

# Concept about Health Beliefs and Practices

## Health

**h** **health**, in humans, the extent of an individual's continuing physical, emotional, mental, and social ability to cope with his or her environment.

This definition is just one of many that are possible. What constitutes "good" health in particular can vary widely. The rather fragile individual who stays "well" within the ordinary environment of his or her existence may succumb to a heart attack from heavy shoveling after a snowstorm; or a sea-level dweller may move to a new home in the mountains, where the atmosphere has a lower content of oxygen, and suffer from shortness of breath and anemia until his or her red blood cell count adjusts itself to the altitude. Thus, even by this definition, the conception of good health must involve some allowance for change in the environment.

Britannica Out

**Definition of Health:** The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a "state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1947).

### ❖ What are the values of health?

**Value of Health:** It is said "Health is wealth". If health is lost, everything is lost. If health is lost, the capacity to work is lost. Inability to work leads to poverty and misery. On the other hand, if we have health we are able to work and this, in turn, adds to our wealth. Therefore good health is one of the basic foundations on which our lives are built

For the common man, health is merely an absence of sickness and ailments. This view is narrow and one-sided. The term 'health' is much more comprehensive. Good health is the state of all-round physical, social and mental well being of a person, which enables him to live and work normally and to resist the negative impact of his environment.

The merits or the advantages of having good health can hardly be exaggerated. Good health is not only important but is also an essential ingredient for a happy life. A healthy person is able to work and live on his own.

He is not dependent on others. He is in a better position to relax and to enjoy the thrill of life. He is able to enjoy life in its varied forms. On the other hand, an unhealthy person finds it difficult to be happy and joyful.

## CONCEPT OF HEALTH

- An understanding of health is the basis of all the health care.
- Health is not perceived the same way by all the members of a community including various professional groups (like biomedical scientists, social scientists, health administrators, and ecologists) giving rise to confusion about the concept of health.
- Health has evolved over the centuries from the concept of individual concern to a worldwide social goal.
  - The various changing concepts of health as follows:

### 1. Biomedical concept

### 2. Ecological concept

### 3. Psychosocial concept

### 4. Holistic concept

#### 1. Biomedical concept

- Absence of disease
- Human body as a machine, disease as a consequence, of the breakdown of the machine and once of the doctor's task as repair of the machine

#### 2. Ecological concept

- The ecologists viewed health as a dynamic equilibrium between man his environment and disease a mal-adjustment of the human organism to environment.
- Health implies the relative absence of pain and discomfort and continuous adaption and adjustment to the environment to ensure optimal factors of the people
- The ecological concept raises two issues:
  - a) Imperfect man
  - b) Imperfect environment

#### 3. Psychological concept

Health is not only a biomedical phenomenon, but one which is influenced by social, psychological, cultural, economic & political factors of the people concerned.

##### a) Social factor:

- Poverty
- Illiteracy
- Habits and lifestyles (Smoking, Drugs, Multiple sex partners etc.)

##### b) Psychological factor:

- Anxiety
- Tension Emotional breakdown

#### 4. Holistic concept

- It is a synthesis model of all the above concepts.

- Strength of social, economic, political and environmental influences on health.
- An unfiled or multidimensional process involving well-being of the person in context at his environment.
- The holistic approach implies that all sectors of society have an effect on health.

*Reference-*

*-Parks Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*

## Health Belief Model

**Health:** A complete state of physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (WHO, 1948)

**Belief:** Something that is considered or accepted to be true. E.g. belief in God

**Model:** Model is a theoretical way of understanding concept idea.

**Purpose:** Models are representations that can aid in defining, analyzing, and communicating a set of concepts.

**The Health Belief Model (HBM)** is a psychological model that attempts to explain and predict health behavior by focusing on the attitudes and beliefs of individual

### Developed by

**The Health Belief Model (HBM) was developed in the 1950's by social psychologists Hochbaum, Rosenstock and others, who were working in the U.S. Public Health Service to explain the failure of people participating in programs to prevent and detect disease**

