

Health Education as a Component of Human and Community Development

RATNA SAHU¹ AND PARBATI TUDU^{*2}

¹Rtd. Professor and ²Research Scholar

Department of Home Science, Berhampur University, Berhampur University, Berhampur (Odisha) India

ABSTRACT

Education is the critical input in the human resource development and it is an indicator of economic growth and its contribution for a healthy community and society cannot be undermined. Health education is indispensable in achieving optimum individual and community health. It is the process by which individual and groups of people learn to behave in a manner conducive to the promotion, maintenance or restoration of health. By the learners are motivated to adopt and maintain healthy practices and life styles preserve healthy environment and passionately pursue the goal of achieving optimum health for all in society. Health education should be emphasized at primary, secondary and higher educational level to ensure full participation of the community and also bridge the gap in awareness building where ever gap exists. This education should be imparted as a non professional and also as a professional course to scholars, as well as to housewives, senior citizens and professionals as a value addition through formal and non formal channels. The policy makers should formulate such policies so that health education reaches the remote corners of India at urban and rural level for eradication of morbidity, mortality, malnutrition, over nutrition, unhygienic health practices, enhancement of longevity ,healthy eating pattern as well as achieving health for all and also to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the active involvement of all human and non human resources, media, knowledge bank and use of all infrastructures at our disposal. It also should induce to develop structures and policies to achieve health for all through education by making it a compulsory component where ever it is possible.

Key Words : Health education, Awareness, Motivation

INTRODUCTION

“Health is one of those terms which is most people find it to difficult to define although they are confident of its meaning. Therefore, many definition of health have been offered from time to time, including the following:

- a) “The definition of being sound in body, mind or spirit, specially freedom from physical disease or pain” (Webster)
- b) Soundness of body or mind; that condition in which its function are duly and efficiently discharged”(Oxford English Dictionary)
- c) The definition adopted by John M Last is “The process by which individuals and groups of people learn to behave in a manner conducive to

the promotion, maintenance or restoration of health”.

WHO definitions:

The widely accepted definition of health is that given by the World Health Organization (1948) in the preamble to its constitution, which is as follows:

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing

And not merely an absence of disease or infirmity”.

In recent years, this statement has been amplified to include the ability to lead a “socially and economically productive life”.

“Health is NOT mainly an issue of doctors, social

services and hospitals. It is an issue of social Justice”.

Alma-Ata declaration:

The declaration of Alma-Ata (1978) by emphasizing the need for “individual and community participation” gave a new meaning and direction to the practice of health education. The dynamic definition of health education is now as follows:

“a process aimed at encouraging people to want to be healthy, to know to stay healthy, to do what they can individually and collectively to maintain health, and to seek help when needed”.

The modern concept of education emphasises on health behaviour and related actions of people.

Health education and behaviour:

The behaviours to be adopted or modified may be that of individuals, groups and entire community.

Strategies designed to influence the behaviour of individuals or groups will vary greatly depending upon the specific diseases concerned and its distribution in the population as well as upon the characteristics and acceptability of available methods preventing or controlling that disease and health problem.

Health education can help to increase knowledge and to reinforce desired behaviour patterns.

It is clear that education is necessary, but education alone is insufficient to achieve optimum health. The target population must have access to proven preventive measures or procedures.

Health education:

Health education is the profession of educating people about health. Area within this profession encompasses environmental health, physical health, social health, emotional health, intellectual health, and spiritual health. It can be defined as the principle by which individuals and groups of people learn to behave in a manner conducive to the promotion, maintenance, or restoration of health. However, as there are multiple definitions of health, there are also multiple definitions of health education. The joint committee on health education and promotion Terminology of 2001 defined Health Education as “any combination of planned learning experiences based on sound theories that provide individuals, groups, and communities the opportunity to acquire information and the skill needed to make quality health decisions.” The WHO defined Health Education

as “comprising of consciously constructed opportunities for learning involving some form of communication designed to improve health literacy, including improving knowledge, and developing life skills which are conducive to individual”.

Sound health is an important indicator of Human Resource Development. Health for all calls for concerted action in all sectors and demands coordinated efforts to enlist active participation of people for optimum health. Health management is a multi dimensional activity involving people and administration and developmental agencies of the country.

