

CASE STUDY

Hakim Sheik was a member of the Paschim Banga Khet Mazdoor Samity (PBKMS), an organisation of agricultural labourers in West Bengal. One evening in 1992, he accidentally fell off a running train and suffered head injuries. He was in a very serious condition and needed immediate treatment. He was taken to a government hospital in Kolkata but they refused to admit him because they did not have a spare bed. Another hospital did not have the facility or the specialised doctors necessary for his treatment. In this way he spent 14 hours in a critical state and was taken to eight different government hospitals, but none of them admitted him.

Finally, he was admitted to a private hospital, where he received treatment. He spent a lot of money on his treatment. Angry and upset over the indifferent attitude of all the hospitals that refused to admit him, Hakim Sheik and PBKMS filed a case in the court. The Court said that the difficulty that Hakim Sheik had to face could have cost him his life. If a hospital cannot provide timely medical treatment to a person, it means that this protection of life is not being given.

Answer the following Questions:

1. From the above story, identify one of the major existing problems in the health system in India.
2. 'Right to life must be safeguarded' --- Simplify the expression.
3. How PBKMS helped Hakim Sheikh?