Chapter – 02 Civics

Role of the Government in Health

- **What is Healht**: Health means our ability to remain free of illness and injuries. There are certain factors which affect our health.
- **Healthcare in India**:
  - (i) India has the largest number of medical colleges in the world and is among the largest producer of doctors.
  - (ii) India is the fourth largest producer of medicines in the world.
  - (iii) Most doctors settle in urban areas, while people in rural areas have to travel long distance for medical facilities.
  - (iv) About 5 lakh people die from tuberculosis every year, while 2 million cases of malaria are reported every year.
- **Private and Public Healthcare:**
  - (i) Healthcare is divided into two categories: Public health services and private health services.
  - (ii) Public health services is a chain of health centres and hospitals run by the government. One important aspect of public health is that it is meant to provide quality healthcare services either free or at low cost so that even the poor can seek treatment.
  - (iii) Private health services are not owned or controlled by the government. People have to pay a lot of money for every service that they use.
- **Healthcare and Equality:**
  - (i) In India, private health services are increasing but public health services are not. As cost of these private services is high, many people cannot afford them.
  - (ii) Private services sometime encourage practice which are unethical. Barely 20% of the Indian population can afford medicines that they require during an illness.
  - (iii) In the responsibility of the government to provide quality healthcare services to all its citizens, especially the poor and the disadvantaged.
  - (iv) In 1996, Kerala decentralized its health budget at Panchayati level to ensure effective health planning.
  - (v) The best example of healthcare comes from Costa Rica where the government provides for adequate healthcare to people.