The prime objective of Health Education is to provide scientific knowledge and information to people about health problems, treatment, care and prevention of morbidity.

Health Education should become a part of human right.

Health Education should aim at:

- Elimination of social and psychological prejudice, ignorance and misconception.
- Make people aware of healthy living and healthy life style.
- To provide maximum knowledge of functions of food, nutrition, different types of metabolic disorders, communicable diseases, symptoms and complications.
- To provide information on elimination, care, prevention and treatment of all forms of health hazards and morbidities.

After the adoption of the declaration of Alma-Ata 1978 which gives emphasis to individual and community participations in health schemes the scope now has shifted from.

- Prevention of disease to promotion of healthy life styles.
- The modification of individual behavior to modification of social environment in which the individual resides.
- Community participation to community involvement and
- Promotion of individual and community self reliance in health matters.

Health education in School :

Importance : In present global scenario health education in school level is highly essential to make a

healthy society. As we know healthy mothers gives a healthy child concept of health education taught in schools is to give informatics an illness and their preventive, substances abuse and sexual relation. The ultimate purpose of health education is to allow students to have an understanding of their bodies and beliefs related to health. Health education is a significant addition to the school curriculum because health is a source of major concern. To maintain the undisrupted education awareness of health education is required. Simple learning about health inside the class room will not fulfill the aspiration but its practical use in the day to day activities.

Facts: Health education has been formally included in the school for discussion in fraction of the human body and self esteem. It gives information to the students regarding some illness and its prevention. Health issues are also been included in the school programmes. Its goal is to disseminate informatics and allow students to develop attitudes and belief health.

Behaviour: Incorporation of behavioral concept in school that students became able to apply in other aspects. Sometime sense cause lead to wide range of health and psychological concerns. For example teen pregnancy and eating disorders although to vastly different conditions are both caused by lack of self-esteem. The students become equipped with the skills needed what they learn in the class room.

Social effects: Inclusion of health education in the source of information to the economically weaker students. Infusion of this practices will benefited most in improving attendance and academic achievement.

Support: Health education requires other campaign throughout this year. What the students learn in the class room should be referred by other events to increase knowledge in the health areas. The effective health education programmes cover wider areas than those found in the lesson plans.

Contents of Health Education :

– **Human biology:** Health education should contain first and foremost sound knowledge of human biology, function of different body parts, individual metabolic activities, growth and development pattern of the body from conception till death.

– **Food and Nutrition:** The aim of nutrition education is to guide people for balanced diet and to promote good dietary habit and to avoid Jargon and

calories and biochemistry nutrients. Now-a-days several chronic diseases are manifested in the society due to want of nutritional food. Nutritional Education can prevent malnutrition, promote health and improve the quality of life.

– **Hygiene:** Hygiene has two aspects, – Personal and Environmental. Personal hygiene includes bathing, clothing, washing, toilet, care of nails, feet and teeth, spiting, coughing, and inculcation of clean habit during the young age. Environmental hygiene has two aspects – Domestic and Community. Domestic hygiene implies use of soap, need of fresh air, light and ventilation, hygienic storage of food, hygienic disposal of wastes to avoid pest, rats, mice and insects. Improvement of environmental health is the major concern of many government and related agencies for which the third world countries has given emphasis for improvement of basic sanitary services like water supply, disposal of human excreta, solid and liquid wastes, vector control, food sanitation and housing which are fundamental to health. Implementation of health education approach in the primary and secondary school level will not only identify the sanitation problem but also it solution for improving health of the people.

– **Family Health:** Family is the first defense as well as the chief reliance for the well-being of its members. The role of family in Health promotion, in prevention of disease, early diagnosis and care of sick is of crucial importance.

– **Disease prevention and control:** Drugs alone will not solve the problem without health education; a person may fall sick again and again from the same disease. Through the experiences of western countries have shown that education is a most for eradication of cholera, malaria, typhoid and tuberculosis. Several health programme are also in operation in the national level still then it clearly indicates that anti-malaria, spray with insecticides cannot solve the problem without health education.

