

Sanitation and Health

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Abstract

Improved sanitation generates both social and economic benefits. Householders understand these wider benefits, but scientists have only recently begun to study individual's motivations for improving sanitation and changing sanitation behaviour. Good health is a matter of great concern. To maintain healthy living a disciplined life is necessary. One of the best way to realize this objective is to drink plenty of water as it reduces the risk of infection, keeps your skin healthy, reduces the risk of heart attack, burns body fat and regulates our body temperature. A systematic sleep is also regarded essential as sleep it relaxes our body and reduces stress. Further, pursuing of a balanced diet and practicing of regular long, brisk walk will also help in maintaining a stable and good health. In this paper an attempt is made to describe the importance of sanitation, types, strategies and impact of sanitation health using secondary data drawn from books, journals, magazines, newspapers.

Keywords: Sanitation, health, water, balanced diet, health, social and economic benefits

Introduction

Cleanliness is next to godliness. Sanitation is the hygienic means of preventing human contact from the hazards of wastes to promote health. While the main goal of sanitation programme is to improve health; householders rarely adopt and use toilets for health-related reasons. Instead, the main motivations for sanitation adoption and use include the desire for privacy and to avoid embarrassment, wanting to be modern, the desire for convenience and to avoid the discomforts or dangers of the bush (e.g., snakes, pests, rain), and wanting social acceptance or status. Furthermore, for women, toilet facility at home protect them from practicing open defecation and sexual abuses from outside home. For girls students provision of toilet facility in schools or colleges facilitate them to attend the classes regularly and preventing them from staying at home during menstruation time. Apart from health, lack of toilets means that more than 1.1 billion women and girls globally get limited education and face harassment. In rural India high dropout rates and non-enrolment among can be attributed to absence of toilet facilities.¹In India, 23% of girls have listed menstruation as the chief reasons for dropping out of schools. As many as 28 % of them said they do not go to schools during their period because they lack clean and affordable protection.² While the economic benefits of improved sanitation include lower health costs, increased efficiency or productivity of human beings, fewer days lost at work or at school due to prolong illness and so on.

Types of Sanitation

Different types of sanitation facilities are available or provided by the government for its people to maintain good health and vigour. Some of important of them have been briefed below.

Basic sanitation - refers to the management of human faeces at the household level.

On-site sanitation - the collection and treatment of waste is done where it is deposited. Examples are the use of pit latrines, septic tanks, and Imhoff tanks.

Food sanitation - refers to the hygienic measures for ensuring food safety.

Environmental sanitation - the control of environmental factors that form links in disease transmission. Subsets of this category are solid waste management, water and wastewater treatment, industrial waste treatment and noise and pollution control.

Ecological sanitation - a concept and an approach of recycling to nature the nutrients from human and animal wastes.

Container-based sanitation -Container-based sanitation (CBS) refers to a sanitation system where human excreta is collected in sealable, removable containers (or cartridges) that are transported to treatment facilities.

Community-led total sanitation -Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) is an approach to achieve behaviour change in mainly rural people by a process of "triggering", leading to spontaneous and long-term abandonment of open defecation practices

Dry sanitation - It usually refers to a system that uses a type of dry toilet and no sewers to transport excreta.

Emergency sanitation -Emergency sanitation is required in situations including natural disasters and relief for refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Sustainable sanitation -Sustainable sanitation considers the entire "sanitation value chain", from the experience of the user, excreta and wastewater collection methods, transportation or conveyance of waste, treatment, and reuse or disposal.

Safely managed sanitation -This is basic sanitation service where in addition excreta are safely disposed of in situ or transported and treated offsite.

Strategies to Achieve Success in Sanitation

Sanitation is a complex topic, with links to health and to social and economic development. It affects many but is championed by few. From our experience or observation of the prevailing situation, we believe that there are a couple of major strategies could leads to achieve good and required sanitation facilities. Firstly, the most important of these strategies is political leadership, which is manifested by establishing clear institutional responsibility and specific budget lines for sanitation, and by ensuring that public sector agencies working in health, in water resources, and in utility services work together better. The regional sanitation

Conference declarations released during the International Year of Sanitation, in which many government ministers personally involved have been regarded an important step in this direction. In addition, the biennial global reports on sanitation and drinking water published by the World Health Organization and UNICEF contribute towards political leadership and aid effectiveness by publicising the sanitation work of both developing country governments and support agencies. Secondly, the strategy is the shift from centralised supply-led infrastructure provision to decentralised, people-centred demand creation coupled with support to service providers to meet that demand. This strategy is transforming sanitation from a minor grant-based development sector into a major area of human economic activity and inherently addresses the problem of affordability, since people install whatever sanitation systems they can afford and subsequently upgrade them as economic circumstances permit.

Reasons for the People Non- Utilizing the Facility of Toilets

In spite of the various efforts undertaken to provide toilet facilities by the government, voluntary organizations and so on, lakhs of people still all over the country still practice open defecation. As per the most recent Swachhata Report of the NSS office, in 2015, more than half of the rural population 52.1% of the country still defecate in open. This may be attributed to the following reasons.

- Poverty
- Ignorance
- Shortage of water
- Lack of education
- Lack of necessary support from the government
- Lack of space, lack of encouragement

- Inception of blind beliefs
- Inference of politics and improper maintenance and so on

The final strategy is the full involvement of the health sector in sanitation. The health sector has a powerful motivation for improving sanitation, and much strength to contribute to achieving this goal. The Declaration of Alma Ata in 1978 emphasised the importance of primary health care and included “an adequate supply of safe water and basic sanitation” as one of its eight key elements. Many years have passed since this Declaration, and the body of evidence about sanitation has increased substantially. The health sector now needs to reassert its commitment and leadership to help achieve a world in which everybody has access to adequate sanitation.

