

Unit II: Components or Traits of Public Health Sociology and Public Health Theme

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Public Health Sociology

- Public health sociology is an interdisciplinary field that examines how social structures, institutions, relationships, and cultural norms influence health outcomes, health behaviors, and public health policies.
- It combines principles from sociology and public health to understand how societal conditions impact disease distribution, healthcare access, and health behaviors.

Components or traits of public health sociology and public health themes

- (a) Social stratification
- (b) Ethnicity and caste system
- (c) Family and kinship
- (d) Peer groups
- (e) Community dynamics
- (f) Social organizations
- (g) Social control

Social stratification

- Social stratification is horizontal division of society into “Higher” and “Lower” social units.
- Social stratification is the division of society into permanent groups or categories linked with each other by the relationship of superiority and demotion.

Origin of social stratification

- Hunting and gathering societies
- Horticultural and agricultural societies
- Division of labor and job specialization
- Industrialized societies
- The improvement of working conditions

Causes of social stratification

- Inequality
- Conflict
- Power
- Wealth
- instability

Forms of social stratification

- Property wealth and income:- Rich class and poor.
- Birth/Caste :- Brahman, Chhetri, Vaishya and Sudra
- Religion:- Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim etc.
- Education:- Educated and uneducated
- Intelligence:- Gifted and slow.
- Race :- White and Black
- Political right:- Leader and Governed.
- Nature of Occupation:- Agriculturist, Industrialist etc.
- Language: Between the languages

Characteristics of social stratification

- Social stratification is universal
- Stratification is social
- It is in diverse forms
- Social stratification is consequential
- **It is ancient:** The stratification system is quite old. According to historical and archeological records, stratification was present even in the small rootless groups. Difference between rich and poor, powerful and humble, freemen and slaves was there in almost all the ancient civilizations.

Social stratification

Positive aspects

- Educated people are aware about health education intervention program
- Higher classes focus on dietary pattern to keep themselves healthy
- Higher class children intake a greater amount of micro nutrient
- Higher classes people have good living standard Higher caste such as Brahmins and chettris do don't use alcohol because of their religious and cultural barrier

Negative aspects

- Uneducated people are not aware about health education intervention program
- Lower class people are vulnerable group nutritionally.
- Lower class children consumed less break fast and micronutrient.
- Lower classes people have low living standard
- Lower caste people have culture to drink the alcohol which affect the health

Social stratification

Positive aspects

- Higher classes people provide good health care service during the pregnancy
- Higher classes people have good awareness level for using the family planning devices so they have small and happy family

Negative aspects

- Lower classes people cannot provide the good health service due to poverty and expensive health service
- Lower classes people don't have the awareness of using family planning due to which they have bigger family.

Bodily Movement

- The control of a body is a universal fact of human life, no two bodies are identical, some bodily differences between people tend to be treated as insignificant, while others become the basis for social inequalities.

The environment

- The urban built environment can also affect socioeconomic inequalities and have serious consequences on health.
- A locality's economic status affects physical features, resources and the socio-cultural environment.
- The wealth or poverty of an urban area influences the availability of public services, housing conditions, pollution levels, crime rates and the quality of private sector enterprises in terms of the goods and services provided

Ethnicity and caste system

Ethnicity:

- Ethnicity refers to a group of people who share common cultural characteristics such as language, religion, traditions, ancestry, and historical identity.
- ethnicity is a group with common culture tradition and sense of identity
- So, ethnicity is a kind of feeling with common characteristics and background.
- It is also a kind of awareness and acceptance of being in a group.

Characteristics of ethnicity

- Own language, religion, tradition, culture and civilization
- Own social, economic and cultural structure.
- Same socio cultural background
- **Geographical Concentration:** Ethnic groups often reside in specific regions or communities.
- **Social and Political Influence:** Ethnic identity can influence political movements, economic status, and social interactions.

