Health is an important component and cause of well being. The health outcomes by and large show the status of development. India’s performance in the area of healthcare has been disappointing over the years. Though there have been improvements in some health related indicators like birth and death rates but India’s performance in a number of health-related indicators has been worse than Sub-Saharan Africa. The improvements have also not been uniform throughout the country. Healthcare services are much better in urban areas and there are differences in the health status of population across the states.

Uttar Pradesh is one of the most populous state of India which shows the poorest performance in terms of health outcomes and provisioning of healthcare services. It is at the lowest rung of all three major indicators of health viz. Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Nutritional status. As far as provisioning of health services are concerned, it maintains the same position as it has on the health status front. For example, percentage of children fully immunized is lowest in UP. It is the state where maximum numbers of unassisted births take place. Thus, its poor performance in terms of health outcomes provisioning makes it a special case to study.

Urbanisation is increasing fastly. Although urbanisation acts as catalyst in increasing the prosperity of the nation, it is also accompanied by poverty, deprivation and marginalization. Hence, access to basic amenities like healthcare, sanitation, water and housings are generally becoming difficult to growing urban population. Among all basic amenities and facilities, accessibility to and utilisation of healthcare services are becoming more difficult. It is true that there has been expansion of public healthcare services in the past. The growth in private and non-government sectors has also been remarkable. Despite it, adequate healthcare to all has remained elusive. The people seem to be gradually losing faith in government healthcare facilities and preference for private healthcare providers is growing. The emerging trend raises the question that whether people are going to private sources of healthcare for treatment of their various ailments due to inefficiency of the state healthcare services or they do find private sector more efficient and cost effective in comparison with public healthcare services. The greater dependence of people on the private and non-
governmental health services minimizes the role of state and prompts the state to silently withdraw from healthcare responsibilities of the public. However, for a large number of people, state still continues to remain an important provider of health services despite the problem of inefficiency and poor governance. Thus, in the current scenario public health services are used by large number of people and at the same time peoples' faith in state health services has shaken leading to increasing dependency on private healthcare providers, day by day, despite being costly. Therefore, it becomes pertinent to investigate and analyze the various dimensions of access to and utilization of healthcare services provided in public sector in comparison with the private domain. Thus, it was decided to analyze the issues in one of the urban parts of the state as a case study in view of the fact that the healthcare services to great majority of population in urban areas is in no way better than in the rural areas of the state. Hence, a detailed study has been conducted in Lucknow metropolis.

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