

Role of the Government in Healthcare

Q1. In this chapter you have read that health is a wider concept than illness. Observe this quote from the Constitution and explain the terms 'living standard' and 'public health' in your own words. An important aspect 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: The living standard refers to the level of wealth, comfort, material goods, and needs Available for a certain socioeconomic class in a country. In well-built urban areas, the standard of living is better than in underdeveloped rural areas. Clean, pollution-free environments lead to good living standards while living in dirty, poor areas. Sanitary, dusty lands lead to poor living standards.

Public health has been defined as the science of protecting and improving the general health of communities at large through education, policy-making, and research for disease and injury prevention. Indicators such as mortality rates, birth rates, nutrition indices, etc. are used to measure how good or bad public health is for the population concerned.

Q2. What are the different ways through which the government can take steps to provide healthcare to all? Discuss.

Answer: The government can take the following steps in providing basic healthcare for its citizens

- In the case of the Kerala government, state governments can empower local panchayats by providing them financial support, making them self-sufficient healthcare units in the process.
- Governments can lay emphasis on imparting education regarding healthcare to the local populace, such as healthy habits and the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.
- By providing sanitation, safe drinking water, sanitation and nutrition
- Organization of free health check-ups on a monthly basis will also play a crucial role.
- Through different campaigns and educational programmers, people should be made aware of different health problems. For example, people are made aware of diseases such as diarrhea and dysentery due to poor hygiene through advertisements
- Special treatment must be there for women, who are a vital part of our society. Specialized 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.

Q3. What differences do you find between private and public healthcare services in your area? Use the following table to compare and contrast these.

Facility	Cost of Services	Availability of Service
Private		
Public		

Answer:

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

The table above concludes that private health centers provide efficient quality services. Doctors are well educated and qualified and provide the best facilities to their patients, and therefore health centers are expensive. On the other hand, there is a shortage in public health centers Infrastructure provides services that do not match with advanced technologies Private but these facilities are inexpensive in cost and are easily used by poor people.

Q4. 'Improvement in water and sanitation can control many diseases'. Explain with the help of examples.

Answer: Water and sanitation are basic requirements for the maintenance of our health. Poor quality of water causes a lot of health problems. Similarly, poor hygiene causes dangerous pests and many epidemics that give rise to insects. Recently we saw the spread of dengue due to Aedes (a mosquito). Malaria is also caused by a mosquito called anophelis. Improving water and sanitation can control these incidents.

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.
- People should be educated on the consequences of the consumption and use of contaminated water. That way, the diseases can be controlled.
- The government should check the quality of water provided at regular intervals. Proper checks on waste disposal and sewerage treatment should be ensured.