



UNIQUE STUDY POINT

Chapter 2 Role of the Government in Health

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 refers to the level of wealth, comfort, material goods, and necessities available to a certain socioeconomic class in a country. In well constructed urban areas, standard of living is far better in comparison to underdeveloped rural areas. Clean, pollution free surroundings lead to good living standards whereas living in regions of dirty, poor sanitation, dusty lands leads to poor living standards.

Public Health is the wellness of all people, irrespective of caste, religion, gender, or economic status to remain healthy and free from any disease. Right to life is everyone's right without any discrimination. That is why the healthcare is "public" and every individual is entitled to healthcare provided by the government.

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

Answer: The different ways through which the government can take steps to provide healthcare for all are:

- The government could increase the number of hospitals or medical vans in rural and remote places for better access to healthcare.
- Sanitation facilities and proper drainage system could be improved.
- With the help of different agencies, the government could provide efficient filters for clean and safe drinking water.
- Proper garbage dumps and disposable bags should be provided and maintained.

- Special treatment must be there for women, who are a vital part of our society. Specialised care is needed for young mothers and pregnant women, especially those who live in remote areas.
- Medicines should be available either at free costs or at very low costs.
- Even proper toilets and washrooms should be made and maintained at every corner.

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.

Answer:

Answer:

Facility	Cost of Services	Availability of service
Private	Expensive (high cost)	The service is easily available as the private health centers use modern and advanced techniques. They are also not very crowded.
Public	Cheap (low cost)	It is difficult to avail proper services as there is a lack of equipment. The public health centers are very crowded and service is very slow and inefficient.

The table above concludes that private health centers provide efficient quality services.

Doctors are well educated and qualified and provide best facilities to their patients, and hence the health centers are costly. On the other hand, public health centers, lacking in infrastructure, provide services which don't match with the advanced techniques used by private ones but these facilities are cheaper in cost and are easily used by poor people.

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

Answer: Improvement in water and sanitation can control numerous diseases especially water borne diseases. There are several diseases that spread through contaminated water, for example,

cholera, malaria, jaundice, typhoid, diarrhea, dysentery, etc. By ensuring that clean safe water is available to all, such diseases can be prevented.

Examples –

- Regular checks of water coolers, roof tops and wherever the water is stagnant should be conducted in every house. These checks could prevent mosquito breeding and could save many lives.
- The government should check the quality of water provided at regular intervals. Proper checks on waste disposal and sewerage treatment should be ensured.
- People should be educated on the consequences of the consumption and use of contaminated water. That way, the diseases can be controlled.

Extra Questions

Very Short Answer Questions

1. What is private activity?

Answer: An activity or service that is organised by an individual or a company for their own profits.

2. What are communicable diseases?

Answer: These diseases that spread from one person to another in many ways such as water, food, air, etc.

3. What are two types of healthcare services?

Answer: The two healthcare services are:

- Public health services
- Private health services

4. What does our constitution say on health?

Answer: According to our constitution, it is the primary duty of the government to ensure the welfare of the people and provide healthcare facilities to all.

5. What are private health services?

Answer: Private health services are not owned or controlled by the government. In private facilities, patients have to pay a lot of money for every service they use.

Short Answer Questions

1. What is a public activity.

Answer: An activity or service that is meant for all people in the country and is mainly organised by the government. This includes schools, hospitals, telephone services, etc. People can demand these services and also raise questions about their non-functioning.

2. Who are medical tourists?

Answer: This refers to foreigners, who come to this country specifically for medical treatment at hospitals that offer world-class facilities at a lower cost than what they would have to pay in their own countries.

3. Why should taxes be paid to the government?

Answer: (i) Taxes should be paid to the government as government uses the tax money for providing many public services for the benefit of the citizens.

(ii) Taxes, fund development programmes and services like education, healthcare, employment, etc.

(iii) Tax money is also utilised for relief and rehabilitation, in case of natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, etc.

4. How is public health service provided?

Answer: (i) The public health services are a chain of health centres and hospitals that are run by the government.

