Reforming Healthcare Systems

What is the issue?

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- The West Bengal Clinical Establishment Regulatory Commission has fined Apollo hospital chain Rs 30 lakh over the death of a 4-month-old.
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- The commission was set up in response to widespread public protests over **mistreatment and overcharging.**
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What did the WHO recommend?

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- WHO representative in India had sought **regulation of the private healthcare sector.**
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- It also asked the government to consider tax based financing of universal health coverage.
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- This, along with a degree of regulation of private delivery can achieve something meaningful.
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What is the present state of healthcare?

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- There is a **massive shortfall in state delivery** of affordable healthcare.
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- Therefore, people are forced to turn to private deliverers and becoming prone to overcharge and underserve.
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- Over 80% of what Indians spend on healthcare is out of pocket.

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- In 2016-17 state and central governments spent **1.4% of GDP** on health compared to a **global average of 5.99%.**
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- The far greater challenge is to improve the quality of management of the public health service.
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- So that the enhanced state funding translates into at least somewhat acceptable delivery.
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What are the problems?

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- Lack of functioning primary health centres across the country which have doctors, paramedics and a stock of essential medicines to distribute.
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- Over concentration of new super speciality hospitals.
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- A lot of investment has been made in equipment but there is often an issue with staff being posted to run them.
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- The **national doctor patient ratio** is poor compared to international benchmarks, but the ratio for rural areas is even worse.
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- This is because doctors are reluctant to move out of urban areas.
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What might be an effective solution?

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- Make district hospitals into teaching hospitals where a **preference is given to local students.**
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- This increases the hances of them working in areas where they come from.
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- Rural areas also face a severe shortage of paramedics.
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- Have more nursing colleges and train the students to become **'nurse practitioners',** who can deliver basic diagnosis and prescribe essential

treatment.
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- Two-year courses for nurse practitioners in critical care have been started.
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Source: Business Line

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