

Rajasthan Right to Health Bill

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Why in news?

- Thousands of doctors took to the streets in Rajasthan Monday to protest against the Right to Health Bill, hitting healthcare services across the state.
- The Indian Medical Association (IMA), the country's largest physician association, has announced its support to the Rajasthan doctors.

News Summary: Rajasthan Right to Health Bill

What is the Rajasthan Right to Health (RTH) Bill?

- **Right to avail free treatment**

- RTH gives every resident of the state the right to avail free Out Patient Department (OPD) services and In Patient Department (IPD) services at all public health facilities and select private facilities.
- The Bill extends a total of 20 Rights to the citizens of the state.

- **Emergency treatment**

- Also, all residents will be entitled to emergency treatment and care without prepayment of any fee or charges.
- The hospital can't delay treatment on grounds of police clearance if it is a medico-legal case.
- After emergency care, stabilisation and transfer of patient, if patient does not pay requisite charges, the healthcare provider shall be entitled to receive requisite fee and charges or proper reimbursement from the state government.

- **Punishment**

- As per the Bill, anyone found in contravention of the Act will be punishable with a fine of up to:
 - Rs 10,000 for the first contravention, and
 - up to Rs 25,000 for the subsequent contraventions.

Why are the doctors protesting?

- **Bill penalises doctors and hospitals**

- The protesters claim that the Bill doesn't help patients much, but penalises doctors and hospitals.

- **Contentious emergency provision**

- One of the most contentious issues of the RTH was emergency care, leading to protests by doctors.
- As per the bill, emergency treatment can be availed without prepayment of requisite fee or charges.
- The Act does mention that the government will reimburse the hospitals, but the protesters say there is no clarity on how or when these funds will come.
- Also, the bill has not defined what an emergency is. It could range from a heart attack to a delivery to a child coming in with stomach ache in the middle of the night.
- The bill it does not say who should treat what. If one runs an eye clinic, he/she cannot treat a heart attack case.
- The government has said that more clarification will be provided when the rules for the Bill are framed.

- **Redressal mechanisms**

- Protestors claimed that the redressal mechanisms mentioned in the Bill will not let doctors work in peace.
- As per the bill, local politicians and government-nominated members would be a part of the district authority to look into patients' complaints.

- Protestors claim that if a doctor has a tiff with someone, they can lodge a complaint to impede the functioning of private hospitals.
- In such cases, it will just become another machine of corruption.

What do public health experts say?

- Many public health experts have said that the Bill is a step in the right direction. 95% of the bill talks about making the government healthcare systems accountable.
 - The Bill will also ensure that those who aren't able to get healthcare— such as people with rare diseases for which treatments are extremely costly — become the responsibility of the state.
 - The state then cannot deny them treatment because it will be their right.
- Just like MGNREGA made work a right, when health becomes a right, people will be empowered to demand it from the government. This will draw the government's focus on the gaps in the system.
- These experts also claim that private hospitals too have some responsibility towards people.
 - Doctors' education has been subsidised by taxpayers, sometimes the land for hospitals is subsidised by the government, there are many other subsidies for them.

Also, there is a 1996 Supreme Court judgement that makes it mandatory for all medical practitioners to provide emergency care, without worrying about payments.

Q1) What is Right to Health?

The right to health is a fundamental human right that refers to the right of every individual to enjoy the highest possible standard of physical and mental health. It is recognized as a fundamental human right in various international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Q2) What is Universal Health Coverage (UHC)?

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is a global health goal aimed at ensuring that all individuals and communities have access to quality health services without suffering financial hardship. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines UHC as “ensuring that all people can use the promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health services they need, of sufficient quality to be effective, while also ensuring that the use of these services does not expose the user to financial hardship.”

Source: [Doctors vs Rajasthan's Right to Health Bill](#) | [Indian Express](#)

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