

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN HEALTH

HEALTH :- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

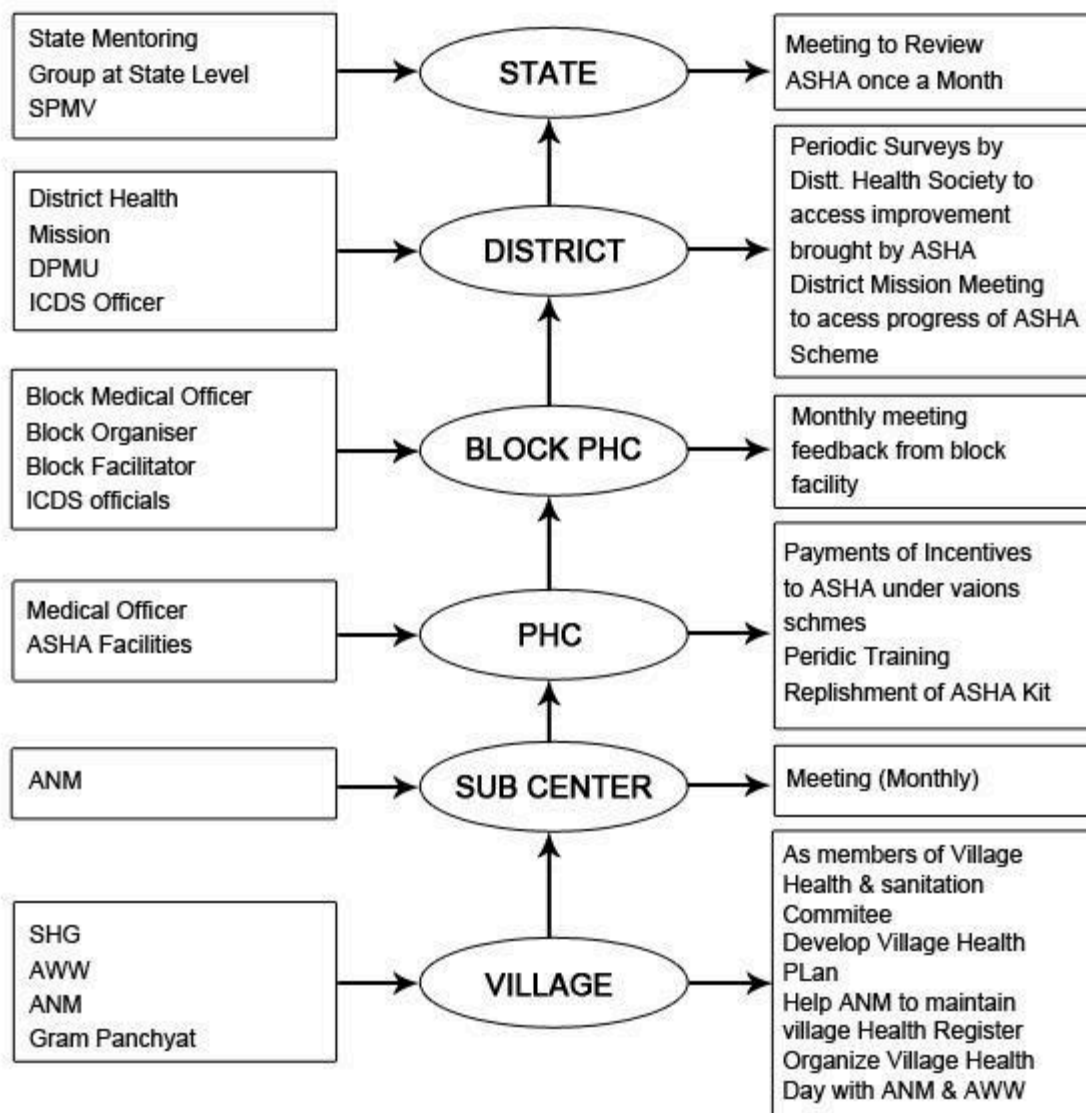
HEALTHCARE IN INDIA :- To prevent and treat ill health, adequate facilities, such as the following are required:

