

Test Code 42001 MGP 2021 C-6

Essay Test 1

Name: Shailja Pandey

1. Healthcare for all In India :

Myth or Reality

" It is health that is ^{real} wealth,
not pieces of gold and silver."

- Mahatma Gandhi

Three Idiots - the movie presents dark humour to throw light on the precarious situation healthcare emergencies can put families in. Raju, friend of the protagonist Wancho, takes his friends to his house, albeit hesitantly. Upon reaching, they find Raju's mother cooking on a wooden stove, their house bereft of electricity and the marriage of a daughter having become a burden.

All this is due to the heavy expenditure that goes into the medical treatment of Raju's father who is facing a debilitating medical condition. The bitter narrative highlights the need of good health in a family, society and nation.

"Healthcare for all" is a promising slogan that adorns NITI Aayog's Strategy for India @ 75, the Sustainable Development Goals and India's National Health Policy. The World Health Organisation defines good health as not mere the absence of disease but complete physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being.

Healthcare for "all" refers to realising this human right for an infant, an adolescent, a pregnant woman and an ailing grandfather. It implies filling the chasm of healthcare inequality and making medicare accessible, affordable and qualitative.

The Covid health catastrophe that threw economies and societies off gear has brought tremendous focus on the argument whether healthcare for all is myth or reality in India.

JUST FACADE, AN INTANGIBLE MIRAGE?

Statistics on the state of health infrastructure in India

do not present a satisfactory picture of Healthcare for all. The number of beds in Indian hospitals are merely 0.85 for a population of 1,000. This is ~~exacerbated~~ exacerbated due to the frugal healthcare spending that stands around 1.3% of GDP.

To compound the problems, well trained human resource in health is absent with merely 1 doctor for every ≈ 1450 Indians against WHO norms of doctor: population ratio of 1:1000. The menace of quackery has mushroomed often causing deleterious effects on health.

Nursing too remains a shoddy profession with dim career prospects (1.7:1000 ratio vs required 3:1000). Moreover violence

against health professionals by agitated family members reduces efficiency and motivation of the medical fraternity.

The paucity of quality drugs hampers the goal of Healthcare for All. United States agencies as FDA claim that more than 1/3rd drugs in Indian markets are spurious. The scourge of siphoning away drugs from public hospitals by doctors for private practice increase medicine shortage.

What is worse that Indian Council of Medical Research has noted that 2 in 3 Indians have drug resistant microbials in their gut. Thus the low expenditure on research

in India ie, 0.7% of GDP, will cost India large if ~~ex~~ no innovations on newer drugs are made.

The reason why Healthcare for all in India seems mere talk is because child health care is falling behind as infant mortality rates in Assam and UP are very high. 40% children still do not complete their immunisation. The rate of stunting at 38% of under 5 children population is the highest in the world. Clearly India's health care is failing young children.

Adolescents too face health challenges as period poverty is underlined by the fact that

more than 50% young Indian girls are oblivious of menstruation and before their first period. Also, it is seen that drug addiction has gripped Indian youth especially in North West and North East India. But rehabilitation effects have not kept pace.

Women of reproductive age are anaemic with every second woman suffering from low haemoglobin levels. There is still no cure for Alzheimer's that brings old age life to a grinding halt.

Mental health remains a taboo with severe deficit of psychologists and crude methods of electric current treatments. 1 in 7 Indians suffers depression.

Rare diseases that disproportionately affect children remain unresearched and treatments are prohibitively costly. Non communicable diseases are responsible for 65% of morbidity, with India having among largest numbers of obese people.

Despite 18% of world's population, India carries burden of 27% of global Tuberculosis cases. India has repeatedly failed to meet target of elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases as Kala azar. The ghastly scenes of infants dying due to encephalitis in Bihar can never be forgotten.

Mere health crisis is not the challenge in India. The social determinants of health, too

are also contributing to elusive goal of ~~an~~ Healthcare for all. Only 18.1% rural households have tapped water connections. Thus ~~they~~ as NITI Aayog points around two lakh people die each year due to unsafe water consumption.

Air pollution, with 13 Indian cities featuring in top 20 polluted cities of the world, ruptures the fragile tissues of the respiratory system, further endangering health.

While urban India can still benefit from multi speciality hospitals, few rural India is at greater loss due to greater neglect of health care framework. Neither local body grants nor enthusiasm of doctors nor supply of electricity. If villages

harboring 70% of India's population remain on sidelines of healthcare, then no progress on ~~Univer~~ Health Care for All is possible.

SILVER LINING IN THE CLOUDS

Despite the deficiencies in India's healthcare scenario, there are causes for optimism. There are signs that showcase the motivation of India to realise Healthcare for All.

The management of Covid-19 in India with lightning fast erection of testing labs, massive manufacturing of Personal and Protective Equipment along with design of indigenous vaccines offers hope.

The impressive hike in public health expenditure by

137% in Budget 2021-22 is a welcome step. The ball has been set rolling for establishment of Critical Care Units, National Institute on Virology and mobile health units. These will cater to India's health needs.