Caste

- The caste system is a social hierarchy in which society is divided into groups. These groups determine what labor you can do and your level of spiritual purity.
- It is most commonly associated with South Asia, particularly Hindu society in India and Nepal.
- Caste is closely connected with the Hindu philosophy and religion, custom and tradition
- Caste is a closed group- D.N. Mazumdar and T.N. Madan

Caste Divisions

1. Brahmin:

2. Chettry



3. Vaishya: these are the traders and people involved in agricultural production



4. Sudras: these are the farmers and common folk who make up the laborers and servants for the other castes.



Characteristics of caste

- **Hereditary Nature:** Caste is determined by birth and remains fixed throughout life.
- **Food habits:** a Brahmin is not permitted to eat non-vegetarian food
- **Caste is endogamous:** practice of marrying a specific ethnic groups, class or social group
- **Hierarchical social structure:** at the lowest are those castes from whom the higher castes cannot accept and food or drink, not even they may be touched without contamination, hence their hierarchy the Brahmins enjoy a number of social and religious freedoms while they suffer a series of disabilities.

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- **Occupation-Based:** Traditional caste systems assigned professions to different castes.

Ethnicity & caste system in relation to positive & negative aspect of public health themes.

Positive aspects	Negative aspects
• 1. Brahmin, Chhetri, Janajati (Newar, Gurung) have high rate of education on early initiation of breastfeeding and weaning practices • Brahmin people avoid alcohol consumption which is good for pregnant women. • Utilization of health services by higher caste, Brahmins / Chhetri's is high.	• Dalits have lower rate of education on those intervention programmes. • Brahmin people avoid meat, onion etc which may cause lack of necessary nutritious to pregnant women. • Culture and language become the barrier for the public health services utilization

Family

- The family is the most important primary group in society. it is the simplest and the most elementary form of society. it is the most basic of all social groupings. It is the first and the most immediate social environment to which a child is exposed.
- Acc.to Eliot and Merrill: Family is “the biological social unit composed of husband , wife and children.”
- It is simplest and elementary form of society.
- It is first and most immediate social environment to which a child is exposed

Characteristics of family

- **A mating relationship** : a family comes into existence when a man and woman establish mating relation between them.
- **Selection of mates**: wife or husband may be selected by parents or by elders, or the choice may be left to the wishes of individual concerned.
- **A form of marriage**: the mating relationship is established through the institution of marriage.
- **A system of nomenclature**: every family is known or recognized by distinctive name.
- **A way of tracking a descent (वंश)**: Descent refers to the social recognition of biological relationship between individual.
- **A common residence**: a family requires a home or household to live in.
- **An economic provision**: family provides for the satisfaction of economic needs of its members

factors for Changing family pattern

- Modernization
- Rise in literacy rate
- Westernization
- Urbanization
- Size (nuclear/joint family)

Kinship

- Kinship is one of the basic social institution, which is universal.
- It plays an important role in the socialization and the maintenance of groups solidarity.
- kinship is very much important in traditional societies especially in a country like nepal where the political system and politics has been determine by kinship.

Eg.koirala family in nepali politics

gandi family in indian politics

Contd..

- Either by blood relationship or marriage, kinship is important in everywhere.
- **Acc . to Aberchrombie and others:** “the social relationship deriving from blood ties (real and supposed) and marriage are collectively reffered to as kinship.”
- So kinship is the bond of blood or marriage which binds people together in group.

Characteristics of kinship

- **Biological and Social Basis:** Kinship is based on both biological ties (e.g., parent-child relationships) and social recognition (e.g., marriage and adoption).
- **Universal Presence:** Every society, regardless of culture or geography, has some form of kinship system that structures relationships and social responsibilities.
- **Types of Kinship:** Kinship can be categorized into consanguineal (blood relations), affinal (relations by marriage), and fictive (socially recognized relations like godparents or adopted children).
- **Marriage and Family Structure:** Kinship dictates acceptable marriage partners, family responsibilities, and living arrangements, influencing social stability.
- **Economic and Political Influence:** In many traditional societies, kinship determines land ownership, political leadership, and resource distribution.