- 1- Health centres and hospitals
- 2- Laboratories for testing
- 3- Ambulance services
- 4- Blood banks
- 5- Health workers and nurse
- 6- Qualified doctors
- 7- Health professionals to advice, diagnose and treat
- 8- Medicines and equipments

Healthcare in India consist of a paradoxical situation. It consists of a large number of doctors, clinics and hospitals with significant experience and knowledge in running a public healthcare system, i.e. a healthcare system run by the government. This system has capacity to take care of a large population. Also there has been an extraordinary advancement in medical sciences through which new technologies and treatment procedures are available. Though our country has money, knowledge and people with experience, even then people are not provided with proper healthcare facilities.

Public Health Services: - Public health services comprise a chain of health centers and hospital run by the government. These are available both in rural and urban areas.

- **At the village level.** There is a nurse and a village health worker trained in dealing with common illness as and they work with doctors at **Primary Health Centers (PHCs)**.
- **At the district level.** The District Hospital supervises health centers.
- Large cities have many government as well as specialized government hospital.
- Public healthcare services are known as Public because
- Resources required to run these centers are obtained from the general public in a way of taxes. So these facilities are meant for everyone.
- They provide quality services either free of cost or at low cost.
- Their function is to prevent spread of diseases such as TB, Malaria, Jaundice, Cholera etc. These services can be made effective only when there is participation of people.



Private Health Facilities :- Private health facilities are those which are privately owned and not owned or controlled by the government. A large number of private health facilities exist in our country as many doctors run their own private clinics. There are **Registered Medical Practitioners (RMPs)** in rural areas and large number of doctors providing specialized services in urban areas.

Urban areas also have hospitals and nursing homes that are privately owned. There are many laboratories that provide special facilities such X-ray, ultrasound etc and medical shops from where we can buy medicines. Patients have to pay a lot of money for their treatment in private hospitals

Healthcare and Equality: In our country, it is private services which are increasing and not public services. Private services are mainly concentrated in urban areas and they are run for profit. The cost of these services is high medicines are expensive and almost 80% of the population cannot afford them or

have to borrow money during illness. Private services motivate wrong practices in order to earn profits. It is only 20% of the population who can afford medicines and treatment for illnesses.

Hardship for the Poors: Medical expenses of private hospitals cause hardship to almost 40% of people. Illness is a cause of misery for poor families as they are already undernourished and not provided with basic necessities of life. Treatment expenses make their situation even worse.

It's is not just money which prevents people from getting properly treated but rather factors like sex and other areas also matter. For example women's health is considered less important than that of men. Tribal areas have scarcity of properly run healthcare centers. This deprives people from getting proper treatment.

Initiatives to be Taken: Health condition of most people in our country is not good. Providing quality and adequate health services to all its citizens is the responsibility of the government. Improvement in health situation of people depends on the provision of basic amenities. Hence, it is necessary to work on both basic amenities and health situation of people.

There are examples which provide an outline to improve the condition. They are discussed below

The Kerala Experience: Kerala has made efforts to provide adequate healthcare to its people. In 1996, State Government gave its 40% budget to the Panchayats in order to provide better facilities and check the existing ones. Proper planning was done for betterment of people.

Safe water, food, women's development and education were provided. Working of schools and anganwadis was ensured. All other problems were checked though some problems are there which have to be addressed.

The Cost Rican Approach: Costa Rica is considered as one of the healthiest countries in the South America. The Government here took an approach of not having an army but instead of allotting its money for health, education and other basic amenities.

People were provided with safe drinking water, sanitation, nutrition and housing facilities. Health education was considered significant as knowledge about health was important at all levels.

According to the Costa Rican Government, a country can develop only when its people are healthy. Thus, they paid significant attention to the health of its people.