

Chapter 2: Role of the Government in Health

Intext Questions:

Question 1 : Would you associate all or some of these pictures (images on pages 18-19) with 'health'. In what ways? Discuss in groups.

Answer: All these pictures are associated with health.

These pictures relate to:

Sanitary conditions

Availability of clean drinking water

Health centres

Hospital services

Question 2 : Pick two situations from the above collage that are not related to illness and write two sentences on how they are related to health.

Answer:



Question 3 : Can you provide a title to the two columns?

<p>India has the largest number of medical colleges in the world and is among the largest producers of doctors. Approximately more than 30,000 new doctors qualify every year.</p>	<p>Most doctors settle in urban areas. People in rural areas have to travel long distances to reach a doctor. The number of doctors with respect to the population much less in rural areas.</p>
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Healthcare facilities have grown substantially over the years. In 1950, there were only 2,717 government hospitals in India. In 1991, there were 11,174 hospitals. In 2017, the number grew to 23,583.	About five lakh people die from tuberculosis every year. This number is almost unchanged since Independence! Almost two million cases of malaria are reported every year and this number isn't decreasing.
India gets a large number of medical tourists from many countries. They come for treatment in some of the hospitals in India that compare with the best in the world.	We are not able to provide clean drinking water to all. 21 percent of all communicable diseases are water borne. For example, diarrhoea, worms, hepatitis, etc.
India is the third largest producer of medicines in the world and is also a large exporter of medicines.	Half of all children in India do not get adequate food to eat and are undernourished.

Answer: The titles can be:

Advancement in health care

The health situation in India

Question 4 : In India, it is often said that we are unable to provide health services for all because the government does not have enough money and facilities. After reading the above columns do you think this is true? Discuss.

Answer:

There are many developments like:

The largest number of medical colleges in the world.

Approximately more than 30,000 new doctors qualify every year.

About 23583 hospitals by the year 2017.

Extension of medical tourism due to the low cost of treatments.

The fourth-largest producer of medicines.

The following are some of the drawbacks of our healthcare:

Most doctors settle in urban areas, fewer doctors in rural areas.

Two million cases of malaria and five lakh cases of tuberculosis every year.

Water-borne communicable diseases like diarrhoea, hepatitis on the rise. About 21% have no access to clean water.

Half of all children are malnourished.

Private health on the rise and the Public health care system has not grown as per the need.

In order to prevent and treat illnesses, we need appropriate healthcare facilities:

They are health centres, hospitals, laboratories for testing, ambulance services, blood banks, etc.

They can provide the required care and services that patient's need.

In order to run these facilities, we need health workers, nurses, qualified doctors, and other health professionals who can advise, diagnose, and treat illnesses.

Healthcare Services in India

We also need medicines and equipment that are necessary for treating patients.

India has a large number of doctors, clinics, and hospitals.

It also has considerable experience and knowledge, in running a public healthcare system. This system of hospitals and health centres is run by the government.

It has the ability to look after the health of a large section of its population scattered over lakhs of villages.

There has been a phenomenal improvement in medical sciences with many new technologies and treatment procedures.

Question 5 :The Story of Hakim Sheik

Hakim Sheik was a member of the Paschim Banga Khet Mazdoor Samity (PBKMS), an organisation of agricultural labourers in West Bengal. One evening in 1992, he accidentally fell off a running train and suffered head injuries. He was in a very serious condition and needed immediate treatment.

He was taken to a government hospital in Kolkata but they refused to admit him because they did not have a spare bed. Another hospital did not have the facility or the specialised doctors necessary for his treatment. In this way, he spent 14 hours in a critical state and was taken to eight different government hospitals, but none of them admitted him.

Finally, he was admitted in a private hospital, where he received treatment. He spent a lot of money on his treatment. Angry and upset over the indifferent attitude of all the hospitals that refused to admit him, Hakim Sheik and PBKMS filed a case in court.

Read the story given above. Then imagine that you are a judge in the court. What would you say to Hakim Sheik?

Answer: I would pronounce the judgement with due compensation to Hakim Sheik. I would also heavily fine the delinquent hospitals as a deterrent punishment for dereliction of duty.

Question 6 :Where do you go when you are ill? Are there any problems that you face? Write a paragraph based on your experience.

Answer: We generally go to private nursing homes.

Problems:

Non-availability of expert doctors on the spot.

The high cost of treatment.

No proper guidance and information.

Question 7 :What problems did Aman face in the public hospital? How do you think the hospital can work in a better manner? Discuss.

Answer: Problems faced by Aman are:

1. Non-availability of doctors.
2. Junked and non-operational equipment.
3. Non-availability of medicines.
4. Crowded.
5. The indifference of doctors etc.

Proper and strict administration can get the hospital's work in a better manner.

