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Thoughts on health planning in Pakistan

Pakistan, a country created in the name of Islam was meant to be welfare state based on the principles of equity and social justice. In a welfare state, basic needs of the citizens are the responsibility of the state. These include provision of food, shelter education and health care. Successive governments in Pakistan unfortunately paid very little attention towards fulfilling this promise. Gradually but steadily the rulers of Pakistan moved away from this original concept of the founder of the country towards a law and order establishment. The welfare responsibilities were neglected or handed over to the private sector. In the field of health care for example there has been a continuous deterioration over the last half century.

There was a time when a patient admitted to a state hospital could at least receive basic minimum health care without cost. This is however not the case at present. Even the poor patient today has to pay in the institutions run from the public exchequer. The situation has reached a stage when government functionaries have now started expressing the opinion that health care and education are no large state responsibilities. In this way, rulers, are trying to absolve themselves of the burden and responsibility. Health education have ceased to be priority in our national planning and have been left over to the individuals to take care of themselves. With the present gap between incomes and cost of living, much of corruption in Pakistan can be traced to education and health sectors, besides many other social problem caused by stratified educational and health programmes resulting from lack of state supervision.

Whatever has been done in the field of health in the past has been based on adhocism, piece meal efforts and on dictions of funding agencies. Unfortunately no health policy has been formulated and put to practice. There is an urgent need for formulations of a comprehensive health policy with implications both for prevention of diseases and provision of basic curative health care facilities to all citizens. Health policy should be realistic and in line with

the public or private sector is a matter of methodology. The ultimate responsibility is of the state.

The following recommendation may help to formulate health care system of the country.

1. Preventive Health Facilities:

The aim of provision of these facilities should be to prevent illness as well as provide treatment to the sick. Preventive strategies are cost effective and should be encouraged. These include the following:

- To provide sanitation
- To provide clean drinking water.
- To promote hygienic and healthy living
- To improve nutritional standards of the community

the receipt of the patients. The practice of charging from the poor patients in the state run hospital is contrary to the concept of a welfare state.

3. Special emphasis on providing health care facilities:

There should special emphasis on providing health care facilities to maximum number of people in the villages and neglected and deprived slum areas of the cities. A sizeable network of primary health care centres already exists which should be made optimally functional. Preventive and curative health

sector there is mushrooming of private hospital. Health is now being treated as a business and industry unfortunately in much the same way as education. Whereas the development of hospital facilities in private sector needs encouragement, there should be some sort of supervision of private hospitals, laboratories and other health establishments in terms of quality functioning and profits. Common professional staff of public and private hospital causes and number of administrative problems. Therefore, the private hospital should be encouraged

the officials of the health ministry and anti ped attitude of the members of registration bodies agencies, which determine price of the drugs. In many instances cheap and life saving medicines have been withdrawn permanently temporarily from the market and substituted by more expensive brands often without any scientific justification. Similarly very expensive drugs of dubious utility pushed commercially, against the result of connivance between drug companies and health officials.

7. Following recommendations are made in respect of drug policy:

- a) Provision of quality drugs at affordable prices.

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