

Lesson at a Glance

- In a democratic country, it is the expectation of the people that government work for their **welfare** through the provision of education, health, employment, etc.
- **Health** is a vital aspect because only healthy people can prove themselves resourceful.
- Health means our ability to remain free of illness and injuries. In broader sense, health means something more than this. Apart from disease, we need to think of other factors such as clean drinking water, pollution-free surroundings etc. that affect our health. Adequate food is also essential for keeping ourselves in good health.
- A life with stress will lead us to illness. Hence we need to be without mental strain. Thus, good health includes both sound mind and sound body.
- We need proper healthcare facilities to maintain good health. Healthcare facilities include health centres, hospitals, laboratories for test, ambulance services, blood banks, etc.
- In order to run such facilities we need health workers, nurses, qualified doctors, etc.
- We also need medicines and equipments that are essential for treating patients.
- India has no dearth of qualified doctors. There are a large number of clinics and hospitals too. Perhaps therefore a large number of medical tourists come to our country for treatment at reasonable cost.
- India is the fourth largest producer of medicines in the world and is also a large exporter of medicines. Despite all this, health situation in our country is very poor. The reason is that the government fails to make necessary healthcare available to all.
- Healthcare facilities can be divided into two categories—**Public health services** and **Private health facilities**.
- The public health service is a chain of health centres and hospitals run by the government. It is found in both the rural and urban areas.
- At the village level there are health centres where there is usually a nurse and a village health worker. They deal with common illnesses.

- At the district level is the District Hospital that supervises all the health centres.
- Big cities have many government hospitals.
- Under public health system, quality health care services are provided either free or at a low cost, so that even the poor can seek treatment.
- Under this system action is also taken to prevent the spread of diseases like Tuberculosis, malaria, jaundice, cholera, diarrhoea, chikungunya, etc.
- A wide range of private health facilities exist in our country. A large number of doctors run their own private clinics.
- In the rural areas, Registered Medical Practitioners (RMPs) are found whereas in the urban areas a large number of doctors can be seen.
- There are hospitals and nursing homes that are privately owned, and not run by the government.
- Unlike the public health services in private hospitals patients have to pay a lot of money for their treatment.
- In our country, private services are increasing but public services are not. As the private services are run for profit, the cost of these services are rather high. Poor people find it difficult to get treatment here.
- Adequate healthcare is not available to all in the country. Only 20% of the population can afford all the medicines that they require during illness.
- It has been found that 40% of people who are admitted to a hospital for some illness have to borrow money or sell some of their possessions to pay for the expenses.
- For the poor, every illness is a curse. As they are undernourished and live in unhygienic conditions they frequently fall ill. The expenses on illness make their situation even worse.
- So far women's health is associated, it is easily ignored.
- Many tribal areas have few health centres.
- Thus, we can say without doubt that the health situation of most people in our country is not good.
- However, Kerala has made efforts to provide adequate healthcare to people of the state.
- Costa Rica is a country in North America. It is considered to be one of the **healthiest countries** in the continent.
- The Costa Rican government curtailed the expenses on the army to spend it on health, education and other basic needs of the people. It provides them safe drinking water, sanitation, nutrition and housing.

■ IN-TEXT QUESTIONS SOLVED ■

- Q. 1.** *Why did Ranjan have to spend so much money? Give reasons.* (NCERT Textbook, page 24)
- Ans.** Ranjan belonged to a well-to-do-family. Hence, his parents took him to a private hospital and got quick treatment by spending a huge amount of money.
- Q. 2.** *What problems did Aman face in the public hospital? How do you think the hospital can work in a better manner? Discuss.* (NCERT Textbook, page 24)
- Ans.** There is always a rush at the public hospitals. Hence, Aman had to wait in a long queue at the OPD counter. He was feeling so sick that he had to lean on his father all the time. When their turn came, the doctor examined Aman and asked for a blood test. Then they had to go and stand in another long queue. They got the test results after three days.
- In order to avoid such situations there should be more qualified doctors and medically trained persons. Facilities should be improved and extended. More and more branches of healthcare facilities should be provided. More and more mobile clinics should also be there.
- Q. 3.** *Where do you go when you are ill? Are there any problems that you face? Write a paragraph based on your experience.* (NCERT Textbook, page 24)
- Ans.** I go to a private health clinic. I prefer it because there is no rush. The doctors take proper care immediately special attention is given to all patients. It is neat and clean. We get all facilities under one roof.
- Q. 4.** *What problems do we face in private hospitals? Discuss.* (NCERT Textbook, page 24)
- Ans.** In private hospitals we have to spend more in comparison to government hospitals. We have to buy all medicines prescribed by the doctor from outside. We are also forced to avail all facilities only inside the clinic which is costlier than the outside market. Sometimes we are forcibly given some extra tests and medicines which may be avoided.
- Q. 5.** *In what ways is the public health system for everyone?* (NCERT Textbook, page 25)

Ans. The government has established public hospitals and health centres to provide healthcare to all citizens. The resources needed to run these services are obtained from the money that we, the public, pay to the government as taxes. Hence such facilities are meant for everyone.

Q. 6. Private health facilities can mean many things. Explain with the help of some examples from your area.

(NCERT Textbook, page 26)

Ans. Private health facilities can mean many things. Today these facilities or clinics are run by big companies. Such companies run many businesses associated with these centres. For example, the facilities of medicines, pathology, X-ray, ultra-sound, stretchers, wheelchairs, etc. are associated with medical facilities. Big companies at a time run many establishments which feed their health clinics.

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

Q. 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."

Ans. **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.

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

Ans. 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.

Q. 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.

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

Ans. 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.

