

Chapter 8

**ROLE OF RURAL MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS
IN THE RURAL HEALTHCARE MARKET:
EVIDENCE FROM THE INDIAN SUNDARBANS**

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ABSTRACT

In the low and middle income countries, share of government funds for public healthcare system is much lower than those of high income countries. To bridge the gap in the healthcare market, there is a huge presence of private healthcare providers in these nations. Unfortunately, the private sector providers, especially in the rural areas are predominantly unqualified medical practitioners. This chapter reviews the role of rural medical practitioners in the context of rural healthcare market with special reference to the Indian Sundarbans. It shows who visit these RMPs (rural medical practitioners). It also discusses why people visit them from both the demand-side as well as supply-side. It also discusses their treatment quality and future prospect. Given the

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