Family & kinship in relation to positive & negative aspects of public health

Positive aspects	Negative aspects
• Communicable disease are prevented by the family • Pregnant women can get more care and emotional support in joint family • Proper physical, emotional and financial support by family members	• Low class family is mostly infected by communicable disease • Pregnant women may not get sufficient emotional support in nuclear family • Giving child birth at early age due to force of in laws and family

Family & kinship in relation to positive & negative aspects of public health

Positive aspects

- Nuclear family can provide more health care facilities and it is easy to afford
- Mostly the small and educated family vaccinate their children
- Small family can afford essential health services as needed

Negative aspects

- Joint family cannot afford easily
- In case of a larger family only a son is vaccinated
- Joint family cannot afford all the services and different traditions become the barrier to use public health services

Peer Group

- Peer groups, whose members have interests, social positions, and age in common, have an influence on the socialization of group members.
- Peer groups are groups of individuals who share similar characteristics, interests, or experiences. These groups influence each other's behaviors, decisions, and attitudes.
- Peer groups can form in various settings, such as schools, workplaces, social organizations, or communities.

Peer group

Terms

- **Peer groups:** a peer group is a social group whose members have interests, social positions and age in common.
- **Peer pressure:** peer pressure is the influence exerted by a peer group, encouraging individuals to change their attitudes, values or behaviors in order to conform to group norms.
- **Gender roles:** sets of social and behavioural norms that are generally considered appropriate for either a man or a women in a social or interpersonal relationship.

Types of Peer Groups

- **Formal Peer Groups :** Organized groups with defined structures, such as professional associations, academic groups, or workplace teams.
- **Informal Peer Groups :** Naturally formed groups based on friendships, shared interests, or common backgrounds.
- **Social Peer Groups:** Friends or acquaintances who interact regularly for social purposes.
- **Professional Peer Groups:** Colleagues or individuals in the same field who share knowledge and experiences.
- **Academic Peer Groups:** Students who study together, collaborate on projects, or engage in discussions.
- **Online Peer Groups:** Virtual communities or social media groups where people with common interests connect and share ideas.

Purpose of Peer Groups

- Satisfy certain belonging needs
- Often chosen to other socializing agents
- Influence social, cognitive and psychological development
- Influence development of morals and values
- Interaction provides instruction on acceptable behavior.
- Social Support – resources provided by others in times of need

Peer groups in relation to positive & negative aspects of public theme

Positive aspects

- Preparation of food at home
- Good peer groups having positive thinking about the environmental sanitation avoid air and water pollution
- Friends can suggest for positive health care for children
- Friends can provide education on intervention like : child spacing, breast feeding, safe motherhood , immunization, etc.

Negative Aspects

- Restaurants and fast foods
- Peer groups that smoke and gathering make air pollution and environmental pollution
- There may be some friends who suggests negative information that may leads to negative health.
- Some friends does want to upgrade the health status of their friends

Peer groups in relation to positive & negative aspects of public theme

Positive aspects	Negative Aspects
• Influence of peers for regular ANC, Institutional delivery, PNC visit and having nutritious feed • Sharing of information regarding health services and motivate to adopt healthy behaviours	• Influence of peers to involve in sexual relation which may cause early and unplanned pregnancy • Peers may pressure on engaging risk taking and unhealthy behaviours .

Community dynamics

- Community Dynamics is the process of change and development in communities of all living organisms—including plants, microorganisms, and small and large living being of every nature.
- The changes in the community brought about by social, cultural and environmental experiences whether it is positive or negative development that impacts within the community.
- Community dynamics shape the growth, stability, and transformation of a community.

Components of community dynamics

1. Social Structure

- The relationships, roles, and hierarchies within a community, Includes family systems, peer groups, and social organizations.

2. Cultural Factors

- Shared traditions, beliefs, values, and practices. Language, customs, festivals, and historical identity.

3. Economic Aspects

- Employment opportunities, local businesses, and financial stability. Resource distribution and economic development.

4. Demographic Changes

- Population growth, migration, and diversity in age, gender, and ethnicity. Affects housing, education, healthcare, and resource allocation. ⁷

5. Social Movements and Engagement:

- Community-led initiatives for social, political, or environmental change. Involvement in advocacy, protests, and development programs.

