

# Impact of Health on Sustainable Development in India

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## **Abstract**

*Health is an essential dimension for sustainable development. Health is have great significance as an end in itself and as an integral part of human well-being, which includes material, psychological, social, cultural, educational, work, environmental, and personal security dimensions. These dimensions of well-being are interrelated and interdependent. Investments in health, particularly prevention of ill health, enhance a country's economic output through their effects on educational achievement and skills acquisition, labour productivity and decent employment, increased savings and investment, the demographic transition and impacts on the earth's ecosystem.*

*Good health is thus an end in itself and it plays an integral role in human capabilities and well-being. This paper is an effort to present a relationship between health and sustainable development. Sustainable development can't achieve without good health of the citizen.*

**Keyword** *Health, Human Capabilities, Sustainable Development.*

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## **Introduction:**

Health is an essential dimension for sustainable development. Health is have great significance as an end in itself and as an integral part of human well-being, which includes material, psychological, social, cultural, educational, work, environmental, and personal security dimensions. These dimensions of well-being are interrelated and interdependent. Investments in health, particularly prevention of ill health, enhance a country's economic output through their effects on educational achievement and skills acquisition, labour productivity and decent employment, increased savings and investment, the demographic transition and impacts on the earth's ecosystem. Good health is thus an end in itself and it plays an integral role in human capabilities and well-being.

This paper is divided into four parts. First part of this paper is about conceptualization of health, second part about conceptualization of Sustainable development, third part about relationship between health and sustainable development and in the last about the conclusion drawn.

## **Objectives of the study:**

- To study the concept of health.
- To study the concept of sustainable development.

- To examine the health dimension of sustainable development.

### **What is health?**

Health is one of those terms which most people find most difficult to define. Therefore, many definitions of health have been offered from time to time, including the following: "Health is a function of the overall integrated development of the society and the health status is one of the indicators of the quality of life." The World Health Organization (WHO) defined health in its broader sense in 1946 as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Buddha said that, of all the gains, the gain of health is the highest and the best. Webster defines health as "The condition of being sound in body, mind or spirit especially freedom from physical disease or pain" while Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "Soundness of body or mind; that condition in which its functions are duly and efficiently discharged".

Health is a dynamic state on the wellness-illness continuum, ranging from high-level wellness, to states of illness/premature death. The level of wellness or health is determined by the ability to deal with and defend against stress. It is determined by physiological, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual factors. Health is viewed holistically as an interacting system with mental, emotional and physical components. It is also considered as a basic and dynamic force in our daily lives influenced by our circumstances, beliefs, culture and social, economic and physical environments. It implies good prospects for continued survival.

### **What is sustainable development?**

All of us are staying in the era of Sustainable development. The concept Sustainable development has a special relevance in the context of environment in general and exploitation, allocation and utilization of natural or environmental resources in particular. Hence, it is assumed that the concept of Sustainable development is broader in scope and significance comparing Economic development. This concept of development has been originated in the 20th century. The term was brought into common use by the World commission on Environment and development in its report "Our Common Future."

Sustainable development is a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary concept. According to Van Den Bergh (1996), the major theoretical perspectives of sustainability are Neo-classical economic equilibrium, evolutionary ecology, psychology, socio-cultural and human ecology. Likewise, the concept is very closely concerned with physical or natural sciences. The present paper takes into consideration only health perspective of the concept sustainable development in general.

The term sustainable development was first used by the 'World Conservation strategy' presented by the international union for the conservation of nature and natural resources in 1980.

India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. But there is an inverse relationship between economic developments and the environment. Indian economy has been undertaking the planned efforts to speed up its economic development. Besides this, economic reforms programme popularly known as New

Economic Policy (NEP) that is being implemented in our country since 1991. Important goal of New Economic Policy was to promote the rate of economic growth. This necessitates assessing the state of sustainable development in Indian and the efforts of the state of the Indian economy in that direction

### **Health and sustainable development:**

The whole development cycle of a person depends upon his intellectual caliber, curiosity and constructive thinking, but these depend upon good health. Therefore, to meet the need of healthy citizens for a healthy society, health services are very important for the government. The progress of society greatly depends upon the quality of its people. Unhealthy people can hardly be expected to make any valid contribution towards development programs.

**Health as Input-** Many of the conventional approaches to health consider the need to justify expenditures on health through the advantages it can bring to the economy. According to World Bank's World Development Report 1993, investment in health focuses on the benefits that improved health has on economic growth. The approach adopted here is that healthier is wealthier: we should care about health, not only because it is intrinsically good, but also because it contributes to economic growth. It is argued that health, through its contribution to the quality of human capital increases savings and investment that have significant effect on economic growth. This approach puts economic growth as an end and health as a means of achieving this end.

**Investing in Health :** The link between the health status and health care investment has attracted a considerable interest among economic researchers at theoretical and empirical levels both. The health of the human capital generates both higher income and individual well being. Improved health generates economic growth and poverty reduction in the long run. Improved health can occur either through privately or through public sources. The importance of health as a public good, necessitates the growth in the quantum of investment in health.