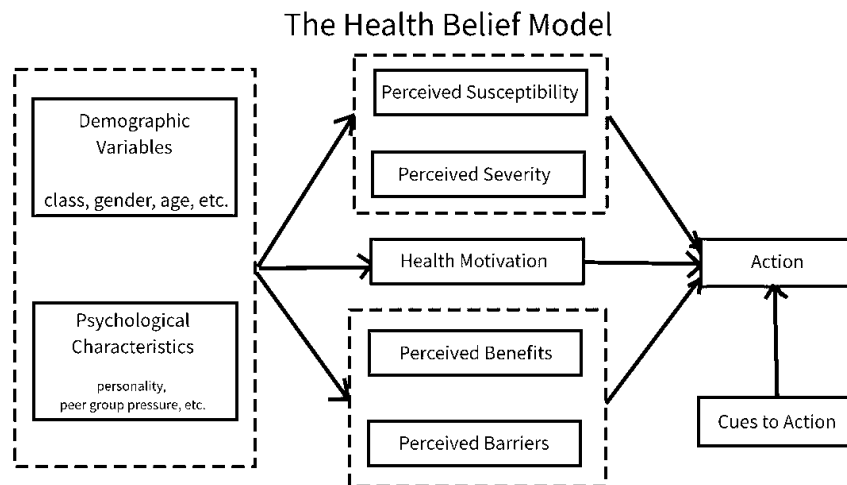
HBM claims that personal beliefs of the individual affect his health behaviors.

Their aim was to predict preventative health behaviors and the Behavioral response to treatment in acutely and chronically ill patients.

### **Premises of Health Belief Model:**

Individuals will take action to wards off, to screen for, or to control an ill health condition if:

1. They regard themselves as susceptible to the condition.
2. They believe it to have potentially serious consequences.
3. They believe a course of action can reduce the susceptible and seriousness.
4. They believe the cost of the action is outweighed by its benefits.



**COMPONENTS** The components of health belief model are as following:--

- 1. Perceived susceptibility to disease**
- 2. Perceived seriousness of disease**
- 3. Perceived benefits of action**
- 4. Perceived barriers**
- 5. Self efficacy**
- 6. Cues to action**

### **1. PERCEIVED SUSCEPTIBILITY TO DISEASE**

It is the belief that one either will or will not contract a disease. It ranges from being afraid of developing a disease to completely denying that certain behaviors may cause illness.

**For example;** one person who smokes may believe it can cause cancer and stop, another person believes it does not cause cancer and continues.



## 2. PERCEIVED SERIOUSNESS OF DISEASE

- It concerns the person's perception of the threat disease poses to health and its effects on person's lifestyle.
- Perceived seriousness depends on how much person knows about disease and can result in change in health behaviors.
  - If a person who smokes knows that lung cancer can cause Physical disability and death and therefore affect one's ability to work and care for the family, the person is more likely to stop smoking.



## 3. PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF ACTION

- It is person's beliefs about how effectively measures will prevent illness.
- It is influenced by patient's conviction that carrying out a recommended action will prevent or modify the Disease and by the person's perception of cost and unpleasant effects of performing the health behavior.

**For example:** the person may believe that stopping smoking will prevent future breathing problems and that the initial withdrawal symptoms can be overcome, the person may stop smoking.

#### 4. PERCIEVED BARRIERS

- It concerns that the new behavior will take too much time.  
Their beliefs can be actual or imagined.



#### 5. SELF EFFICACY

- It is the one's own belief in the ability to reach goals and complete tasks, is a strong influence on a person's choices particularly regarding health behaviors.