Question 8 : Why did Ranjan have to spend so much money? Give reasons.

Answer: Ranjan had to spend so much money because of the following reasons:

He took treatment at a private nursing home.

He had to purchase medicines from the open market.

He spent money on consultation, tests, etc.

Question 9 :What problems do we face in private hospitals? Discuss.

Answer:

Private hospitals are not owned or controlled by the government.

Patients have to- pay a lot of money for every service.

Sometimes incorrect practices are encouraged where patients undergo unnecessary treatments or tests.

Question 10 :Why should we pay taxes to the government?

Answer:The tax money paid to the government is used for providing public services for all citizens.

Services like defence, police judiciary, highways, etc.

Developmental programmes like education, health care employment, social welfare.

Vocational training for the needy.

Rehabilitation after natural disasters.

Space, nuclear, or missile programmes.

Services to the poor by subsidies on basic amenities.

Question 11 :

(a) In what ways is the public health system meant for everyone?

(b) List some Primary Health Centres (PHCs) or hospitals near your place. From your experience (or by visiting any one of them), find out the facilities provided and the people who run the centre.

Answer:

(a) Public health system is meant for everyone in the following ways:

Numerous hospitals, primary health centres, dispensaries, family welfare centres.

No fee charged.

No restrictions on anyone.

Free supply of medicine.

(b)Primary health care centre near my house is the Sadar Hospital. This is the government hospital and I visited here last week.

The facilities were given to the patients and in case of emergency, ambulance were present for referral.

However, the issue point in this was the cleanliness of the hospital.

Question 12 : Private health facilities can mean many things. Explain with the help of some examples from your area.

Answer:Private healthcare is the private ownership of a private health service like hospitals and clinics etc.

They can mean many things in the following ways;

(i) A social service.

(ii) A business

A wide range of private health facilities exists in our country.

Countless doctors run their own private clinics.

In rural areas, one finds Registered Medical Practitioners (RMP).

Urban areas have a large number of doctors, many of them provide specialised services.

There are hospitals and nursing homes that are privately owned.

There are many laboratories that do tests and offer special facilities like X-ray, ultrasound, etc.

There are also medicines for selling shops. They are called chemist shops or stores.

Question 13 : How can health care be made more affordable? Discuss.

Answer: Healthcare is now becoming more and more costly due to various reasons. And if we deal with these reasons then we will be able to reduce the prices of healthcare services.

Those reasons are:

1. Lack of country made equipments and importing of these equipments from other countries.
2. Lack of infrastructure.
3. Private healthcare institutions have no rules and regulations, they just ruthlessly increase the bill to earn as much as possible.

Question 14 : An important part of the Constitution says it is the “duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health.”

Answer: Article 47 makes improvement of public health a primary duty of State as part of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP). Article 47 of the Constitution of India deals with Duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health.

EXERCISES:

Question 1 :

In this chapter you have read that health is a wider concept than illness. Look at this quote from the Constitution and explain the terms ‘living standard’ and ‘public health’ in your own words.

An important part of the Constitution says it is the “duty of the state to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health.”

Answer:

Living Standard:

- It means the condition in which people are living.
- Standard living of people are measured in terms of comforts, wealth, goods or services.
- Higher the standard of living of people, higher the economy and vice versa. Thus it also reflects the economic condition for a country.

Public Health:

- It means the general level of public health.
- The Government provides free basic health facilities and low cost hospitals and medicines to their people.
- It ensures that every people has right to get health facilities.

Question 2 : What are the different ways through which the government can take steps to provide healthcare for all? Discuss.

Answer: Different ways through which the government can take steps to provide healthcare for all:

- Establishing public healthcare at zonal level.
- Setting up low cost government hospitals.
- Health insurance for basic treatment.
- Provision of clean drinking water and steps to check pollution.
- Generic medicines at low prices should be provided.
- Healthcare programme and creating awareness.
- Mobile clinic should be encouraged more in rural areas.

Question 3 : What differences do you find between private and public health services in your area? Use the following table to compare and contrast these.

Facility	Affordability	Availability	Quality
Private			
Public			

Answer:

Facility	Affordability	Availability	Quality
Private	Cost of services is high	Easily available	Generally good
Public	Cost of services is low	Take long time with long queues	Generally poor

Question 4 : 'Improvement in water and sanitation can control many diseases.'
Explain with the help of examples.

Answer: It is true that 'improvement in water and sanitation can control many diseases.'

- Contaminated water is the main reason for many diseases like cholera, jaundice etc.
- By provision of clean drinking water, protection from water related diseases can be assured.
- Poor sanitation is responsible for many communicable diseases.
- Lack of proper sanitation also gives rise to the birth of mosquitoes, several insects which affect the health of people.
- Proper sanitation will leads to hygienic condition which will surely control many diseases.

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