

Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

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Unit:01 Health and Society

Module Name: Meaning and Definition of Health

Module No:01

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Notes:

Meaning

Health is a common theme in most culture. In fact, all communities have their own concepts of health and diseases. Health is basic to socio-economic development of a country. Concept of health attains different meaning in different set-up. *It is not* perceived in the same way by doctors, social scientists, health officials etc. Change is a continuous process and it has its impact on all spheres of the life.

Therefore, the meaning and concept of health also varies with the time and space(Agrawal, 2015). For example: Two individual can have same state of health, but in one culture he can be considered healthy while in other culture he may have to adopt the sick role. In early times health was taken as state of body fitness and ability to perform functions in absence of the disease.

Traditionally, health was viewed as absence of disease and if one was free from disease the person was considered healthy. Health in humans, is the general condition of a person in mind, body and spirit, being free from illness, injury or pain. Now the concept of health aims to achieve improved quality of invaluable human resources and its regular enhancement.

More emphasis is given on holistic concept of health and it goes beyond physical considerations. Health is not limited to the person as an individual, but is also expressed in the person's relationship with the surrounding world. All sectors of society have an effect on health i.e industry, education, housing, public, society and other sectors

Definition of Health

Talcott Parsons(1971) definition "*the state of optimum capacity of an individual for the effective performance of the roles and tasks for which he/she has been socialized.*" WHO Definition(1946): "*Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity*".

Dimensions of Health

WHO definition envisages three (3) specific dimensions:

1. Physical Health

- Implies perfect functioning of the body.
- Energetic, has good posture, weighs normal for age and height, gets sound sleep, good appetite, bright eyes, clean breath etc.
- Has all body organs functioning normally.
- Looks alert and responsive

2. Mental Health

- A state of balance between the individual and the surrounding world.
- Not mere absence of mental illness.
- One who is free from internal conflicts.
- Has control on emotions.
- Confidence in one's own abilities
- If he or she is relaxed and free from any worries.

3. Social Health

- It implies harmony and integration with the individual, other members of the society, between individuals and the world in which they live.
- Has pleasant manners, fulfills responsibility towards others.
- Helps others, gets along well with people around.
- A person is socially healthy if he or she can move in the society confidently with others.

Non- Medical dimensions can be included are:

- Spiritual – a sound mind in a sound body
- Emotional- when he/she does not lose temper or does not develop tension, has a self control.
- Vocational- Capable of earning sufficiently to lead the life successfully. For some this dimension may merely be a source of income but for others it may be source of self worth and life success.