Framework for Public Health Research and Addressing the Role of Law in Health Disparities

Samriddhi Kesharwani[1], Sumant Gidronia[2]

[1]*Assistant Professor, Department of Law, Kalinga University, Raipur, India*

[2]*Research Scholar, Department of Law, Kalinga University, Raipur, India*

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ABSTRACT

The Indian system of safeguarding an individual's health has a lengthy history. The commercialization of medications and the medical profession, along with the passage of time and advancements in science and technology, enhanced the duty of physicians and contributed to the daily rise in medical negligence lawsuits. The government has established a number of committees to examine public health-related issues, and these committees have produced a number of suggestions aimed at enhancing India's healthcare system. In India, the role that diverse organisations have played in promoting public participation in the participatory management of civil society in the health care system represents a paradigm shift. The world came to understand that one of every person's most basic necessities is their health. This suggested article makes the argument that laws can generally be used to address disparities in public health as well as the absence of appropriate legal guidelines for maintaining public health.

1. Introduction

The longest Constitution in the world, the ultimate law of our nation, is found in India, the largest democracy in the world. Aside from that, the Parliament has passed a number of laws to enhance everyone's living circumstances in one way or another, safeguarding and controlling everyone's health in the process [1]. Globalisation is the era in which we live, and it has been ongoing since the 1990s. Trade, cooperation, and amicable ties have increased as a result of the development of international cooperation. During this time, there is a lot of information and communication sharing opening up new avenues for improving living conditions. Nonetheless, there are crises in India's health system [2]. Primary health care clinics, government hospitals, and public health facilities are being neglected, and environmental contamination is getting worse. The average person's living and service situations are being negatively impacted by the rising rates of poverty and unemployment. The price of medications is rising daily. Drug marketing that isn't legal is the norm. Because of the State's negligence, the underprivileged groups in society lack access to adequate, higher-quality healthcare services. The private hospitals that are thriving are out of reach for the large segment of the populace that is marginalised, and the government hospitals are being ignored. The esteemed medical field is becoming more commercialised, and doctors pay little attention to medical ethics, which are set forth by the Medical Council of India. In addition to being careless about the health of the great majority of the urban poor classes, doctors are keen to practise only in urban regions [3]. Examining the sorry state of affairs in the health sector today, it is simple to conclude that the State's regulatory framework has failed, thereby compromising everyone's right to health [6]. The Indian Constitution and numerous other laws have worked hard to safeguard the public's health and, in doing so, to uphold their right to health [17]. However, sufficient progress could not be made in the health sector in view of lack of seriousness in implementing the provisions of law by the States in the post - independent era [4]. In this case, the introduction is examined in section 1 of the article while the pertinent literature is

examined in section 2. Section 3 explains the goal of the work, Section 4 shows the discussion of the work, and Section 5 concludes the project.

2. Literature Review

Since 1600, as the company's commerce expanded, the number of British doctors has grown. However, there was no official medical establishment prior to the Bengal Medical Service's founding in 1763 [16]. The Bengal Medical Service established clear guidelines for advancement within the service as well as grades or levels. Similar medical services were quickly established in the other two Madras and Bombay presidencies [12]. The military medical service in India grew as a result of the growth of medical services and the establishment of medical boards in each presidency in 1775 to oversee European hospitals. The eighteenth-century battles brought attention to the need for support in European hospitals throughout India. Indians and occasionally European soldiers were employed by the Company from its inception as compounders, dressers, and apothecaries [5]. These helpers were formed into a Military Subordinate Medical Service (SMS) in Bengal in the 1760s, and like actions were done in the other presidencies in the early nineteenth century. In 1848, the SMS had 20 to 40 individuals each presidency; by 1914, however, the number of members had increased to almost 500 across India. The British army's domestic death rate was higher than that of the civilian population in 1857, according to a commission report.

A similar commission was established to look into the health of the Indian army two years after the mutiny. The ravages of epidemic sickness, especially cholera, which had also cost many lives among European residents at Lucknow and other north Indian towns, had significantly hindered the efficacy of British forces during the revolt [13]. Medical personnel observed that the Board of Directors of the East Indian Company was now showing concern for the soldiers' health, something that had been lacking for years. Nonetheless, the British government believed that it would be better to address the issues with military hygiene in India rather than trying to improve the Company. The Military Cantonments Act, 1864, established a system of sanitary police overseen by military medical officials and a death registry systems in an attempt to manage hygiene within military posts. The Act's provisions, which addressed both the European and Indian populations residing in cantonments, demonstrated the emerging belief that the health of Europeans could not be seen in a vacuum [8]. The registration of births and deaths was the cornerstone of the sanitary arch, as one health official put it [7]. The purpose of this plan was to serve as the foundation for an annual compilation of the essential data for the Indian civilian population, also known as the "general population" in official reports.

