives – not used
 - Some doctors – prescribe expensive and exclusive medicines – simple medicine may work
- 20 % population – afford all medicines required during treatment
- Study reports – 40 % of people – admitted – borrow money – pay expenses
- Poor family – every illness – anxiety
- Fall ill – regularly – undernourished – not getting – enough to eat, clean drinking water, clean surroundings
- Expense – makes situation worse
- Lack of money – not always a problem
- Women's health – less important than others
- Many tribal areas – few health centres

What can be done?

- Health condition – not good – all people
- Government – responsibility – provide quality health service
- Health as imp. as social conditions

The Kerala experience

- 1996 – Kerala government – major changes
- 40 % – budget – given to panchayats
- Plan and provide for all requirements
- Village – proper planning – water, food, women's development and education
- Water supply schemes – improved – working of schools and *anganwadis* – improved
- Health centres – improved

- Despite of these efforts – many problems – shortage of medicines, insufficient hospital beds, not enough doctors

The Costa Rican approach

- Costa Rica – healthiest countries – Central America – main reason – Costa Rican Constitution
- Several years ago – Costa Rica – decided – no army
- Army's budget – used on health, education and needs
- Government – believes – country – needs to be healthy for development
- Provides – safe drinking water, sanitation, nutrition, housing
- Health education – imp. – Knowledge about health – imp. part of education