The Economic Survey 2021 has commended PM Jan Arogya Yojana for elevating health insurance coverage. From just one AIIMS at Delhi, PM Swastha Suraksha Yojana has expanded their number. Thus institutions are being deployed to meet the requirements.

To fill the dearth of medicare professionals, India has permitted AYUSH doctors to undertake surgery through Shalya and Shalakyas course.

The overhauling of medical education on recommendations of Rajit Roy Committee to create National Medical Commission will make healthcare regulation, transparent and effective.

The advent of telemedicine and India's response to it through National Digital Health Mission is appropriate. It will also enable the health care to reach far flung villages and tribal locations.

To meet drug demand and bring self reliance in medicine, Bulk Drug Parks will facilitate drugs for the network of Tanushadhi Kendras.

India has given due importance to health of children

by ramping up the AASHA and Anganwadi cadre. Through incentives, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) spread awareness on maternity and enable safe deliveries. The ~~Kishore~~ Bal Swastha Kalyakram is adamant to meet health ~~info~~ needs of growing children.

Initiatives as Jan SUVIDHA to provide sanitary napkins at ₹2.5 per unit are commendable for improving reproductive health of girls. To provide for old age health demands, steps as ASIP and Rashtriya Vayashkari Yojana are noteworthy in reducing limitation of age related disability.

India has recognised the unique needs of mental health personnel by enacting a right based legislation as Mental Healthcare Act. The decriminalisation of suicides and psychological support through platforms as Mamodasan ~~admit~~ ~~recognise~~ their needs.

The Rashtriya Rogya Nidhi (RAN) sanctions funds for the less privileged in need of healthcare. The National Rare Disease Policy with leverage RAN to treat the affected.

Similarly India has adopted a preventive stance on Non communicable diseases by ~~sta~~ eliminating "Eat Right" campaign through transfat.

Ambitious programmes on TB elimination, malaria eradication et al are running in full swing.

Moreover to meet dem address social determinants of health nutrition centric programmes as Poshan Abhiyan and water supply initiatives as Jal Teevan Mission (Urban) are poised to play their role in Healthcare for All.

All these initiatives give a hope that busting the myths, earnest efforts are on to bring a Healthcare Revolution in India.

However these efforts can be complemented further by raising health care expenditure to 2.5% of GDP. A public health management cadre is desirable and community based approach to wellbeing specially mental health is necessary. India must also place sharper focus

on preventive healthcare that is given only 7% of total healthcare financing.

Support from international bodies as WHO must continue. The designation of right to health as a fundamental right as demanded by Bondhua Mukti Morcha must be given greater attention.

Good healthcare that is all encompassing is an ideal for a nation. As experience from Cuba shows, strong healthcare can uplift human capital of a nation. There may be challenges but India is on the right path towards concretising "Healthcare for All". As India celebrates 75th year of independence it should further reaffirm its pledge for Swastha Bharat, Sameiddha Bharat. As is rightly said by Winston Churchill "Healthy citizens are the greatest asset a country can have."

Human happiness and moral duty are inseparably connected

"Duty for the sake of duty"
- Immanuel Kant

Siddhartha was a rich prince with the rare luxuries of life as the son of a republican chief. He was well tended to and was destined to be king. But peace evaded him. He felt unease within when he saw sick men dying and old men being deserted by their families.

So he embarked in search of truth. Upon much penance he found the truth of duty as morality as the "Ashtangika Marga" or Eight Fold Path. Siddhartha then became the Buddha who was able to extinguish every pain. He experienced nirvana, absolute perfection and absolute happiness.

The narrative seeks to bring home the lesson that human happiness and moral duty are inseparably connected. Happiness is a holistic sense of contentment and bliss. Aristotle calls it Eudaimonia. Kant claims it is the end of a virtuous life.

Moral duty is the obligation to a principle of righteousness like the Three Jewels or triratna of Jainism. It implies a sense of commitment to an ideal of virtue.

Human happiness is a goal for all endeavours. However it is inextricably linked to an ethical framework. History has witnessed great monarchs as Ashoka who conquered a mighty empire. But all it left them with was pain and regret. Only the inculcation of moral duty through Dhamma could bring peace and meaning to the life of Ashoka.

A individual who is moral always feels complete and one who is wayward in ethics is filled with a void inside. A person with allegiance to moral duty or svadharma in Gandhi's words, alone can realise "Swaraaj" or self rule.

An instance is of Mother Teresa who left her comfortable life in Europe to dedicate herself to duty of alleviating suffering of the weak. She set up hospitals to care for the sick and the dying. This filled her with delight and happiness and ~~not only~~ satiated her conscience.

Parallely an individual like Robert Clive the Governor of Bengal may have been a brilliant administrator. But his manoeuvres and corrupt undertakings ~~was~~ impoverished Indian masses. He acted against moral duty of humanity. And thus died a painful death by suicide due to mental disease.

Happiness finds an intimate relation with moral duty in families too. When family members take care of each other and encourage and support one another, the familial bonds are strong. In the Ramayana, the noble allegiance to moral duty by Rama ensured a principle based family that led to happiness of Rama Raja.

