Case Study – 5

**Transparency and Accountability in Healthcare: An Investigation into the Availability of Medical Equipment in Public Hospitals in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

**Background:**

In 2013, the Punjab government built a Metro Bus public transport system at a cost of Rs. 30 Billion, which started functioning on February 11. However, on March 19, 2014, a newspaper reported that patients in Mayo Hospital, Lahore, were facing difficulties due to the unavailability of oxygen cylinders. The Center for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) decided to investigate whether the unavailability of medical equipment was a one-off incident or a widespread problem in public hospitals.

**Action:**

On April 15, 2014, CPDI submitted an information request to all the District Headquarter Hospitals (DHQs) in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, seeking information about the availability and functional status of different medical equipment. As the information was received from DHQs, the findings were compiled. The findings were shared with Mr. Waseem Abbasi, who wrote a story on the issue.

**Findings:**

The findings were shocking, revealing that there was a lack of essential medical equipment, resulting in thousands of preventable deaths in both Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Specifically, there was no Computerized Tomography (CT scan) machine available for at least 31 million people living in 23 districts of these two provinces. Furthermore, there was no X-ray machine in Pakpattan, which was deemed criminal negligence on the part of healthcare managers in that district.

**Impact:**

The story highlighted the severe lack of medical equipment in public hospitals and its impact on patient care. The issue was brought to the attention of the public, prompting demands for the government to take action. Additionally, healthcare professionals were made aware of the dire situation, which allowed them to advocate for better healthcare services. Finally, the story also highlighted the importance of the RTI Act as a tool for ensuring transparency and accountability in government institutions.