Community dynamics in relation to positive & negative aspects of public health

Positive Aspects

- Earlier crops and food grains were produced without using chemicals
- Development of community people use different water purification methods for drinking water
- In urban area, health education intervention programme are launched in high rate from which people are aware about the health education

Negative Aspects

- Nowadays chemicals, pesticides, etc are used for cultivation
- Air pollution increases. Destruction of water resources.
- In rural area, there is lower chances of launching health education intervention programme due lack of facilities like : transportation
- Increase in antibiotic drug resistant diseases

Community dynamics in relation to positive & negative aspects of public health

Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects
• The increased knowledge on diseases by the general population helped in early detection, treatment and compliance regimen. • Increase in rate of institutional delivery of child Urbanization increases the availability of Public health services	• Earlier there was high rate of home delivery of child. • Increases the demand of public health services as population increases

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

- Social organization is a state wherein various institutions in the society are functioning in accordance with their recognized or indirect purposes.
- Organization is the system of relationships between persons and among groups with the division of activity and with regard to the division of activity and the functional arrangement of mutual obligation within the society.
- Institutions, associations and groups are the various constituents of a social organization.

Definition

- According to Auguste Comte “social organization is general social agreement or social consensus”
- Organization refers to an aspect of interaction system
HM Johnson
- According to Herbert Spence “social organization refers to interactions of the economic, political and other division of society”

Characteristics of social organizations

1. **Specific purpose-oriented:** Every social organization is formed around a specific purpose. The main purpose of social organizations is to fulfill the specific needs of people.
2. **Interdependence and cooperation of members:** Social organizations succeed in fulfilling their objectives only through the interdependence and cooperation of the members participating in social organizations.
3. **Consensus:** The consensus of the members of the social organization creates an environment of cooperation.
4. **Means of social control:** Social organizations act as a means of social control. Every social organization has certain customs and rules. All these customs and rules are applied to the individuals of the society.

Characteristics of social organizations

1. **Specific methods of work:** Every social organization is run by specific methods of work. All the members of the organization and the common people achieve their objectives through specific methods.
2. **Difference in status:** There are different types of social organizations in society. But the status of social organizations varies in terms of scope of work, culture, type of work, etc.
3. **Types:** Social organizations are of two types in nature; namely - formal and informal social organizations. Social organizations that are not created with a general purpose; are created artificially with a specific purpose - are called formal social organizations. For example, schools.

Again, informal social organizations are those with general purposes and are created naturally. For example - friendship, general human relations of one person with another - etc.

Social organizations in relation to positive & negative aspects of public health

Positive Aspects

- Social organization includes gym, clubs, which relates to sports, yoga which leads to the active physical movements of the people
- INGOs , clubs , and other organizations launch programme related to health education intervention programme.

Negative Aspects

- Not only the active physical movement this may also results injuries, accidents, fractures
- Some organization does not launch programme from which people are not aware about the health education intervention

Social organizations in relation to positive & negative aspects of public health

Positive Aspects

- Community health workers and volunteers are said to effectively reach mothers, including those give birth at home and in the hardest to reach community
- Different types of social organization works to increase the use of public health services such as , Mother's Group ,Youth Club.

Negative Aspects

- They cannot reach at every area due to geographical situation of Nepal
- Corruption among the health institution

Social Control

- Social control refers to the control of society over the individual
- Some social control implies a system of device through which society control the activities of individual members
- According to Mannheim: “ social control as the sum of those methods by which a society tries to influence human behaviour to maintain a given order”
- The patterns of pressure which a society exerts to maintain order and established rules.

Ogburn and Nimkoff

Nature of social control

- Social control denotes some kind of influence
- It is essentially use by the society or community
- It is implemented for promoting the welfare of all the individuals or of the group as a whole
- The social control is as old as human society
- It is universal

Types of social control

1. Formal Control:

- Law, legislation, military force, police force, administrative devices, political, educational, economic (industry) etc...

1. Informal control:

- Public opinion, sympathy, sense of justice, norms, values, folkways, values, customs, religion, fashion etc..

Social control in relation to positive & negative aspects of public health

Positive aspects

- Social control includes rules , regulation and law. This may bring change in individuals attitude, beliefs, with the concept of healthy bodily movement of oneself.
- Some people have knowledge on law of safe abortion

Negative Aspects

- More control can leads to negative affect on attitude , beliefs.
- Some people follow traditional methods of abortion

Social control in relation to positive & negative aspects of public health

Positive aspects

- Different kinds of laws related to new born care is formulated
- Socialize the medicine completely and to give its citizen a constitutional right to all health services.

Negative Aspects

- Laws are not followed properly
- Islamic people have the different misconception regarding the family planning