- (ii) They provide treatment from common illness to special services.
- (iii) At village level, a nurse and a village health worker are provided in every village.
- (iv) They are trained under doctor's supervision in the Primary Health Centres (PHC).
- (v) At the district level, the district hospitals supervise all the centres.

5. How does the judiciary in India help in promoting public health?

Answer: (i) The judiciary regards health as a part of the Right to Life of every person.

(ii) It is essential for a hospital to provide timely treatment to a person.

(iii) The court says that it is the duty of the government to provide the necessary healthcare services, including treatment in every situations.

6. What can be done to promote healthcare in India?

Answer: (i) Health situation of most people in India is not good.

(ii) It is the responsibility of the government to provide quality healthcare to its citizens, especially the poor and the disadvantaged.

(iii) Health is as much dependent on basic amenities and social conditions as it is on healthcare services.

(iv) Therefore, it is important to work on improving the health situation of the people.

Long Answer Question

1. Is adequate healthcare available to all in India?

Answer: (i) In India, private services are increasing but public services are miserable. Medicines in private sector are expensive. Poor people cannot afford these services.

(ii) Barely 20% of the population can afford expensive medicines. Many times, poor people have to borrow money or sell their possessions to pay for medical expenses.

(iii) There are poor who are undernourished and do not get basic amenities.

(iv) Gender inequality or women's health is a neglected factor in India.

2. Examine the healthcare services available in India.

Answer: (i) India has the largest number of medical colleges and about 15,000 doctors qualify every year.

(ii) Hospitals have grown from 2,717 in 1950 to 18,218 in 2000.

(iii) India gets a lot of medical tourists who come to take treatment in the world-class hospitals located in our country.

(iv) India is the fourth largest producer of medicines and large exporter of medicines in the world.

(v) Most doctors like to settle in urban areas and do not like to settle in rural areas.

(vi) About 5 lakh people die from TB every year. Likewise, 2 million cases of malaria are reported every year in India.

(vii) About 21% diseases are communicable and water-borne.

(viii) Half of the Indian children are undernourished.

3. Examine the Kerala experience of healthcare in India.

Answer: (i) In 1996, the Kerala government made some radical changes, so 40% of the entire state budget was given to panchayats.

(ii) Though the village could plan for water, food, women, development and education, but government also ensured that water supply schemes were checked, the working of schools and anganwadis was ensured and specific problems of the villages were taken **up**.

(iii) Despite improvement of health services, problems like shortage of medicine, insufficient hospital beds, shortage of doctors, etc. need to be addressed.

4. What is public health service?

Answer: (i) The public health service commits healthcare services to all citizens.

(ii) Government establishes hospitals and healthcare centres.

(iii) The resources needed to run these services are obtained from public money, i.e., by public paying taxes to the government.

(iv) Further, it provides quality healthcare to take action to prevent diseases like TB, malaria, jaundice, cholera, diarrhoea, chikungunya, etc.

(v) Also, government organises effective campaigns against the spread of mosquitoes.

Hots (Higher Order Thinking Skills)

1. In what forms do private medical facilities portray themselves?

Answer: (i) There is a wide range of private health facilities.

(ii) A large number of doctors run their own private clinics.

(iii) In rural areas, one finds Registered Medical Practitioners (RMP), urban areas have a large number of doctors, who charge money for giving specialised services.

(iv) There are hospitals and nursing homes and laboratories for tests and special facilities like X-ray, ultrasound, medical shops which are owned privately.

2. Examine the Costa Rican approach to healthcare.

Answer: (i) Costa Rica, a Latin American country has one of the best healthcare services in the world.

(ii) Costa Rica decided not to have an army and spend that money on education and other basic needs of the people.

(iii) The Costa Rica government believes that attention should be given to health of the people. The Costa Rican government provides basic services and amenities to its citizens.

(iv) It provides drinking water, sanitation, nutrition and housing facilities to all. Health education and knowledge about education is essential at all levels.

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