However if families see deviance from moral duties, suffering is natural as the betrayal of Vibhishan in Rama's house. On the modern day honour killings of sisters by brothers for marrying outside caste. These fractured moral duties show when bloodshed and crime follow are violated,

Today's societies also highlight the same trends of linkages between moral duty and happiness. It is

moral duty of all to foster fraternity and unity. Thus through Qadisi Ekta Week when duty to propagate brotherhood amongst diverse religions is fulfilled, there is understanding and trust.

However if duty of bonding is replaced by narrow animosities as seen in North East Delhi fracture social fabric causing miseries as deaths, tortures and rapes.

Likewise it is our societal duty to stand up against social evils. When luminaries as Raja Ram Mohan Roy appreciated their moral duty to educate societies in rationalistic and humanistic ideas, they brought Renaissance in Indian society. This led to removal of ills as sati and salvaged human's right to life and dignity. This directly expedited the level of happiness in societies.

Similarly moral duty of Dr Ambedkar to emancipate the Untouchables from inhuman

treatment as untouchability liberated this oppressed section. This led to recognition of Dalit rights to education and employment leading to improvements in standards of living and self esteem which raised "Happiness Bar" of societies.

On the flip side, denouncement of moral duty to seek social justice often cause profiling of Black Americans by the police leading to unfortunate death of George Floyd.

Vibrant economies too appreciate the commitment to moral duties. ~~For~~ The Corporate Social Responsibility models build upon this premise. ~~that if~~ If corporates fulfil the moral duty of trusteeship, they can empower people like Nani Kali of Mahindra educating young girls. Similarly ~~the~~ it raises consumer acceptance of their products and provides their employees satisfaction leading to overall happiness of profits.

The capitalist model of productivity raised gains but was marked with dereliction of moral duty towards fair wages for workers, sanitary living conditions and social security. Such an ignorance of basic duty towards workers led to Great Depression that caused immense misery due to unemployment and eventually led to second world war.

However, the economic moral duty to pepper socialist ideas in growth models helped create positive gains in societies. It led to trade unionism, minimum wage, standards by International Labour Organisation for labour welfare. This led to better economic resilience as countries as Norway have shown.

Also when economic models are bereft of moral duties often corporate frauds as ICICI-Videcon, Nirvaan Modi, Kingfisher - NPA problem arise.

However allegiance to rules increases the trust in businesses and ensures their smooth functioning leading to collective happiness as the TATA model exemplifies.

Moral duties in politics too are sacrosanct. Recent Assembly elections in Delhi have seen ~~go~~ large levels of probity with reduced distribution of freebies. This has led to adherence to moral duty of refusal to engage in vote bank politics. This implies reduced diversion of public funds for ~~political~~ political parties leading to saving in government finances.

Similarly true devotion to moral duty by bureaucrats ^{& officers} leads to honing of role models as E Sreedharan and TN Sheshan. They contribute to clearing administration of

corruption. Thus there is lesser incentive for misappropriation misuse of powers. It helps if moral duties are followed to realise civil service as steel frame that Sardar Patel envisaged.

However if there is sidetracking of moral duties, rises as criminalisation of malign politics. Muscle power through intimidation paralyses ~~politics~~ democracy leading to poor governance. The recent promulgation of Emergency in Myanmar leading to utter chaos is an example.

The way we handle our environment also shows that happiness of ecology rests on pillar of morality. For instance as Atharva Veda principles have shown, if we deal with environment through sustainability, we can save resources for posterity. The Wanghuia of New Zealand

who preserve their rivers and ecosystems show the right way of fulfilling duty of conservation.

The Chipko Movement by Gaura Devi in Chamoli was an indicator of respect to ecology. It saved the forests from commercial exploitation helping in maintaining stability of mountain ecosystem. However the modern model of haphazard development causing global warming, indiscriminate construction of dams led to was an act of neglect of duty to ecology that caused the fatal glacial breach of February 7, 2021 over the Rishi Ganga river in Chamoli.

Moral duties must also apply to our engagements with science. When De Jonas talk

worked on vaccines, he was driven by moral duty to save humanity from heart breaking losses due to preventable disease. His moral commitments were instantiated by the fact that he never patented the vaccine, so that it was affordable to all. This act of kindness to humanity saved millions of life leading to happy & healthy families.

Alongside there are instances of scientists as Robert Oppenheimer who designed the nuclear weapon. It was an act of departure from moral duty to save humanity from weapons of mass destruction. The fallout was the disastrous nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that crippled lives in these cities forever.

Thus it must be reiterated that happiness is nothing but adherence to moral virtues. Thus every school and every parent must be the "Key societal elements" as Dr A P J Abdul Kalam says to educate children in morality.

Societal commitment to morality must be reinforced through initiatives as Integrity Pledge by Central Vigilance Commission. Ethical guidelines on duties for professions must be formulated as highlighted by Kumar Mangalam Birla Committee to politicians as the Model Code of Conduct. Mild penalties to nudge moral duties may be followed as Swarn Singh Committee had recommended.

All said, it is important that we internalise duties of morality in every walk of life since that alone is the gandhian key to gratification and happiness. As Rey says, "A duty well done creates a corresponding obligation". 28