**Health as output:** The reverse has also been argued, where wealth is seen to be a necessary input for the achievement of health outcomes. Indeed, Pritchett and Summers (1996) argue that wealthier nations are healthier nations', as demonstrated by the strong and consistent association between per capita income and child mortality. They suggest that the effect of income on health is causal (not accounted for by reverse causation or a third variable) and that, for every unit increase in per capita income, we can ultimately save children's lives. Thus, economic growth assumes a central role in development objectives. So, health necessarily improves wealth and wealth invariably improves health. Such approaches lead us to the critical question of whether economic growth is necessary for improving health. Sen (1999) asserts that it is not always necessary to wait for high economic growth to take place before focusing on improving health. Indeed, the success of pre-reform China, Costa Rica, Sri Lanka and the Indian state of Kerala in improving the health and life expectancy of their citizens without substantial increase in income, support the claim that economic growth is not a pre-condition for health improvement.

The occurrence of multiple deprivations is usually complex and interconnected; deprivation in one dimension often induces and reinforces deprivation in other aspects of life. Such a continuous inter-play between various capabilities produces (and reproduces) the vicious cycle of poverty. As we have argued earlier, health capabilities have both an intrinsic and instrumental role in enhancing human well-being. Deprivation in health can potentially cause deprivations in a number of other dimensions, such as education, employment, subjective well-being and participation in socio-economic spheres. When people are ill, malnourished, have mental disorders or life-debilitating disabilities, their overall capabilities are greatly reduced. Lack of health can therefore be at the heart of inter-locking deprivations. The World Bank's study *Voices of the Poor* (Narayan et al, 2000) suggests that death, injury or severe illness in the family is considered to be one of the major causes of poverty in developing countries. The 2005 WHO Report finds a very close link between chronic diseases and poverty. While acknowledging that poverty is a causal factor of chronic diseases, the report argues that the incidence of chronic diseases also causes poverty. Further, there are huge costs involved in the medical care of individuals suffering from chronic diseases. Chronic diseases have an indirect impact on people's economic status and employment opportunities in the long term. Indirect costs include: reduction in income owing to lost productivity from illness or death; the cost of adult household members caring for those who are ill; reduction in future earnings by the selling of assets to cope with direct costs and unpredictable expenditures; and lost opportunities for young members of the household, who leave school in order to care for adults who are ill or to help the household economy (WHO, 2005, p67).

Health is central dimensions of sustainable development. Health is a beneficiary of and a contributor to development. It is also a key indicator of what people-centred, rights-based, inclusive, and equitable development seeks to achieve. For these reasons, three of the eight MDGs are focused on health, and the rest are key determinants of it.

Yet, ill health remains a significant cause, and a consequence of poverty in all countries. Ill health limits productivity and school attendance, thereby preventing many poor people from escaping poverty. Every year 100 million people are either pushed into poverty by health-care costs, including out-of-pocket expenses for health care, or unable to afford essential health services so that pre-existing sickness is aggravated. The ability to enjoy the rights to work and education, which are, in turn, essential to the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living, is determined by health. At the same time, poverty-related structural disadvantages such as lack of clean water, sanitation and decent work, hinder the prevention and fuel the spread of diseases. Countless people, particularly those with social disadvantages and marginalized and vulnerable populations, face steep economic, environmental, and social barriers to healthy living on a daily basis.

### **Conclusion and Suggestion:**

Given the contribution of health to sustainable development, and the critical importance of the multi-sector determinants of health, a "health-in-all-policies" approach could be adopted. This approach would recognize that health-related targets be included under other sector goals. This approach could encourage integration of health risk reduction and health promotion in all stages of life into the framing of overall development policies and thinking. Central governments scheme like ayushman bhart is a move towards better health of the country.

The health of future generations should be protected, by providing them with skills and education, by bequeathing a clean and bio diverse environment and preventing health risks from climate change and other long-term environmental threats.

The framing of goals, targets and indicators for health must be compatible with protection and fulfillment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including gender equality. It would also ensure the systematic integration of human rights standards and principles in health sector interventions.

Prioritizing a global health goal is essential for sustainable development as discussed above. It is imperative that the health sector address its weaknesses, not least of which are poor governance and weak accountability mechanisms, low status compared to other sectors in the view of finance and planning ministries, serious shortages of well-trained, motivated and supported health workers and unfair distribution of them within and across countries, and lack of knowledge or capability in many key areas such as quality assurance. In the face of such challenges, continuing progress depends to an important extent on empowering communities and people as the agents for their own health and as advocates with government.

Long-term, predictable, and sustainable financing for health, from domestic as well as international resources, is required just to provide an irreducible minimum of preventative and curative health services and capacity building in the health sector. In these circumstances, it is important that the global as well as local, health architecture evolve in order to better respond to countries' needs and priorities and to play a fully effective role in achieving health for all. If we achieve the health for all then only we may achieve the real sustainable development.

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