Role Of Law In Addressing Health Disparities

Health development is not a piecemeal process; rather, it is an essential part of life, encompassing the general expansion and evolution of various socio-cultural, economic, educational, political, and environmental elements. India had no official health strategy until 1983. All fundamental rights, with the exception of health, are mentioned in the Indian National Congress' 1931 resolution on fundamental rights. But the Sokhey Committee brought up the health issue for the first time, recommending a centralised authority to care for mothers and children, the necessity of the bare minimum of infrastructure, and the need to train paramedics and conventional nurses to provide natal, antenatal, and postnatal care. The goal of the Indian Constitution's adoption was to create a society in which every citizen would have unrestricted access to equality, justice, freedom, and dignity. The main goal is to promote public health, which can only be achieved by carefully planning and implementing the framework and policies under the guidance of professionals. Due to a multitude of flaws, the government's numerous initiatives and policies have failed to defend citizens' rights to health. [14].

Law of National Heath Policy

In 1983, the official National Health Policy was developed for the first time. The Indian government chose to create a formal National Health Policy (NHP) in response to the Alma Ata Declaration's commitment to achieving "Health for all by the year 2000" and the recommendations of the joint panel

report from the ICMR and ICSSR. It was believed that in order to meet the real needs of the populace, particularly the most vulnerable groups, through the establishment of an effective and efficient health care system, a comprehensive and integrated approach was required for the future development of medical education and training, research, and health services. The National Health Policy (NHP) aimed to establish a robust and stable primary health care infrastructure, with the ultimate goal of achieving health for all by the year 2000. To achieve this, the policy also called for the provision of universal, comprehensive primary health care, close coordination between health-related services and activities like nutrition, drinking water supply, and sanitation, active involvement and participation of voluntary organisations and the community, the provision of essential drugs and vaccines, qualitative improvements in health and family planning services, and medical research focused on issues facing everyday people. The National Health Policy of 1983 reaffirmed the decision to provide health services to individuals at their doorstep, but it did not provide access to those services.

The target of having one primary health centre for every 30,000 people and one subcenter for every 5000 people in the plains and one primary health centre for every 20,000 people and one subcenter for every 3000 people in tribal and hilly areas was to be achieved in the Sixth and Seventh Five Year Plans. The goal of immunising every eligible kid and expecting woman by 1990 was likewise prioritised. During the Seventh Plan period, special programmes were created for safe motherhood, reproductive and child health, and maternal and child survival. A few accomplishments have also been made in the areas of medical education, research, and service delivery, particularly at Primary Health Centres. During the Eighth Year Plan, the number of Primary Health Centres (PHC) rose from 20,719 to 21,854 and the number of Sub-Centers climbed from 1, 31,469 to 1, 33,730 [9].

The enactment of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 was intended to reconstitute the Medical Council of India and facilitate the upkeep of an Indian medical record, among other related things. The Indian Medicine Central Council Act of 1970 established minimal requirements for training in and use of the Ayurvedic, Siddha, and Unani medical systems. Dental education, ethics, and the profession are governed by the Dentist Act of 1948. The Dental Council of India, established by this Act, has the authority to recommend to the Government of India that permission be granted for the establishment of a dental college, an increase in the number of seats in existing colleges, or the introduction of higher courses therein. Similarly, The Pharmacy Act, 1948 was passed to set minimum requirements for schooling and exams, among other things, and to regulate the practice of pharmacy in India. To control pharmacy programmes, the Central Government will need to establish a Central Council.

Importance of Rights to health

The realisation of the rights to food, housing, employment, education, equality, nondiscrimination, and the proscription of cruel treatment, as well as the preservation of human dignity, are all intimately related to the right to health. It is closely related to the freedoms of association, assembly, and mobility, as well as the rights to privacy and family life, information access, and all three. The full enjoyment of the right to health, as protected by Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, may be adversely affected by a number of internal or external causes. Unhealthy living conditions are the direct cause and effect of illness. The primary causes of illness include a contaminated and unhealthy environment, contaminated drinking water, and malnutrition. Dangerous working circumstances also contribute to poor health.

