

A Critical Study of Health as Key Component of Social Infrastructure

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Abstract

Development of a nation depends on the health condition of the people of that country. So the development of health infrastructure should be continuous process to ensure a country of healthy manpower for production of goods and services. In recent times, people are entitled to health care facilities. Responsibility of the government becomes important to ensure the right to healthy living. After independence sincere and sustained efforts are being made by the government to avoid disease and improve the status of health. But in present scenario, there is need for more development of health infrastructure to face the new challenges created in the health sector. The outbreak of corona virus pandemic led the government to focus more on the development of health infrastructure in India. It is true that present condition of health infrastructure is not sufficient to provide proper healthcare to the Indian people. In this context, the present paper reviews the health infrastructure of India after independence. This paper also analyze challenges in health infrastructure and measures taken by the government to solve it.

Keywords: Health, Infrastructure, disease, Government, Pandemic Development.

Introduction

'Health is Wealth', it means without perfect health we cannot aspect to have healthy, active and competent working force in our country. It is essential to have good health to each and every Indians. As we know, healthy population helps indirectly in the economic development of a county. Economic development is based on developed health infrastructure. In this context, after independence it was felt by the government to improve the health infrastructure of India. Later on, the Government of India has evolved a national health policy to promote healthcare system. In the present scenario, there is need to improve the health standard of the people of our country. The outbreak of coronavirus pandemic led us to be more cautious related to our health. It also led the government to think for more development of health infrastructure in India. To improve the health status in India there is need for eradication of all diseases including coronavirus. For this there is need for introduction of vaccine as soon as possible for eradication of coronavirus from our country.

As we know, refreshing atmosphere improves the standard of our health. It also led to decline death rate, infant mortality rate and increase in expectancy of life. So, we must be the part of 'Clean India Mission' which is introduced by the Government of India to improve the health status in our country.

Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of this study are as under:

1. To analyze the development of health services after independence..
2. To find out health care system in India.
3. To examine challenges or deficiencies in health infrastructure.

Research Methodology

The required information and data for the present study have been collected mainly from secondary sources. For the fulfilment of the above objectives I have chosen the reports mostly published in Government publications, journals, books etc. Also I have collected informations from website through internet.

Development of health infrastructure after independence

After independence there has been a substantial improvement of healthy facilities in India. We find that Death rate has been declined from 27

per thousand in 1951 to 6.3 per thousand in 2017. There has been significant decline in Infant mortality rate from 146 per thousand in 1951 to 32 per thousand in 2017. Life expectancy of the people has increased from 32 years in 1951 to 69.4 years in 2018. Some of the deadly diseases like malaria, TB, Cholera and small pox have been brought under control. There has been significant decline in Under-five mortality rate from 248 per thousand in 1960 to 39 per thousand in 2017.

Following table shows comparative situation of health infrastructure in India between 1951-2017.

Table: Development of Health Infrastructure in India.

Item	1951	2017
Medical Colleges	28	460
Dispensaries and Hospitals	9,209	55,223
Community Health Centres (CHCs), Primary Health Centres and Sub-Centres	725	1,87,505
Number of Beds in Hospitals (Private and Public)	3.2	13,76,013 (2013)
Doctors	61,840	18,15,053
Nurses	18,054	28,21,815
Number of Doctors per 10,000 population	1.7	13.96

[Source: National Health Profile, 2018]

1. On the basis of above table it can be said that the number of medical colleges, dispensaries and hospitals has increased during 1951 to 2017.
2. We also find that there has been a substantial increase in the number of doctors and nurses during 1951 to 2017.
3. Number of Primary health centres and beds in hospitals (Private and Public) has increased during 1951 to 2017.
4. The expansion of health infrastructure has led to eradicate small pox, polio and leprocy.

The Government of India announced National Health Policy, 2017 to improve health facilities to its citizens. 'Ayushman Bharat' (National Health Protection Mission) has been launched by the government to provide health insurance of Rs.5 lakh per family per year to poor households in the country.

