

Managing Health and Well Being in Sustainable Communities

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ABSTRACT

Good health and well-being are essential for the sustainable development of communities. It is the need of the hour because healthy people are the foundation for healthy economies and peaceful societies. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3, "Good health and well-being" aims to ensure health and well-being for everyone at all stages of life. In the Indian Constitution, Article 47 states: that the state is responsible for improving public health, enhancing the standard of living, and raising the level of nutrition. This includes prohibiting the consumption of drugs and intoxicating drinks that are harmful to health. Sustainable communities prioritize the health and well-being of their residents, recognizing the interdependent relationship between human and environmental health. The purpose of the study is to recognize the relationship between good health & well-being and sustainable communities' development and also to know the importance of good health required for community development. The data for the study is collected through secondary sources such as journals, books, websites, newspapers, etc. On analyzing the data, the study concludes that there is a strong relationship between good health & well-being and sustainable communities. This can be ensured by improving physical and mental health, strengthening social connections, reducing healthcare costs, proper care of the environment, ease of accessing healthcare services, healthy food options, clean air, land, and water. This safeguards healthy lives and improves the quality of life for all at all ages which is important to building a prosperous society.

Keywords: Human Health, Healthy Environment, Prosperous Society and Sustainable Communities.

Introduction

Every person wants to be fit and healthy. Health is a very precious factor in everybody's life. Only a healthy mind can think healthy and act healthy and make the environment healthy. A person is considered healthy if he (or she) is fit physically, has a sense of peace, is mentally sound, and is accepted socially. Given that children and youngsters are the key to a nation's development, Quality Education is a very important element for this, but before education, focusing on their health is essential. Strengthening their physics and emotions is the foundation for achieving good health. It is said that a healthy person can make others healthy, therefore it is needed to inculcate the idea of being healthy and environment friendly at a young age. Such efforts reduce the community's pollution in the long run and make the environment healthy. Ensuring a healthy life and promoting well-being for all at all ages is important to building a prosperous society. For this, education and awareness about good health are also very important which can be obtained from a number of different means including media sources such as daily newspapers, TV news, internet, etc. Experts (such as dieticians, doctors, and food specialists) suggestions and small tips help to maintain good health in different seasons like summer, winter, and rainy seasons, and in different adverse conditions such as in times of flood, earthquake, or other natural calamities. In government schools, every Saturday is celebrated as the 'safe Saturday'. Different health tips and preventive measures are given to the students on this day. Because Proper health care reduces healthcare costs and increases economic benefits.

Objectives

- To find out the relationship between health & well-being and a sustainable community.
- To know how health & well-being benefits the development of a sustainable community.

Methodology

The Study is based on secondary sources. The data have been collected from books, websites, newspapers, Journals, etc. The collected data are analyzed and then a conclusion has been drawn.

Key Components

- Clean air and water
- Healthy food options
- Physical activity
- Social connections
- Mental health support
- Health care access.

Benefits

- Improved physical health
- Enhanced mental wellbeing
- Increased social connections
- Reduced healthcare cost
- Improved quality of life
- Environmental Sustainability

Strategies for Implementation

- Community Engagement
- Education and Awareness
- Inclusive Design

Challenges and Opportunities

- Funding
- Equity
- Policy
- Evaluation

Healthcare System in India

The healthcare system in India comprises government-funded hospitals and a wide range of services provided by private players such as hospitals, diagnostic centers, private clinics, pathological labs, etc. Whilst the concentration of private players providing healthcare services is in big cities/towns, they are almost non-existent in rural areas meaning the rural population is reliant on government hospitals for the treatment of common illnesses. Given Government hospitals are limited in rural areas as they do not exist in remote villages but at the block level and are often not equipped with basic amenities, providing essential healthcare facilities and services to the rural population in India is often at risk.

On the other hand, in big towns and cities, there is a good participation of public and private players in ensuring healthcare infrastructures and facilities of almost all kinds for both inpatient and outpatient care. In addition, there is a large number of trained medical practitioners in urban areas which are often scarce in rural areas, especially in the remote villages. Furthermore, the shortage of other favorable factors such as clean drinking water, electricity, road transportation, education, poverty, etc. makes it harder to improve healthcare in rural areas. Thus, the healthcare structural imbalance that co-exists between urban and rural areas of India, puts a challenge for the state to overcome.

- In the Indian Constitution, access to good health and well-being is a human right and that is why the sustainable development agenda offers a new chance to ensure that everyone can access the highest standards of health and healthcare services, not just the wealthiest person.
- Articles 38, 39, 42, 43, and 41 of the Indian constitution place obligations on the state to ensure the right to health is effectively realized.

- Prevention is better than cure and good health increases the economy and contributes to the country's development. If around \$1 billion is spent for enhancing immunization of children against different diseases such as influenza, pneumonia, and others, we could protect around one million children's lives each year.

The lack of development and good healthcare access in rural areas results in higher mortality rates and malnutrition. On the contrary, urban areas that have good connectivity and infrastructure provide better healthcare services and a higher life expectancy. Besides the difference between rural and urban areas in India in terms of level of healthcare access, there are differences between an under-developed state such as Bihar when compared to a developed state such as Karnataka. The study shows that the poor people in (under-developed state like) Bihar pay significantly higher amounts to avail healthcare services compared to those in (developed state like) Karnataka.

