

Newspaper article



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MAIN POINTS: The NHS of UK remains one of the world's best healthcare models which is a run and publicly-funded system. The U. K. and other OECD countries have better health indicators than the U. S., although they spend less on it. Cuba vis-à-vis the U. S. with a per capita income that is less than a fifth of that of the U. S., has a publicly funded system that yields better health outcomes than the U. S.

In India, problems related to the financing of healthcare continue to be politically insignificant and publicly invisible. Even today, 70 per cent of primary healthcare is provided by unqualified practitioners. Over 80 per cent of the health expenditure in India is in the private sector, while in most developed societies more than 80 per cent of health expenditure is borne by the exchequer. In SAARC, India's infant mortality rate is 56 per 1, 000 live births in 2005 better than that of only Pakistan. It is a far cry from 12 in Sri Lanka. Similarly, life expectancy at birth is 64 years in India, 63 in Nepal & 75 in Sri Lanka.

In the U. S. about 50 million persons (over 15 per cent of the population) do not have any health insurance cover as they do not have employers to pay their premium.

ASSESSMENT:

The author of the article titled, “ Financing healthcare in India”, dated: Jan 16, 2010, is Mr. N. J. Kurian. He is a visiting Professor at the Social Development, New Delhi and the Institute of Public Enterprise, Hyderabad. The newspaper, The Hindu, carrying the article is one of the leading newspapers of India with a circulation of 1. 45m and readership of 5. 2m. The article attempted to give a panoramic view of the universal health care system with emboldened comparisons with the United Kingdom. Despite the

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detailed information, there was no information on the state of the African nations, or the emerging super power, China. Latin America, received little mentioning with a positive citation of Cuba.

It would be unfair to say of any bias in the article as the pros and cons of each system, so mentioned, have been kept with utmost clarity and facts. The subjectivity has been supported with data, for marked credibility. The NHS has been kept as the role model for future course of action for other lagging countries without mincing matters.

There is now a lot of hype and hoopla over Obama's new Healthcare reform policy involving a \$1 trillion budget over a 10-year period, its main reason is its political and economic ramifications.

In US, the healthcare system is expensive with a nexus between private health insurance companies and healthcare providers. Invariably expensive drugs and procedures are prescribed by health insurance companies to the young, the employed and the rich, avoiding those who are elderly, unemployed and poor.

Indisputably, all Americans already have access to at least emergency care and hospitals are legally obligated to provide care regardless of ability to pay. It is also a fact that far too many Americans lack health insurance. Thus covering the uninsured comes about as a byproduct of getting other things right. It is indispensable that in the pursuit of correcting loopholes in the health sector the government should place focus on enacting a standard health insurance deduction, expanding health savings accounts and deregulating insurance markets.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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