

CONCEPT PAPER

Public Health Sector in India- Current Scenario and Future Needs

The health services delivery sector in India has undergone a rapid change in the past few years and continues, dynamically. Greater emphasis is being placed on health promotion and disease prevention as a means to reduce the cost of care by improving the population's health. Several initiatives taken by the Govt of India like, National Health Mission (National Rural Health Mission & National Urban Health Mission), Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (PMJAY) popularly known as Ayushman Bharat Yojna, Creation of about 1,50,000 Health and Wellness Centres and many other population-based prevention programs will need multidisciplinary teams of competent Public Health professionals essential to achieve desired health outcomes. Public Health programs reflect an emerging discipline with the potential to create a competent and effective specialized Public Health workforce, which can contribute significantly towards the delivery of essential Public Health services.

Notwithstanding the continued efforts towards population control, gender disparities in India add to the woes of public health mechanisms. Further, the increasing prevalence of communicable and vector borne diseases resulting an additional burden on the healthcare budget. Keeping in mind all the above, it becomes imperative to focus on strengthening the health systems by filling gaps in infrastructure and more notably, skilled human resources to function at all levels.

At present, Institutions in India collectively churn out <500 graduates against a total requirement of 10,000+ professionals annually. Moreover, as per National Education Policy (NEP-2020), there is a great emphasis on multidisciplinary programs which can address the societal problems at large.

The career scope for Public Health professionals in India and abroad are seen as increasing trend in the past few years.

- Central and State Governments have put an emphasis on creating and expanding Public Health Cadre in States/ UTs which has an increasing scope for Public Health graduates and Post-graduates employability and services.
- Various International and National organizations have introduced services in Public Healthcare Sector in India and are / shall be employing professionals with Public Health qualifications.
- Moreover, there are high job prospects for Public Health professionals in India as Public Health Management Analyst, Specialist Public Health for implementing and monitoring programs, Professor - Public Health, Senior Technical Specialist - Health Counsellor, Laboratory Technician, Research Scientist, Manager - Breastfeeding Initiative.

Looking at the present need and future scenario, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak has taken initiative to establish **University Institute of Public Health Sciences (UIPHS)** to prepare professionals as per needs of our country and the world, at large.

In the beginning, it is planned to start Integrated Program in Public Health (IPPH) (Bachelors + Masters of Public Health). The programme shall be of Five Years duration having 10 Semesters of teaching and training. The Integrated program shall have an option of exit after three years with Bachelor's Degree as Bachelor of Public Health in accordance with NEP-2020. Even further, the exit options i.e. awarding Certificate after one year, Diploma after two years shall also be there as per NEP-2020. The credits to be awarded shall be as per UGC National Higher Education Quality Framework (NHEQF). In the later stage, various independent Master in Public Health (With specialisation) and Post Graduate Diploma Programs in Public Health (PGDPH-with specialisation) of One Year duration will also be introduced.

Maharshi Dayanand University will be the first in India to start Integrated Programme in Public Health (IPPH) in India. Also, the programme shall fulfil the mandate of NEP-2020 involving flexibility of entry/exit, skill-based courses, equipped with ability and communication skill enhancement courses, the graduate will be skilled enough to serve the nation.

To run the programs from 2023-24 and further to establish the Institute as a centre of excellence in public health domain, there will be the following requirements:

1. An independent building comprising of Classrooms (04), Laboratories (04), Meeting room (01), Seminar Hall (01), Computer Lab (01), office Space, Faculty Cabins (10), Pantry and necessary amenities (Approx. built-up area of about 10,000 sq. mts.)
2. Trained Faculty at the level of Professor (01), Associate Professor (02) and Assistant Professors (04). Some additional experienced faculty like Distinguished Professor, Visiting Professor, Adjunct Faculty etc. can also be engaged. In addition, sufficient support staff like Clerk cum Assistant (02), Junior Data Entry operator (02), Store keeper (01) and Peon (02) will be also be required for smooth functioning of the Institute.

The Institute will ensure quality course content delivery by academia and industry experts and will focus on practicum and hands-on training. The Institute will serve as a resource for collaborating institutions across the country and will come as a Centre of excellence in the near future.