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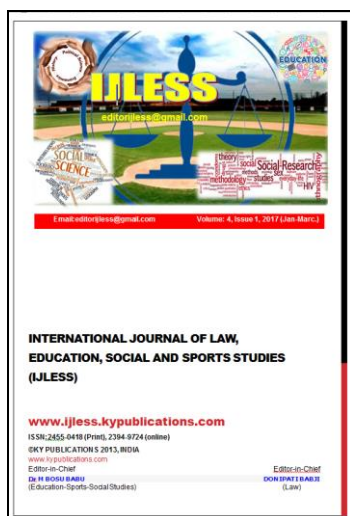
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HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY IN THE ERA OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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**ABSTRACT**

The paper deals with the aspects of health, an important indicator of human development index in the field of economic progress. It is the root cause and the most vital aspect that ensures the balanced economy and leads to the betterment of an individual which thereby tends to sustainable development. The parameter of 'Health' of the nation's discloses the 'wealth' of the nations, suggesting that healthier labour force is responsible for more productivity and output. Therefore, the issues of health and wealth are very much interlinked. It explores the concept of the role of health of people that can also be considered as a factor for the progress of a nation. It establishes that health cannot be ignored at any cost for the overall development of a nation in the wake of gradual depletion of natural resources and ecological imbalance that are impacting the scenario of health of human beings.

Keywords: Health, productivity, development, wealth, lifestyle, depletion of natural resources, sustainable development, environmental degradation, preservation of resources

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"The healthiest ones are richer than the richest and luckier than the luckiest."

INTRODUCTION

Health is generally considered as a state of living without suffering. The ancient sage Buddha says that 'health is the greatest gift that any living being is gifted with'. Without health, life is a suffering and miserable that leads to much burden on the individual's exchequer. A man can cherish his life happily and reach his goals easily through better health. Though, the possibility of happiness of an individual depends on many other factors, good health can be one of the primary causes for it. Taking into consideration of the fact that many people who suffer from diseases throughout their lives, it is assertively said that development of an individual is not possible in the absence of good health, in the era of competitive growth. Health is one of the dominant factors and it is considered as the root cause of human happiness and progress.

One of the deciding indicators of economic development is the health condition of an individual. The causal effect of general health conditions on economic performance is intensely debated in the literature. This in turn affects human population, productivity, accumulation of skilled labour etc. Health which was not considered as a parameter earlier for social progress is now treated as a human capital today. It is established that the healthier labour force would lead to better productivity in terms of product quality and quantity in the on-going process of industrial and economic development.

Health indicators

The factor of health plays a dominant role in the field of progress. But, today a number of ailments are causing a concern showing impact on the productivity. According to the statistics of The World Health Organization, more than

11% of world's population was obese in 2008, and it is growing abnormally by the year; indicating that 30% or more people on the globe are either obese or over-weight. This has been growing as a dangerous epidemic. Besides water-borne, air-borne and food related diseases, retardation of both physical and mental condition is the other growing concern for the planners in the field of economic development.

It is no denying a fact that health of an individual mainly depends on environment, status, gender, culture; genetics, personal hygiene practices, diet, literacy etc. Health indicators are used to guide the public health policy and provide an understanding of the health of the people. The health conditions of the people can be easily known through the positive indicators of health namely:

1. Life span or longevity
2. Competency to work
3. Ability to cope with stress
4. Competency to achieve productivity
5. Emotional balance

Life span is one of the primary indicators of human development index (HDI). All of these factors contribute for an effective economic growth. But there are other factors considered negative in thwarting the economic progress of a nation. They are mainly:

1. Low or high weight of the new born
2. Disabilities of infants (retardation etc.)
3. Chronic ill health
4. Genetic disorders
5. Stress- related ailments
6. Epidemic outbreak
7. Endemic outbreaks

Fortunately, for most of these problems effective cures and treatment systems have been developed by the scientific communities either to prevent or cure the people in order to make them fit for participating in the process of economic development. Some vaccinations that are in use today prevent many diseases like flu, hepatitis, polio, asthma etc., given in the early days of the childhood to prevent the children from these diseases and to make their life more healthier and productive. In addition, the disabled group of people are also treated so as to create a better living for them in the society. The chances of improving the health of the children today is very much in the hands of the scientific community, which is also a part of economic growth.