Health Impacts of Sanitation

Lack of sanitation is prone to various diseases like malaria, cough and cold, skin and eye infection, Cancer etc. Of human excreta, faeces are the most dangerous to health. One gram of fresh faeces from an infected person can contain around 10^6 viral pathogens, 10^6 – 10^8 bacterial pathogens, 10^4 protozoan cysts or oocysts, and 10 – 10^4 helminth eggs. This illustrates the importance of particular interventions, notably the safe disposal of faeces, in preventing disease transmission. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, targeting universal sanitation coverage, is unlikely to be effective unless it breaks the Gordian knot of complementarities and WASH quality holding up the burden of childhood diarrhoea.³

Bird's Eye View of Indian Sanitation Programmes

Since 1986, India has spent over 19,242 crores [₹] billion on constructing toilets across the country. The Indian government is now gearing up to spend an additional (₹31 billion) Rs.1.9 lakh crore over the next five years through the Swachh Bharat mission. The Swachh Bharat mission would place overwhelming emphasis on constructing toilets, with plans afoot to build over a 100 million of them in rural areas alone in the next five years. But if prior experience is anything to go by, many of them would either not be built or not used. Unofficial studies like the SQUAT survey, which was done in five northern States, show that in at least 40 per cent of households with a newly built toilet, a member of the family was still defecating in the open. Cultural conditions and tradition were some of the reasons for poor adoption, the survey found.

Health

Health, ‘A state of complete physical, mental, & social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.’ There is an old saying, ‘Health is Wealth’ Good health is a secret of every happy man. Staying healthy for children is vital for proper growth and development of mind and body as they need to focus in the class and fully participate in the activities on the field. Parents must take their children for medical check-up and learn from experts about their development in terms of height and weight, as it has a huge impact on their overall performance and efficiency. If you are strong and healthy, you can be a shining example to others and teach them how to achieve vibrant health.

Different Components of Health

There are basically five components of health. A person is considered to be healthy when all these are in check. Here is a look at these components:

1. Physical Health

Physical Health is being physically fit, devoid of any illness or disease. Good physical health promotes longer life span.

- Follow a proper diet plan that includes all the essential micronutrients
- Lower the consumption of oily, sugary and junk food
- Avoid smoking, drinking and taking drugs
- Take adequate sleep daily

- Exercise regularly
- Go for regular health check-up

2. Mental and Emotional Health

It includes the psychological and emotional wellbeing of a person. Our mental health basically impacts the way we feel, think and handle different situations. Keeping mental health in check is as important as keeping physical health intact.

- ✓ Take care of your physical health
- ✓ Value and respect yourself
- ✓ Surround yourself with good and positive people
- ✓ Meditate
- ✓ Indulge in Exercise, learn ways to deal with stress

Social Health

Social health is a person's ability to build and maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships with his/ her friends, neighbours, relatives and others in the society. It also refers to a person's ability to act appropriately and adapt to different social situations.

- Groom yourself
- Learn good communication skills to communicate effectively
- Be friendly and positive
- Learn the art of anger management
- Attend social gatherings
- Be a good listener

Cognitive Health

When a person's brain can perform all the mental processes efficiently he/ she is said to enjoy good cognitive health. The processes and activities involve learning new things, good judgement, efficient use of language to communicate your point and strong intuition.

- ❖ Eat healthy food
- ❖ Take 8 hours of sleep each day
- ❖ Have herbs such as Brahmi, Ashwagandha and Calamus to boost brain power
- ❖ Play brain games such as chess, Sudoku, word puzzles, etc
- ❖ Indulge in meaningful discussions
- ❖ Don't multitask
- ❖ Exercise

Spiritual Health

It is basically establishing a sense of connection with a person's inner self to understand the meaning of life. Keeping the spiritual health intact helps a person become more positive, patient and sorted in life.

- ✓ Take out time to sit in self-introspection for some time each day.
- ✓ Take a diary and pen down your thoughts if you can't concentrate while thinking
- ✓ Meditate & positive attitude
- ✓ Practice deep breathing
- ✓ Practice Yoga
- ✓ Pray

What is Cultural Health?

It is basically an education discipline that educates about the appropriate cultural information. It refers to intra or inter-cultural competence which is required to establish effective cross-cultural communication. This is divided into four categories:

National: It focuses on cultural literacy regarding values, principles and interests of the nation a person belongs to.

Medical: It focuses on the cultural competency of medical representatives and organizations.

Ethnic: It focuses on cultural literacy regarding values, principles and interests of the ethnic group a person belongs to.

Education: It focuses on the cultural literacy of the students and professionals. Many schools have started incorporating it in their curriculum.

Our motto should be to keep our body clean in order to remain healthy. We must laugh more as laughing is a therapy and a secret of good health. The government should include integrated health programs into their public policies and control specific health problems. It is also essential to surround oneself with people who bring in positivity and encourage you to bring out the best in you rather than pulling you down. Besides being socially active and maintaining good relations with people, it is also essential to look within. Squeeze in some time each day to sit all by yourself to understand your needs better and take your life in the right direction. This is a crucial step in keeping your overall health intact.

Conclusion

We live in a country where approximately 1.25 billion people reside. Such a high population brings a great need for managing human waste. Today, sanitation is a major challenge faced by not only India but also all over the world. Sanitation refers to the presence of resources and provisions for safe dumping of human waste and urine. According to official figure, more than 60 crore people have no sanitation facilities at home, and they either go out to the field or use dry latrine to relieve themselves. This is a very alarming statistic because improper sanitation not only risks the spread of contagious diseases but also the environment. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every one- citizens, institutions, governments & respective organizations for the maintenance and development of sanitation & health for the welfare of the society. Sanitation& health upholds the economic, social, cultural, &political status of the country and the world at large

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