– **Mental health:** Occurrence of mental health problems is due to changes in the society from agricultural to the industrial economy. There are certain special situations when mental health is of great important. Health worker should help the people to achieve mental health by showing sympathy, understanding and by social contact.

– **Prevention of accident:** Accidents occur in three main areas: the home, road and in the place of work and safely education should be directed to these

areas.

– **Use of health services:** Many people particularly rural masses do not have the knowledge of health services available in their community and many more do not know what signs to look for that indicate a visit to a doctor is necessary. There is a communication gap between the public and health administration in the form of “feedback” for further improvement of health services.

The declared aims of health education are to inform people about the health consciousness, and show that the disease free society can be thought of.

Methods of imparting health education :

Methods of health education should cater to precise needs of the society. Education consists of the following information about health factors and knowledge of biology, trends of diseases, prevention, treatment and care.

– **Education:** Education is important at of every step of life cycle and every age group of people. The aim is to create a knowledge base, awareness and to create a provision to adopt health practices at individual, family, and community level. Health education should modify behaviour pattern at home, school, work place and community by everyone.

– **Motivation:** It is the intrinsic drive and set of interest which compels a person to behave in a manner that provides deep sense of satisfaction to the person and which a person holds as valuable practice for healthy living.

– **Counseling :**Health counseling should be an integral part of school, college curriculum. All education institution should have a health center, catering to the health needs and particularly encouraging daily exercise, yoga, pranayam, body fitness and imparting information on disease free body, environment and society. First aid training, give information of all types of medicine like Ayurveda, Reiki, Homeopathy, acupuncture, occupressure, Unani and all forms of alternative medicine.

– **Environment :** The most important factor for health education is environment. It is the place where the children grow that’s the number of the family, neighbor, community where the children shape their individual personality. So while imparting health education care should be taken for physical and human environment.

– **Printed material:** Simple rules of health education can be taught by using pictures, leaflets, and pamphlets. Posters and chats are also useful materials

for imparting education. Press is also serving as the medium of health education. Films on the screen directly appeal to the eyes and motivating the viewers for health instruction.

– **Spoken words :** Spoken words should be used while teaching the children because it can easily be understood by the children. Some important health related discussion programme can be presented through the broadcasting method.

– **Television :** Television provides the opportunities of making people health conscious through the audio visual power which improve the general level of health knowledge and health behaviour of the whole community. Electronic media as well as print media is also very much helpful for ensuring better health of the children.

Maintenance of Health Information :

A comprehensive health information system requires information and indicate the following subjects.

– **Demography and vital events:** Health study of community such includes mortality, morbidity, disability and quality of life.

– **Utilization and non-utilization of health services:** Different health programme and initiatives undertaken for public, youth, children, women by national, international, NGO and Government.

– **Financial statistics:** Cost expenditure related to the health expenditure of Government and public enterprise.

– **Lecture method:** Lecture method is an effective method to impart health education through audio visual aids.

– **Demonstration:** A demonstration is a carefully prepared presentation for practical implication of health education.

– **Group discussion:** Workshops, seminars, conferences are excellent method of imparting health education.

Factors that promote good health in children and adults :

– **Nutrition and balance diet:** It provides energy to the human body Diet provides fuel to the working machinery. Responsibility of diet is to construct tissues, build the skeleton help growth and development and support continuous replacement of blood cells consumed in the metabolic function.

– **Air and Sunlight:** Air provides oxygen which

purifies bloods and activates our body organs. Fresh air contains more oxygen and foul air contains more carbon dioxide or nitrogen resulted physical and mental fatigue heaviness and weakness. Cross ventilation of rooms help obtaining fresh air and dispelling foul air. The sunlight provides life giving properties and destroys harmful germs.

– **Bodily posture:** Bodily posture of children is helpful for maintaining health. The children should have their own knowledge of correct postures of sitting standing, walking, reading and writing. Absence of the above the body organs became deformed, the eye sight suffers and the nervous system weakness. Malnutrition, bad dress, bad furniture and bad habits lead to bad postures. The children should be trained to have correct postures.