Healthcare system in India

India has a three-tier healthcare system, as under:

Primary Healthcare

It includes PHC (Primary Health Centres), CHC (Community Health Centres) and sub-centres. There are small hospitals set-up mostly in small towns and rural areas. It is generally managed by the single doctor and ANM (Auxiliary Nursing Midwife). These centres main objective is to focus on education people on issues relating to healthcare, and provide immunisations facilities against infectious diseases. In these centres preliminary treatment is offered to patients. We find that community health centres often

work as referral hospitals for the primary health centres.

Secondary Healthcare

It includes such institutions which are upgraded compared to PHC and have facilities for surgery, ECG, ultrasound and X-rays. These health centres are mostly located in big towns and district headquarters.

Tertiary Healthcare

It includes well equipped and modernised medical centres, offering specialized medical facilities. It also includes educational and research centres such as AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi), PGI (Post Graduate Institute, Chandigarh) etc..

Public sector health infrastructure

The government is liable to guide and regulate all health related issues such as medical education, adulteration of food, drugs and poisons, medical profession etc..

The Central Government evolves broad policies and plans through the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare. It is the responsibility of the Central Government to collect information and render assistance to state governments, Union Territories and other bodies for the implementations of important health programmes in the country.

During the last few decades India has built a vast health infrastructure and man power at different levels. The expansion of health infrastructure has resulted in the eradication of different diseases.

Private sector health infrastructure

Private Health Sector has grown leaps and bounds in recent times due to slow development of public health sector. In recent times, private sector is playing a significant role in the health sector. It facilitates medical education and training, medical technology and diagnostics, manufacture and sale of pharmaceuticals, hospital construction and the provision of medical services.

In recent times, more than 70% of the hospitals are run by the private sector. Nearly two-fifth of the beds available in the hospitals controlled by the private sector. Maximum number of dispensaries are run by the same private sector. Near about 80% of out-patients and 46% of in-patients are getting health services from the private health sector. Thus private sector's role is significant in providing health services in India.

Role of Indian system of medicine (ISM)

The contribution of ISM is important in the health care system of India. It includes Ayurveda, Yoga, Siddha, Naturopathy and Homeopathy (AYUSH). A large number of hospitals and dispensaries are run by the AYUSH in different states of this country. Undoubtedly, ISM is capable to solve major health problems because these medicines are natural, safe, effective and inexpensive. We should come front to promote this system.

Health as an Emerging Challenge

Since independence there has been significant increase in health services and improvements in health indicators but health sector still suffers from a number of challenges.

There is unequal distribution of healthcare facilities across rural and urban sectors of the country. Most of the healthcare facilities are available in the urban areas. In recent times so many communicable diseases like AIDS, HIV, SARS and recently coronavirus are spreading rapidly and are posing a serious threat to the society. Others side we find that the maintenance of public healthcare centres, hospitals and dispensaries is not in good condition. No proper efforts are made by the government to maintain the healthcare centres. The main reason for this is lack of funds.

We also find that slow effort made by the government in health sector led the private sector to rise. The number of private hospitals is increasing rapidly across the country. The healthcare services provided by the private sector are very expensive which is beyond the reach of common people.

Sanitation level is very poor in India. We are not able to maintain our surroundings clean. There is lack of awareness among the people related to sanitation. So many areas sanitary facilities are also not available.

There is inadequate number of health personnel to meet the growing need of medical assistance especially in rural areas. Due to this people have to depend on quacks or on private doctors, who charge very high, which may not be affordable to poor people.

Suggestions

Following suggestions can help in strengthening health infrastructure:

1. Public health services should be decentralized so that all citizens can get better health facilities.
2. Awareness should be created among the people related to health and hygiene, proper sanitation, vaccination, communicable diseases, availability of medical assistance etc.
3. Primary healthcare system should be made more effective.

4. Investment should be increased in public health so that more health care institutions can be opened, new innovations and research can be carried on to develop treatment to some dangerous diseases such as cancer, coronavirus etc.

Conclusion

This entire research is based upon health infrastructure of India and challenges faced by it. This research shows how health infrastructure is creating a huge impact on the people of India. It is the need of time to develop health infrastructure of our country. If the people of our country will be healthy that will turn them into efficient workforce which will be resulted in economic development. For this government of India should take more initiative for the development of health infrastructures and also to create awareness among the people. Then only our country will stand with such countries where health infrastructure is developed.

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