Particular segments of the populace, such as incarcerated individuals, members of ethnic minorities and indigenous communities, the elderly and disabled, those seeking asylum, refugees, and migrant workers, are more vulnerable than the general population. For instance, discrimination and gender inequality are the key reasons why women and girls frequently do not have appropriate access to health care. The ability to enjoy one's right to health is frequently impacted by a lack of financial resources on the part of the State, of individuals, or of both. Discrimination within a state, especially between urban and rural areas, has an impact on health as well.

Diseases caused by nature or human activity may also impact one's right to health. The right to health

may also be negatively impacted by financial or trade agreements. Therefore, removing obstacles that prevent a person from fully exercising their right to health is not just the obligation of a State but also of third parties [15]. Poverty is the main barrier preventing people from fully enjoying their right to the best possible level of health, even if various national and international circumstances may also interfere with this right. Economic and social rights, including the rights to food, safe water, clothing, health care, and suitable shelter, are denied by poverty. It also encourages harmful ways of living, like drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution, and homelessness. Poverty is a global issue that affects all nations to varied degrees; it is not limited to emerging nations. Poverty affects specific segments of the populace in numerous developed nations. The living conditions of indigenous inhabitants, migrant workers, and members of ethnic minority groups are appalling [18]. Individuals residing in impoverished areas and transitory communities lack enough infrastructure. Compared to men, women are more likely to live in poverty and usually are the only ones responsible for raising their children [10].

Role of Right to Health Development

The connection between human rights and health is becoming more widely acknowledged these days. Health policies, programmes, and practices are closely related to the exercise of human rights. It is acknowledged that safeguarding human rights is essential to preserving public health. These connections are clear, but both are potent, contemporary methods for identifying and improving human well-being. Considering the relationship between health and human rights can be beneficial for individuals working in the fields of health and human rights, as it can help reframe key global health issues and expand the scope of human rights theory and practice. The utilisation of a range of services and environments that the State is obligated to provide as essential for achieving and preserving good health should be interpreted as part of the right to health. Everyone agrees that good health is necessary to enhance human conditions [11]. A healthy body and mind are not only personal concerns; they also affect the community as a whole since sustained scientific, technical, and economic advancement cannot occur in the absence of a healthy populace. One of the economic, social, and cultural human rights—the right to health—requires positive, affirmative action by the state in order to improve people's circumstances, as opposed to merely placing restrictions on government. Numerous social, political, economic, and cultural elements are necessary for a healthy life and should be guaranteed by the state. These elements include preventing prejudice, giving people access to a means of bringing about social change, and ensuring that they have access to enough nutrient-dense food, clean air and water, sanitary conditions, and a sufficient means of subsistence. These elements not only make up the human right to health, but they also impact each person's particular state of health. Moreover, there is a close relationship between development and health.

Globalisation, privatisation, and liberalisation processes have been included into the free market economic frameworks of many nations during the past few decades. It is true that globalisation presents significant obstacles in addition to opportunities. Over the previous fifty-eight years, there has been a tremendous improvement in health, with life expectancy rising to almost 72 years and infant mortality falling by over half over that time. Life expectancy has increased from 45 to 62 years, and child mortality has decreased from 1960 to the end of the 1990s, indicating further improvements in the health situation of emerging nations. The Consumer Protection Act only recently expanded to include private practitioners, a move that was strongly opposed by the medical community. The antiquated and insufficient restrictions that now exist are not being put into practice. Since the private sector is being urged to actively participate in practically every area of the economy, its significance has increased. Public health services are now extremely difficult to get, particularly in the nation's rural parts.

3. Conclusion and future scope

History will show that science played a major role in the development of the medical system. As British authority over India began, so did public awareness of the right to health. In response to these worries, a public health system developed, initially mostly inside military cantonments but eventually spreading outside of them. However, logistical challenges, financial constraints, resistance from Indian elites and

British humanitarians, and the military's and some IMS officers' strong desire to sterilise the Indian populace all served to restrain this goal. Public health initiatives like smallpox vaccinations and death registrations, despite the mission's general failure, offered a way to know the population, although an imprecise one. Although the inadequacies of the vaccination establishment and ongoing scepticism of the measure ensured a constant stream of infection, particularly in rural areas, the expansion of smallpox vaccination in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was also starting to affect a reduction in mortality from the disease in some areas of India.

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