



Holistic Health Prioritization in India: Journey from Ancient to Modern Period with Societal Impact

Suryasnata Panda

M.A in Sociology & UGC NET

Bikram Parida

M.A, M.Phil. & UGC NET-JRF, Lecturer and HOD Dept. of Sociology

Sarala Mahavidyalaya, Rahama, Jagatsinghpur, Odisha

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ABSTRACT

For the past several decades, the world has witnessed notable changes in human living. The ideological & cultural transformation have resonated across many sectors of Life: family pattern, dietary consumption, lifestyle, education, occupation & income. Good health is basis for societal growth, economic progress & human happiness & on the present world the health has been challenged frequently, we can't assign health & disease purely with natural causes, because health is so much influenced by socio-economic factors. As Thomcer says "Sociology of health as a branch of sociology is concerned with the social causes & consequences of health & illness. In India, the focus on holistic health is growing, by blending ancient practices with modern insights. This paper centers on elements of holistic health. Furthermore, the paper aims to give an explanation of holistic health prioritization in India from ancient to present era.

Introduction

If individuals are able to perform the activities with a good Living, a satisfying life & enjoyable Leisure time, then we can say they are healthy. world Health Organization (WHO) defined health as a state of Complete physical, mental & social well-being & not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.



The Preamble to the who affirms that it is one of the fundamental rights of every human being to enjoy the highest attainable level of health. Alma Ata Declaration of 1978 set the target of achieving the goal of health for all by 2000. The Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) have (2000-2015) have incorporated 5 out of & goals to health need of the population. As per Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [2015-2030] out of the 17 SDG 3 is for health & well-being but all are indirectly related to health for deprived population.

Holistic health is an approach to wellness that simultaneously address the physical, mental, emotional, Social & spiritual components of health.

Key components of holistic health

Physical: The Physical health of human must be in such a position that it must function well, remain free from diseases & continuously generate energy for productive work. Nutrition, sufficient amount of sleep, daily physical activity, regular physical checkups, avoidance of harmful substances like tobacco products are some of the effective ways to improve & maintain one's physical health.

Mental: Mental health doesn't simply refer to the absence of mental illness. Good mental health is that where a person is capable not only to manage his thought & feelings, but also to cope effectively with stress, strain & any changing situation. Meditation, breathing techniques help a lot on this case.

Emotional: Due to lack of emotional security both from family & friends some emotional trauma like depression, anxiety & even if suicide is seen among the people. proper education, positive thought, & some breathing techniques are mandatory to overcome these situations.

Spiritual: when one can find the meaning, purpose & goal of his/her life, connecting with something very large than oneself & engaging in spiritual practices we can say his/her spiritual health is good.

Social: Health & social conditions of life are reciprocal to each other. Status of health regulates the quality of life & the quality of life determines the health status. Social health is best understood by the level of healthy relationship with others & participation in social activities.

The combination of these determinants can lead to a greater sense of wellbeing & Individuals become more resilient to stress, diseases & many more challenges.



The Journey of holistic health in India:

Holistic health in India has evolved from ancient tradition rooted in Ayurveda, Yoga & Sidha medicine to modern health care systems that integrate traditional & contemporary medical practices. These approaches are focusing on the use of good food, herbs, essential oils as medicine, singing, dancing, movement, chanting, sound, vibration, prayer, meditation, therapeutic touch, reiki etc.

Holistic Health in Ancient Period:

- **Ayurveda** originated in andron more than 3000 years ago “Ayur” meaning life & “Veda” meaning knowledge. Ayurveda emphasizes to maintain a balance of 3 doshas (vata, pitta & kapha) to achieve optimal health. Comprises various therapies like usages of herbs & minerals, yoga, meditation, dietary guidelines & many more detoxification practices & most importantly it prioritizes the importance of Living in harmony with nature. These are written in Charak Samhita of “Charaka” (father of medicine) & Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta “Father of Surgery”.
- **Sidha medicine**, an ancient healing tradition on India originated in Tamilnadu & mostly it focuses on herbal, mineral, animal substances & oil massage therapy to combat diseases.
- **Yoga & meditation:** In the yogic lore, shiva is seen as the First Yogi/Adiyogi. It is also said that each aspect of yoga was put inside each of these Saptarishis/ seven sages by Lord shiva. With carrying the Yogic knowledges, they got spread to different parts of world including Asca yoga promotes holistic health by combining breathing techniques (pranayama), physical postures (asanas) & meditation. Patanjali’s yoga Sutras (200 BCP) Laid the foundation for physical & mental well-being.
- **Societal angle:** The concept of health in that period was based on community. Local Vaidyas had been treated individuals holistically & temple served as the area of healing by giving herbal medicines. That time in caste hierarchies only upper castes had better access to ayurvedic knowledge.

Holistic health in medieval period:

The Unani system of medicine was introduced in India by Arabs & Persians around the eleventh century. Like Ayurveda it prioritizes diet, lifestyle & natural remedies.

British colonization (1757-1957) led to the decline of Ayurveda & Unani system and western medicine took that place.



Societal angle: western medicine created social hierarchy, favoring the elite while ignoring the common. As traditional knowledge was depreciated but it served the Local communities.

Holistic health in post-independence to modern period Govt policies on holistic health:

- Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha & Homeopathy (AYUSH) were gradually recognized (1947-1980).
- National Health Policy emphasized the role of traditional medicine in 1983.
- Ministry of AYUSH was established to persist in local communities in 9th November, 2014 & this day is celebrated in India as the birth of Lord Dhanvantari.
- SOWA-REGPA (S-R) added in AYUSH in 2019
- International yoga day started in 21st June, 2014 as yoga aims to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practicing yoga.
- Fit India movement was launched in 29th August 2019 in India by Honorable prime minister to make Fitness a priority and to remain fit & healthy by including physical activities in daily lives. Shree Suparno Satpathy, a socio-political leader from the state of Odisha founded this in 1993.

Societal angle: Still in the phase of social stratification

Elites	Common People
Middle & upper classes embrace holistic health through wellness retreats, a visit to yoga center & organic diet. As there is rise of health consumerism, Yoga & Ayurveda become more accessible through Online platforms.	Common People are still not so much accessible to the integration of traditional & modern medicine.

Future Steps for proper inclusion of holistic health:

There must be a need for equitable access to holistic health care beyond caste, class, & gender. More research is required to integrate traditional medicine with modern science Holistic healthcare centers should be opened in every area to make people aware about the prevention & treatment of Lite style diseases.



Conclusion

The journey of holistic health in India from ancient to modern period is a shift from religious angle to modern integrative angle. A sociological vision emphasizes inclusivity, accessibility & sustainability ensuring that holistic healthcare benefits all sections of society. As India is in the path of integration of ancient wisdom & modern technical innovation, it can create a balanced overarching health care system.

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