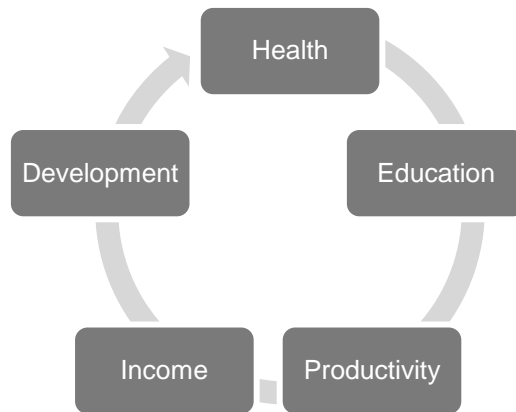
The main idea of health indicators is calculated by considering all the citizens health condition irrespective of gender and age. The topic of health is vast and there have been ongoing researches for the purpose of knowing the ways to achieve better health.

Role of health in productivity and progress

Modern economic development is competitive and faces pulls and counter pulls. The factor of health and technology accelerates economic growth. Technology is gaining an upper hand over human force. But, in the absence of good health, even technology is of no use in the process of economic growth. Speaking about the labour forces, it is observed that the healthier labour would lead to a better productivity. This healthy labour works actively and contributes for the faster pace of growth of an organisation. So, it can be concluded that the wealth of a company depends on the health of the labour force or work force.

The health of the newborn and the growing children is the other factor to be considered in the era of growth. If children suffer during their course of birth or while pursuing their education, there is a deep impact on their future progress. The healthier group of children can be more attentive and aspiring when compared to the unhealthier group.

Thus, considering every prospective and productive individual, it is felt that everyone wants to live a healthy and a happier life. The happiness of the life of any person mainly depends on the health of that person, while the health of an individual depends upon the environment, population, pollution factors, safety, medical facilities, and diet and so on. Better health not only includes the situation of being without any disease, but also the levels of activeness and happiness. Health of the nation is thus a complicated state. The basic needs of food, shelter and clothing are to be primarily provided for better health of the individuals, which in turn leads to the cumulative progress of a society or a nation.



The above circle shows that healthy community can be efficient and it can contribute for high presence of mind and leads to acquiring better skills, knowledge and could be productive. This leads to high productivity as there is an availability of skilled force. This in turn generates more income and thereby leads to development. Development of a nation leads to the state of good health facilities and suitable environmental conditions. The healthier force will suffer less when compared to the unhealthier, leading to more productivity due to the better health and working conditions.

Economic development of the nation is mostly dependent on the people of the nation. For the people to be active and vigilant, they must be healthy first. Thus in a way, the progress of the nation depends on the probability of individual's ability and productivity. This suggests that probability of good health $P(H)$ increases the probability of development $P(D)$ of a nation by inducing high productivity into account. Efforts to measure the link between the health and productivity or productive output are of great importance even today in measuring the economic progress.

A peep into the healthier lifestyle

Josh Billings is of the opinion, "Health is like money, we never have a true idea of its value until we lose it". Going by his inspiring words, it can be well presumed that without strong health nothing can be gained. Man can chalk out his own course of action for a healthy and better ways of living. It all depends on how he plans and executes the course of action for the sake of his progress which in turn leads to the nation's progress. A healthier living is in ones' own hands. Only you can create or destroy your future. The main idea is that an individual with good standard of living and an individual who follows a healthier diet or healthier way of life can progress at a greater pace when compared to an individual who follows an unhealthy lifestyle.

The primary aspect of focus on health may be from the birth of an individual and if great care has been taken by the family, the individual grows up to be healthier. It is also taken into account about the food he/she eats during their course of life. There have been many instances in the history of mankind that great epidemic diseases like plague, black fever have taken high toll destroying the economic progress of the nations.

It is universally acknowledged that the health of an individual depends on the diet he follows. Besides diet, various other parameters influence a person's health. They are as follows:

1. Resting period
2. Working or productive time
3. Nutritious Food
4. Utilisation of time
5. Mobility
6. Knowledge building
7. Utilisation of Resources
8. Working hours

Perfection grows in following certain instructions, learning and applying the system of regulations on one's own self. Long term benefits of this system are more than the short term losses. No matter how difficult it takes to adopt a healthy system, it would surely produce positive results that lead to advantage and progress. Success lies in adopting proper diet and following it regularly. Avoiding the diet that is harmful and paving for green would be as healthy as living a peaceful life. The healthy lifestyle is one that keeps you away from all diseases. The major fact that is,

what to eat, when and how to eat plays a key role in attaining a good health. It has been noticed that nearly 30% of world suffers from one or more forms of malnutrition.

For the purpose of being healthy there must be many things taken into consideration. Our goal and inspiration is one of them. One of the major factors that develop an individual is the presence of a 'healthy environment'. The air we breathe and the water we drink must be pure and hygienic. The availability of unpolluted air, water, good sanitation facilities pave way for a healthier and happier life. For the purpose of maintaining ourselves healthy, it is necessary to be clean and tidy always. A healthier life is creation of healthy habits not restrictions. This leads to a happier life as your happiness is a reflection of your health.

