Reforms in Public Health Management Systems

What is the issue?

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Constituting a Public Health Service (PHS) on the lines of IAS has been mooted again recently.

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Who has proposed it?

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- The idea of having dedicated carder for public health management was first advocated by the Mudaliar Committee in 1959.
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- The 1973 Kartar Singh Committee reiterated the same.
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- Recently, the 12th Five Year Plan and the National Health Policy - 2017 have also strongly vouched for it.
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Why PHS?

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- Doctors with no formal training in public health delivery systems were found to be ineffective in handling surveillance systems, data management and community health.
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- Also, they fared poorly in understanding rural social dynamics, managing logistics or draw up project budget estimates.
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- Hence, a need for an exclusive cadre trained to run public health facilities has been felt.

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- Recruiting doctors through the UPSC or their state equivalents has therefore been envisioned.
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What is the current scenario?

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- As a proper public health delivery structures are lacking in most States, even anaesthetists are sometimes mandated to run programs for reproductive health or malaria control.
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- Also, at the ministry level, people with no formal training in the principles of public health tend occupy top posts.
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- Despite calls for a public health cadre in various reports, such a service at the national level doesn’t look possible any time soon.
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- Among states, Tamil Nadu has taken the lead in training a specialised cadre for health delivery, which is already showing results.
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- Recently, Odisha has notified the establishment of a dedicated cohort trained in public health.
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What are the advantages?

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- Having a dedicated carder will help in reducing the need for deputing specialists for running public health programs.
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- This will enable them to attend to more important duties.
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- This will also enhance the quality of public health delivery and reduce the out-of-pocket health expenditure of the poor.
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- Constituting an exclusive department will go a long way enhancing training

and streamlining management procedures in public health delivery systems.
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- The reach of such cadre to positions within the ministry will have a profound impact on future health policies as it will reflect ground realities better.
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Source: The Hindu

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