

Political Issues and Corruption in Health Sector: The Case of India

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Health services are only one of the many factors that influence the health status of population. It is also influenced, sometimes even more significantly, by such social and economic factors as nutrition, water supply, waste disposal, housing, education, income and its distribution, employment, communication and transport and the social structure. Just as other factors influence health status, so the health services of a community are usually a function of its political system.

Poverty in India is wedded to corruption, whether it is in education or health or roads or public distribution sector. Due to the epidemic corruption, funds meant for development end up in the pocket of custodians of public trust. This system has to go.

However, due to various factors (most important being the rising political consciousness among people) the iniquitous sociopolitical system has been superseded by a people-oriented health services system. The degree of political commitment depends on the degree of mobilization of people. The struggle for health thus becomes a struggle for democratization. In this struggle for democratization, alleviation of suffering due to health problems becomes a political device for community mobilization. Once this is understood, it is the task of those involved in democratization to mobilize community health physicians to devise community-oriented health services.

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