



Mains Practice Question

Q. The private sector in healthcare can play a pivotal role in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Examine. (250 words)

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Approach

- Briefly introduce SDGs related to health.
- Describe the need For Private sector in healthcare to bring out the importance of its participation.
- Describe the challenges involved in the involvement of the private sector in healthcare.
- Give a conclusion.

Introduction

- The international community, through Sustainable Development Goal 3, has committed itself to a global effort to eradicate disease, strengthen treatment and healthcare, and address new and emerging health issues.
- A holistic approach to better health will require ensuring universal access to healthcare and to making medicine and vaccines affordable. In this context, the private sector can play a pivotal role.

Body

Need For Private sector in healthcare

- **High Demand for healthcare:** It is well known that the government is not able to cope with the demand for healthcare services. Infrastructural bottlenecks in the public system have made the State and Central Governments to invite private players to deliver critical healthcare.
- **Collaborative approach of SDG 2030:** The SDGs call for a new approach to development based on cooperation and collaboration between government, civil society, businesses, and others to achieve these goals. For the health sector, this translates into an urgent need to build the capacity of all countries to better manage the private sector and mixed health systems to ensure that all providers, public and private, effectively contribute to a country's goals for universal health coverage.
- **High-quality health care:** The private sector is often seen as a solution to offer access to greater service capacity, greater responsiveness, managerial expertise, technology, and innovation. The private sector is thus more suited to provide super specialty facilities.
- **Higher accessibility:** Financial aid from bankers, venture capitalists, pharmaceuticals, business houses & World Bank assist the private players. Third Party Administrators, large corporate presence and privatization of insurance have made quality healthcare accessible to a higher number of people in India. Public spending due to fiscal constraint remains at a mere 1% on healthcare in India while another 3% of GDP is spent by the private sector.
- **Choice:** One of the key arguments in favor of privatization is that it promotes and maximizes individual choice. Proposals favoring voucher-like systems in health care, which allow the individual choice of providers while fostering competition among health service providers.

Challenges of participation of the private sector in healthcare

- **Potential increase in Inequity:** Increasing concern has been expressed by public health specialists and government administrations on the potential consequences from greater involvement of the private sector in the provision of drugs. These could include economic and geographical inequities, higher drug costs and inadequate attention to regulatory control and quality assurance
- **Regulatory Challenge:** The private sector is highly heterogeneous and specific policies approaches are needed to regulate manage it. The implementation of these approaches requires an understanding of the private sector actors that operate in primary care and their attributes including whether they are for profit or not for profit, their social intentions, whether they have domestic or foreign affiliations, their social and ethical behavior and their capacity.
- **Conflict of Interest:** Public-Private partnership(PPP) in health presents the challenge of conflict of interests as large public funds or assets may flow into private hands through various PPP arrangements.

Conclusion

- The scale of the transformation required to achieve SDGs fir healthcare is considerable. Not only does disease impact the well being of an individual, it burdens family and public resources, weakens societies, and squanders potential.
- The health and well being of people at all ages therefore lies at the heart of sustainable development. Considering the challenge participation of private sector in healthcare is critical for achieving SDGs for healthcare.

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