But, we should always maintain both external and internal healthiness as the Indian dictum goes 'health is wealth'. Herophilus is of the opinion, 'When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless, and intelligence cannot be applied.' So, 'being healthy' is a lifestyle. As a plant that grows well when supplied good nutrition, a person becomes healthy only through following a healthy lifestyle.

It is necessary to keep the body in good health so as to keep the mind strong and clear. Because, every time you eat or drink, you are either feeding a disease or fighting against it. It is true that we spend our health for gaining wealth, and then it is true to say that we are again sending the wealth to gain our health. It is wise to recall the words that 'Health is a state of complete harmony of body, mind and spirit.'

The advent of health towards a nation's progress

The modern communities have realised the importance of health in day to day life and its necessity for a happy and progressive future. It is obvious that following a healthier diet and lifestyle could increase the chances of becoming goal-oriented, and successful. The healthier life leads to a satisfactory life and bestows a sense of accomplishment which is immanent for everybody. He who has health has hope and he who has hope has everything. According to Terri Guillemots, 'Health is the relationship between you and your body'.

Human body is the priceless possession. Taking care of it would make a healthier living easy. Significant aspect of modern life is being healthy and productive that contributes for the nation's progress. It is also necessary that for the purpose of living happily, certain restrictions of social living are to be followed in maintaining cleanliness and hygiene. Being in a state of healthiness one can have access to many advantages. One can actively participate in building up the economy. Our body is a system. The way you eat and think could influence your life.

Health is given high priority in the modern day. The country's development can be measured by one of the parameters i.e. life expectancy. Health and economic progress are interlinked in modern days. In the past it was different. Our ancestors who lived in an under developed world have been so healthy that their life expectancy was more than the present generation. The aspects of development and progress were not given priority in those days as those generations were very close to nature.

Negative aspects of development in regard to health issues

The developments in the field of economy led to developments in the fields of science medicine and technologies. The facilities such as cure for disease and diagnosis have been increased. But, it is to be noted that one of the main reasons for the cause of diseases is modernisation and industrialisation.

Modernisation has become an integral part of the society because it is necessary for the economic development of the people. As we can notice it has improved better medical facilities in the concerned areas. Industrialisation has several effects on environmental pollution and deforestation, thereby reducing the amounts of oxygen and increasing the levels of carbon dioxide through the release of harmful gases that are responsible for environmental degradation.

Negative effects of development on health are:

1. Increase in the levels of industrialization led to the release of harmful gases (CFCs) that are affecting the health of people causing ill health.
2. Increase in deforestation leads to decrease in oxygen levels.
3. Cause of different types of pollution namely sound pollution, air and water pollution are severely affecting economic growth.
4. Water pollution due to release of harmful chemicals in to the nearby water bodies.
5. Change in food habits of people causing ill-health.
6. Establishment of modern restaurants that serve adulterated food causing various diseases when consumed.
7. Different types of emissions of radiation causing cancer.

8. Environmental degradation and global warming.
9. Invention of computers and their continuous frequent causing chronic pain and effects on the health of the eyes.
10. Invention of Mobiles, Televisions that make people lazy and curb creativity and wastage of valuable time of human beings.
11. Modern transport that makes people lethargic by disabling them to use their foot to travel even small distances.

Sustainable development

The issue of sustainable development is gaining currency all over the world today in view of the environmental degradation and fast depletion of natural resources. Equitable distribution of resources has become a difficult issue. Communities are scrambling for the sustainable development. The idea of sustainable development has become a vicious circle now as the demand has gone up for resources. It is a phenomenon in which the present generation is satisfied without compromising on the needs of the future generations. Considering health of the nation as a primary objective, sustainable development can be of greater use in identifying the dos and don'ts of the economic progress.

Economic development takes place in a natural way without much depletion of natural resources. But in the changed scenario much depletion is caused to natural resources, which is affecting the general health condition of the human beings. It has become necessary that there should not be any harm to the present and future human generations during the process of economic development. The development must be unique and consistent causing no loss to the present and future generations even in a slighter way. Considering the negative effects of development on health, sustainable development is the answer to a better way of economic development. It can be considered as a medicine without any side effects, and it can be taken as an optimistic and regenerative model.

Conclusion

It is identified that the health issues of the nation matter a lot during the era of progress. Health is an essential component of development both as an input and as a goal. Without the improvement of public health facilities, a nation cannot move forward and achieve its goals both long term and short term. It is necessary to create a healthy environment and promote healthy living in order for a nation to progress rapidly. Proper utilisation of natural resources can be one of the main objectives. The idea of sustainable development must be kept in mind in order to prosper without any negative effects. Instead of protecting the environment, it is recommended to create an environment that ensures protection. There is no need of a house if there is no decent place to put it on. There is no meaning for progress if there is no space for healthy environment.

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