The Government of India as well as the state governments (such as the Government of Bihar) acknowledging the current challenges run a number of healthcare schemes to bridge the gap between urban vs. rural, and rich vs. poor which can be illustrated as follows:

Healthcare Facilities by the Government of India

- Ayushman Bharat PM – a national public health insurance scheme by the Government of India that aims to provide free access to healthcare services to low-income earners from urban and rural areas alike.
- Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) and Telecommunication – a key strategy to facilitate access to public health care, particularly for people living in remote, difficult, under-served, and unreached areas.
- Strengthening of Tertiary Care for Cancer Scheme – financial assistance is provided for the setting up of State Cancer Institutes (SCIs) and Tertiary Care Cancer Centres (TCCCs) in different parts of the country.
- Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) – is a safe motherhood intervention under the National Health Mission. It is being implemented to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality.
- Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK) – entitles all pregnant women delivering in public health institutions to free and no-expense delivery.
- Pradhan Mantri SurakshitMatritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) – is a government initiative to provide free antenatal checkups by doctors to pregnant women on the 9th of every month.
- Pradhan Mantri Matri Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) – provides cash incentives to pregnant women and lactating mothers in India.
- Central Govt Health Scheme (CGHS) – scheme for providing healthcare to the serving as well as the retired Central Government Employees and their family members

Rural Health Facilities

Medical services in rural India have been often deprived in the past for a number of reasons including bad connectivity, lack of infrastructure, and poverty in general. Lack of nutritious food, clean water, and awareness add to its woes. For more than a decade, the advancement of social media has been playing a pivotal role in improving healthcare knowledge which is also benefitting the rural population. The villagers who were often ignorant in the past, are becoming more self-aware of their health and well-being needs. Their participation in the local initiatives to improve healthcare has significantly increased in recent years. The gram-panchayats supported by the block and district officials are running successful healthcare camps, immunization drives for children, improving sanitation by covering the open drains, supplying clean water, constructing roads and schools, etc. The collective developments contribute to improving the status quo, albeit slow but steady changes in healthcare in rural areas.

The rural health facilities consist of the following government-funded infrastructures.

- Community Health Centers (CHCs): Established 1 center in areas with a population of 1,20,000 people (1 per 80,000 population in difficult/tribal and hilly areas), CHCs provide specialized consultations of static care and emergency services.
- Primary health centers (PHCs): These centers provide basic medical care, immunizations, and family planning services.

- Sub Centers (SCs): The most peripheral and first contact point between the primary health care system and community.

Women's Health and Well-being Facilities by the Government of Bihar

Whilst there is less empirical evidence on what impacts women's health and well-being the most in India, this section attempts to identify the most common causes and a number of initiatives taken by the government. Women's health is a result of different related factors including socioeconomic, culture and traditions, and geographical location. A woman in the urban area is relatively more informed of her health and well-being and has low barriers to accessing healthcare services when compared to women in rural areas. Besides malnutrition and sanity issues which are detrimental to women's health, gender bias stereotypes and lack of health awareness put hindrances for rural women in general to accessing healthcare services.

Another challenge faced by women in accessing healthcare services is access to female medical practitioners (including female doctors and female nurses). This affects the rural areas more with just 6% of the doctors in rural areas are women- one of the noticeable impacts is higher maternal mortality in rural areas when compared to the urban cases.

Whilst there are a number of initiatives taken by the Government of India to improve healthcare facilities for women (illustrated earlier in this report), the Government of Bihar also runs maternity benefit schemes to improve the health and well-being of women.

Government Hospitals and health centers in Patna, Bihar

- AIIMS Patna
- IGIMS Patna
- PMCH Patna
- District Hospitals
- Community Health Centers (CHCs)

Other Initiatives by the Government of Bihar Benefitting the Rural Population

- Bihar State Health Society's (BSHS) Family Planning Program
- Bihar Government's nutrition program
- Bihar State Commission for women

Conclusion

Health and well-being are fundamental to sustainable communities. Good health is very essential for overall well-being as it decreases stress, and brings peace and harmony. It also enables the person to cope with life's challenges and brings stronger social connections which leads to a healthy environment. The study concludes that there is a strong relationship between health and sustainable communities that can be approached by prioritizing green spaces, clean air and water, healthy food options, physical activity, mental health support, and social connections. Ease of healthcare access can foster a healthy culture of well-being.

Recommendations

Health is the most important factor for every living being. Different facilities are provided by the government to improve the health status of the communities, but still, healthcare access is very difficult in government hospitals. Often a patient returns from the hospital without treatment, even from the Emergency department due to the unavailability of a free bed. Many patients lose their lives only because there are no vacant beds in ICUs. Private hospitals' conditions are also questionable. They treat the patients as money banks. Most Private Hospitals and Doctors' clinics prescribe expensive treatments, scans, and operations that are often not needed by the patients. The patients in such situations suffer and at times their conditions become critical. Therefore, it is recommended that:

- Prioritize self-care and well-being.
- Share success strategies and best practices and support local health initiatives.
- The convenience of accessing Health Care Services:

Both the quantity and quality of doctors should be raised in government hospitals. More numbers of beds need to be added in IPD, in the Emergency Department as well as in ICU. The number and quality of diagnosis instruments and machines should be increased.

- The corruption and referral systems for better treatment in the government as well as in the private hospitals need to be checked and banned.

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