

# BUILDING PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS – THE TIME IS NOW

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Most of the people I interact with have no idea what Public Health is or what career fields it offers when I tell them I have studied it. They ask me, "Is it medicine? Or social work? Or maybe psychology?" The public health course makes competent students to learn how to examine and improve health services, technologies, and regulations. And since public health is dynamic in nature, we are also equipped to tackle public health emergencies, champion and help organizations develop ethical corporate social responsibility, create links between the government and the people and serve the communities till the last mile.

The world today is facing the havoc of public health crisis. And not only today but we see this in every century or decade in the form of epidemic, endemic, pandemic or sporadic event. Public health being a multi-disciplinary science involves aspirants coming from varied streams too. COVID-19 seemed to open closed minds when public health system had collapsed, it showed the world that now it needs skilled public health professionals, those with practical competencies that are required to deal with real health emergencies.

The COVID-19 situation should be seen as an opportunity by organizations to set these public health professionals into the workforce for building capacity and support applied research in real time. A right approach during these times for developing capacity can build leadership in the healthcare system, which is the need of the hour. The crisis has clearly centred the need for public health professionals from various academic backgrounds and this is an opportunity to build public health resilience and plug existential gaps by building skill sets in public health and scaling up professional public health work that can be carried out in all regions of the world.