

# Role of the Government in Health

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 means the level of living of people at which they live. If they live in hygienic conditions enjoying all the comforts of life, it means their living standard is high. On the contrary, if they are bound to live in a filthy surroundings and drink polluted water and eat unhygienic foods, it means they lead a low standard of living.

Public health. It refers to the health of the general public.

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

**Answer:** The government can take steps to provide healthcare for all by:

- Increasing the number of hospitals, healthcare centres and family welfare centres.
- Organising free camps for check up of general public.
- Organising Pulse Polio campaigns.
- Spreading health awareness among common people through different means. Workshops, seminars and training camps can also prove to be effective ways.

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	Cost of services	Availability of service
Private		
Public		

**Ans.**

Facility	Cost of services	Availability of service
Private	High, very expensive	Everything is available but on high cost
Public	Either free or at very low cost	There is always rush at the public hospitals. Even though services are available there but it takes time.

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

**Answer:** Water and sanitation are the basic necessities for the maintenance of our health. Poor quality of water causes a lot of health problems. Similarly poor sanitation causes many epidemics giving birth to dangerous insects and worms. Recently we saw the spread of Dengue caused by Aedes (a mosquito). Malaria is also caused by a mosquito called anopheles. Improvement in water and sanitation can control these happenings.

## VERY SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

**1. What do people in a democratic country expect the government? [V. Imp.]**

**Answer:** People in a democratic country expect the government to work for their welfare.

**2. Where do most doctor prefer to settle?**

**Answer:** Most doctors prefer to settle in urban areas.

**3. Name some water borne diseases.**

**Answer:** Diarrhoea, worms, hepatitis.

**4. What problem do rural people face whenever they come in a grip of an illness?**

**Answer:** They have to travel long distances to reach a doctor.

**5. What do we need to prevent and treat illnesses?**

**Answer:** We need appropriate healthcare facilities such as health centres, hospitals laboratories for testing, ambulance services, etc.

**6. What do you mean by a public health care system? [V. Imp.]**

**Answer:** This is a system of hospitals and health centres run by the government.

**7. What happened to Hakim Sheik?**

**Answer:** One evening in 1992, he accidentally fell off a running train and suffered head injuries.

**8. Why did Hakim Sheik file a case in the court?**

**Answer:** Hakim Sheik filed a case in the court because of the indifferent attitude of various government hospitals that refused to admit him.

**9. Who got costly medical treatment—Aman or Raryan?**

**Answer:** Ranjan got costly medical treatment.

**10. What did the court ask the State Government in Hakim Sheik case?**

**Answer:** The court asked the State Government to give Hakim Sheik the money that he had spent on his treatment.

**11. What is full form of RMPs? Where are they found?**

**Answer:** Registered Medical Practitioners. They are found in the rural areas.

**12. Where are private services, easily available?**

**Answer:** Private services are easily available in urban areas.

**13. Why are poor people more likely to fall ill?**

**Answer:** Poor people are more likely to fall ill because they are not provided basic necessities like drinking water, adequate housing, clean surroundings, etc.

**14. Why are women not taken to a doctor in a prompt manner?**

**Answer:** It is because women's health concerns are considered to be less important than the health of men in the family.

## SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

### 1. Define health in broader prospective. [V. Imp.]

**Answer:** The common definition of health is the ability of a person to remain free of illness and injuries. But health is not only about disease. It is something more than that. Apart from disease, we need to think of other factors such as safe drinking water, clean surroundings etc. because they affect our health in various ways. If people fail to get these basic amenities of life, they will fall ill. Being active and in good spirits are also essential part of health. We also need to be without mental stress, because we cannot be healthy for a long time if we are under mental strain.

### 2. Mention some positive aspects of healthcare in India. [Imp.]

**Answer:** Some positive aspects of healthcare in India are:

- (a) India has a good number of doctors, clinics and hospitals. It is among the largest producers of doctors.
- (b) Healthcare facilities have grown substantially over the years. The number of hospitals grew from 11,174 in 1991 to 18,218 in 2000.
- (c) India gets a large number of medical tourists from several countries. They come for treatment in some of the world famous hospitals in India.
- (d) India is the fourth largest producers of medicines in the world and also a large exporter of medicines.

### 3. What are the negative aspects of healthcare in India? [Imp.]

**Answer:** The negative aspects of healthcare in India are:

- (a) Rural people face the crisis of doctors, because most doctors settle in urban areas. They have to travel long distances to reach a doctor.
- (b) About live lakh people die from tuberculosis every year. Almost two million cases of malaria are reported every year.
- (c) Clean drinking water is not available to all. As a result poor people easily become prey to various waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea worms, hepatitis etc.
- (d) Half of all children in India do not get adequate food to eat and are undernourished.

### 4. Write down the main features of public health system. [V. Imp.]

**Answer:** The main features of public health system are:

- (a) It provides quality healthcare services either free or at a low cost so that even the poor can seek treatment.
- (b) It takes action to prevent the spread of diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, jaundice, etc. Time to time it takes up a campaign to see that mosquitoes do not breed in water-codgers, roof tops etc.
- (c) This system is available in both rural and urban areas.

### 5. What did the court say in the case of Hakim Sheik?

**Answer:** 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.

**6. How can you say that adequate healthcare is not available to all? [V. Imp.]**

**Answer:** 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.

**LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS**

**1. Compare public health services with those of private health services. [V. Imp.]**

**Answer:** (a) Public health services are run by the government while private health services are managed by the individuals or companies.

(b) 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.

(c) Public health services are found both in rural and urban areas. But private health services are concentrated in urban areas.

(d) 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. What is Costa Rican approach? Explain. [V. Imp.]**

**Answer:** 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. What major changes were made by the Kerala government in the state in 1996?**

**Answer:** 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.