State of Public Health System

What is the issue?

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- A seven-year-old girl lost her life in a private hospital in Gurugram due to dengue-related complications and the girl's family was highly charged for the medical expenses.
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- This has highlighted the government's inability to provide quality health care and increasing space occupied by the private sectors.
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What is the share of private sector in public health system?

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- The private sector moved in swiftly, becoming the health set-up of choice for all except the poorest.
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- From 8 per cent in 1947, the private sector now accounts for 93 per cent of all hospitals.
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- The recent controversy has underscored the need for regulating billing in private hospitals.
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What are the concerns with government policies?

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- Health is a state subject. Thus policy implementation by the state government had a low uptake in improving the public health system.
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- The Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010 was intended by the centre as legislation for the regulation of hospitals by state

governments.
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- Standard treatment guidelines were drawn up for specific conditions and diseases, to obviate overprescription of drugs or additional costs of diagnostics.
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- There is neither monitoring nor an enforcement mechanism for the guidelines.
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- Recently two state governments have formulated laws related to regulating clinical establishments.
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- The West Bengal Clinical Establishments (Registration, Regulation and Transparency) Act and the Karnataka Private Medical Establishments (Amendment) Bill, 2017.
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- The two acts have penal provisions against doctors who overcharge.
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- Health insurance has penetrated only 3-4 per cent of the country's population.
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What measures needs to be taken?

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- The State should consider improve public health through raising the level of nutrition.
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- The National Health Policy 2017 provides a roadmap for public-private partnerships in healthcare.
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- The policy recognised that the primary care will forever be in the domain of the government.
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- It talks of strategic purchasing of secondary and tertiary care from the private sector.
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- For that to happen, the government should devise an effective regulatory mechanism to drill transparency into the private healthcare system.
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Source: Indian Express

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