– **Physical exercise, sports, games, athletics and rhythmic exercises:** These helpful for circulations of blood, stimulate the glands, strengthening the organs, development and growth and promote general health.

Principles of Health Education in India:

1. Cooperation of parents and community: Child grows and develop by accepting behavior of its parents. Subsequently when the child grows rapidly it get support from the community so far the health is concerned.

2. Individual health care: One should take care of its health. Because health is a treasure for an individual. So individual should more conscious for of its own health. Individual is custodian of own health.

3. Simple and usable health education should consists of simple and pragmatic practices and activities: Simple and usable health education consists of simple and pragmatic practices and activities health related activities or a conducive activity which leads to maintenance of good health. Practice makes a man perfect by inducing value of good health on the person.

4. For total implementation of health care programme necessary and suitable priority should be accorded to health education by its school administration and management: School administration and management should give priority for implementation of the health programme. They are the right agents through whom the health education can flourish among the students. Students also propagate pros and cons of good health among the community.

5. Healthy teachers: Healthy teachers are the back bone of the nation. Healthy teachers have the capacity to teach the students up to their requirement.

Health teachers always produces healthy students.

6. Healthy habits: Habits make a man healthy, wealthy and wise. So healthy habits leads to good health.

7. Knowledge of human body: Knowledge of human body is essential for maintaining good health. Unless one knows the parts of the body and its function it is difficult to keep the body in order. For maintenance of good health every parts of a body needs proper attention by the person.

8. Mid-day meal: Mid-day meal not only lessen the school dropout but also if give nutritional food to the children .In form of mid day meal children can able to grow in a regulatory manner .Mid-day meal scheme enhance the health condition of the students.

9. Physical exercise: Physical exercise is essential for proper blood circulation in the body. By way of sweating wastage things came out from the body. Also regular exercises give energy to the body and maintain balance of the mental.

10. Periodic medical checkup: To maintain good health regular medical check up is highly essential. Because of the periodic check up we can know the health condition of self. Sometimes also he/she takes medicine if any deficiencies in the body.

11. Interest: Creation of interest among the children is the psychological principles. The pupil should be taught the interesting health topics. Simple health related slogan is not sufficient for the pupils. Rather they should felt themselves about the need of the good health. Health programme should be on 'felt needs' and it should be the pupils programme.

12. Participation: Participation includes active learning, group discussion, workshop, which provides opportunities for learning. Personal health and community health is interrelated so health education must include personal and social element. Live must and live best is the motto for health education.

13. Reinforcement: Repeating enforcement in certain interval brings good result to the children. Health instruction needs reinforcement.

14. Comprehension: One should know the level of understanding health education. So simple word should be used while teaching the children. There should not be barrier in practice certain health habits to impart rules. Therefore the teaching should be within the mental capacities of the children. It is better to teach them in local or co local language.

15. Learning by doing: It is an action process.

The Chinese proverb If I hear, I forget, if I see, I remember, if I do, I know. So health habits should be cultivated through practice and following action rules and principles.

16. Known to unknown: For imparting health education one should proceed from known to the unknown. One should start where the children are and proceed to new knowledge. New knowledge brings understanding which rise to an insight problems.

17. The Millennium Development Goals and education:

In September 2000, representative of 189 countries met at the Millennium Summit in New York, to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The goals in the area of development and poverty eradication are now widely referred to “Millennium Development Goals”. The MDGs place health at the heart of development and represent commitments by governments throughout the world to do more to reduce poverty and hunger and to tackle ill-health; gender inequality; lack of education; access to clean water; and environmental degradation. They are an integral part of the road map towards the implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration. Three of the 8 goals, 8 of the 18 targets are required to achieve them, and 18 of the 48 indicators of progress, are health related. They assist in the development of national policies focusing on poor, and help track the performance of health programmes and systems. Although, the MDGs do not cover the whole range of public health domains, a broad

interpretation of proven goals provides an opportunity to tackle important cross cutting issues and key constrains to health and development. Governments have set a date of 2015 by which they would meet the MDGs, i.e. eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and communicable diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development.

To attain health for all and to live a life free of health related problems the importance of health education can never be undermined if the nations want to create a better world to live in.

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