

Importance of Tackling Inequities in Healthcare in India

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India is a country of heterogeneity, from northern most mountains to southern most coasts, from rain drenched east to drought stricken west, from modern civilization of cities to feudal communities of villages to pre-historic tribes – one can find all kind of communities in India. Within the same community lie various differences like different socio-economic strata, unmatched income, varied beliefs and characteristic practices. Even within the same family there is difference in decision-making power, education, dominance, need and demand. All these differences lead to inequalities of utilization of healthcare services. These inequalities can be easily termed as inequities as they are unfair and remediable.

For a country to be healthy, all its parts should be healthy. Equity should be imparted at the cost of equality. The disadvantaged people should be given more importance and efforts should be made to bring them at the same podium as others if not higher. All should have access to healthcare so that the healthcare services are utilized efficiently. Let us understand why is it so important to bring equity to the limelight:

❖ *Human right* - right to health is an important human right and everyone has the right to lead a healthful and productive life. Hence, the supply side has to make efforts so that the ones that are deprived of healthcare should receive it and that too in time.

❖ *Health for All* - WHO has declared “health for all” in 2000 and we are far from achieving it. The main reason is the exceptional level of healthcare inequity that is there in our country.

❖ *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* - we are yet to achieve our targets and goal of MDG and we will not be able to achieve them without imparting equity in healthcare. The high MMR and IMR (212 & 40 respectively) can come down only when access to services is improved. Similarly,

the incidence of communicable diseases like AIDS, TB and malaria can be reduced by letting healthcare reach the ones who are affected the most.

❖ *Strengthen the economy* - it is a vicious cycle as health leads to wealth and vice versa. So to improve the economy we need to improve the health and for that we need to take care of the disparities in healthcare.

❖ *Control the upsurge of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs)* - earlier NCDs were said to be affecting the rich economies but now the picture has changed. India currently is facing the dual problem of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Studies have shown that the prevalence of NCDs is high even in urban slums. Hence, it is important that this section also has access to healthcare so that India is saved from being the world capital of NCDs.

Hence, for a developing economy like India, it is important to address the existing inequities in healthcare so that deteriorating health of the population does not come in the way of the economical expanse.

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