
National Health Policy, 2017: Options For Private Sectors In Healthcare Enhancements Through Active Participation

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Abstract: Government's sincerity towards the health of common people are well reflected in National Health Policy, 2017. The ideas to come over the limited resources are well attended with proposed involvement of private sectors in defined area. Public awareness programs and connectivity of people with own responsibility towards their own health and help from government at appropriate place are well appreciated in policy. Strategic purchasing, capacity building etc. are important segments to invite private sectors. Implementation of community medicine in mental health specifically is worthy to be noted.

Keywords: National Health Policy, Strategic Purchasing, Disaster Management, Community Medicine.....

‘The goal of real healthcare reform must be high-quality, universal coverage in a cost-effective way’, a quote by Bernie Sanders seems to be in heart of new *National Health Policy* (NHP) 2017 as it emphasizes preventive and promotive health care. The best part of universal coverage is to achieve quality health care services without entering to financial hardship. Free drugs, free diagnostics and free emergency care services are proposed in all public hospitals. Better infrastructure of public healthcare systems, comprehensive and integrated health to all is interesting in policy as many countries throughout the globe are already practicing universal healthcare coverage¹. The policy puts forward the active participation of private sectors specifically in strategic purchasing, capacity building, awareness generation etc. with financial support. The proposal to increase 2.5% of GDP in time bound manner is presented.

Principles behind the policy are patient-centered with quality healthcare following ethics, accountability and affordability. School health programs through school curriculum are given with separate space to achieve child and adolescent health. For all these, proposal for development of *National Digital Health Authority* (NHDA) is laid. Government accentuates with involvement of AYUSH remedies in mainstream through public facilities. Yoga is underlined in all schools for betterment of healthcare. Overall presented policy gives a broader scope for private sectors letting in viz., non-government accredited hospitals, private medical colleges (including Ayurveda), outsourcing agencies etc. Better apprehension covers following:

- a. Strategic purchasing:** The policy advises strategic purchasing which means outsourcing. It refers to the allocation of pooled funds to healthcare providers to deliver goods and services to the covered population with defined benefit package². This is part of universal health coverage to maximize societal objectives. While going through public healthcare system, government has to invest a lot to services but, when it is through the private sectors, government may achieve the goal by reducing the costing of services and providing more goods utilizing same resources. More performance based result is expected by linking of some part of payment with performance as *World Health Organization* (WHO) hints.
 - b. Capacity building:** It refers to strengthening the skills, competencies and abilities³. It aims to support the implementation research to cover deadly and common diseases which are still creating havoc in societies. Training for researches, their ethics, analysis workshops, documentation are parts of capacity building. Healthcare development at local level are need of such development.
 - c. Skill development:** For patient centered healthcare, it is expected that healthcare providers should be highly skilled and educated or well-informed about the situation, they are handling. The World Health Statistics say that globally India ranks among the lowest with 0.9 beds per 1,000 population, far below the global av-
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erage of 2.9 beds and as per National Health Profile 2010, only one bed per 2012 persons were reported in 12,760 government hospitals⁴. Large gaps are reported in country in terms of number of doctors, nurses and paramedical staffs too. With available resources these large gaps cannot be filled hence, private sectors have to play greater role in these regards to enrich human resources. Government assures for all cooperation for the purpose. Professionals from medical, paramedical and allied sciences are part of healthcare systems for implementation based researches, accordingly provisions are set in new policy to start and develop skill based programs.

- d. Awareness generation:** Healthcare awareness towards the preventive and curative measures of health related problems are important for any healthy society or nation. Without involvement of general public and private sectors, it seems to be dream for country like ours. Public workshops, training, media coverage etc. are important tools to fill the gap and make people aware health. Toxic management automatically plays important role. Rural healthcare is biggest challenge for government. Medical colleges or organization related with healthcare services in rural areas should be given more importance with extra support in awareness programs.
- e. Developing sustainable network with community to strengthen mental health services:** The purpose of community sustainable development is a community-wide initiative to accelerate the programs of better healthcare in all concerned fields with focus on mental healthcare. It's about the healthcare workers amidst the community directly watching the life-style and understanding the problems and accordingly suggesting the solutions. This is more practical based practices than theoretical or statistical. This is more about connecting the people with situation and accelerating them to act.

7.5% of Indians suffer from major or minor mental illness⁵, so it is matter of concern for government. Psychiatrists worldwide are facing problems in solving the increasing number of depression related problems. Lots of time misdiagnosis or wrong prescriptions also vitiate the condition. Still many of these problems can be solved with awareness or counselling, so the policy accommodates sustainable community development. Ayurveda and Yoga may play pivotal role in such cases with mental calmness and overall mental development using ayurvedic medicines with least side-effects.

- f. Disaster management:** Even after so many years of independence, our country losses thousands of lives every year due to natural calamities or human errors. In all these cases of sudden disaster, lack of resources are well known. Private sectors are invited in controlling such problems with active participation of disaster management. They can be instrumental in policy and plans of disaster management under the guidelines of *National Disaster Management Authority* (NDMA) particularly health related problems when the lack of human resources is well known fact. Preparedness and prevention are important in this case.

A greater idea lies with the involvement of private sector in NHP by government, not only by providing quality health but by making people aware about preventive measures, so that dream of healthy India can be brought in truth.

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