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L2: Role of the Government in Health

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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:

1. Living Standard:

- Living standard is defined as an individual’s level of living – with regards to wealth, comfort, material goods and in this context, here we mean health.
- If one leads a comfortable life, the living standard is said to be of a higher level.
- It is a low level if the basic needs are barely satisfied.

2. Public Health

- Public health means the health of the general public or people.
- The constitution ensures equal access to health to all without any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, sex, religion, etc.

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 the check-up of the general public.
- Organising campaigns against Tuberculosis, Malaria, Polio etc.
- 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.

Answer:

Facility	Affordability	Availability	Quality
Private	High, Very expensive	Everything is available but at a high cost	Excellent
Public	Either free or at a subsidised rate	There is always a rush at public hospitals. Even though basic services are available, they are inadequate for the large number of patients visiting such hospitals.	Not satisfactory

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.