#### 6. CUES TO ACTION

- It refers to factors which cause you to change or want to change.
- Events or strategies that increase one's motivation.
- Factors that activate "readiness to change"

e.g.: a television ad or a reminder from one's physician to get a mammogram

- This model suggests that a cue, or trigger, is necessary for prompting engagement in health-promoting behaviors.
- **Internal cues** -Physiological cues (e.g., pain, symptoms)
- **External cues** - events or information from closers, the media, or health care providers.
- The intensity of cues needed to prompt action varies between individuals by perceived seriousness, benefits, and barriers. Susceptibility,

##### ❖ MODIFYING FACTORS

- 1. Demographic variables (age, gender) 2. Sociopsychological variables (personality and peer group pressure) 3. Structural variables (knowledge and prior contact with disease)
- 4. Others advice
- 5. Mass media campaigns 6. Literature
- 7. Illness of significant other

### ❖ **STRENGTHS**

- Can be used alone or conjunction with other models.
- Understanding what beliefs and attitudes motivates behaviors.
- Good for cessation and acquisitions of behavior
- Enhances self control.

### ❖ **WEAKNESS**

1. Not great for long-term behavior change.
2. Lacks predictive power
3. Difficult to be tested
4. Self-fulfilling prophecy.

## **Factors that influence health and illness relate to dimension**

The factors that influence health and illness related to the person in terms of the human dimensions are as follows:

1. Physical dimension,
2. Emotional dimension,
3. Spiritual dimension.
3. Environmental dimension,
5. Intellectual dimension,
6. Occupational dimension

### **The Six Dimensions of Wellness**

The Six Dimensions of Wellness Model was created by Dr. Bill Hettler, co-founder of the National Wellness Institute (NWI). This popular model is utilized by many wellness organizations to derive resources and services.

#### **1. Physical**

Physical wellness is met through the combination of exercise and good eating habits. It entails personal responsibility and care.

#### **Physical wellness follows these tenets:**

- It is better to consume foods and beverages that enhance good health rather than those which impair it.
- It is better to be physically fit than out of shape.

## **2. Emotional**

The emotional dimension recognizes awareness and acceptance of one's feelings. Emotional wellness includes the degree to which one feels positive and enthusiastic about one's self and life. It includes the capacity to manage one's feelings and related behaviors including the realistic assessment of one's limitations, development of autonomy, and ability to cope effectively with stress.

### **Emotional wellness follows these tenets:**

- It is better to be aware of and accept our feelings than to deny them.
- It is better to be optimistic in our approach to life than pessimistic.

## **3. Spiritual**

The spiritual dimension recognizes our search for meaning and purpose in human existence. It includes the development of a deep appreciation for the depth and expanse of life and natural forces that exist in the universe.

### **Spiritual wellness follows these tenets:**

- It is better to ponder the meaning of life for ourselves and to be tolerant of the beliefs of others than to close our minds and become intolerant.
- It is better to live each day in a way that is consistent with our values and beliefs than to do otherwise and feel untrue to ourselves.

## **4. Social**

The social dimension encourages contributing to one's environment and community. It emphasizes the interdependence between others and nature.

### **Social wellness follows these tenets:**

- It is better to contribute to the common welfare of our community than to think only of ourselves.
- It is better to live in harmony with others and our environment than to live in conflict with them.

## **5. Intellectual**

The intellectual dimension recognizes one's creative, stimulating mental activities. A well person expands his or her knowledge and skills while discovering the potential for sharing his or her gifts with others.

### **Intellectual wellness follows these tenets:**

- It is better to stretch and challenge our minds with intellectual and creative pursuits than to become self-satisfied and unproductive.
- It is better to identify potential problems and choose appropriate courses of action based on available information than to wait, worry, and contend with major concerns later.

## **6. Occupational**



The occupational dimension recognizes personal satisfaction and enrichment in one's life through work. At the center of occupational wellness is the premise that occupational development is related to one's attitude about one's work.

**Occupational wellness follows these tenets:**

- It is better to choose a career which is consistent with our personal values, interests, and beliefs than to select one that is unrewarding to us.
- It is better to develop functional, transferable skills through structured involvement opportunities than to remain inactive and uninvolved.



**Determinants of Health**

The factors which influence health lie both within the individual and externally in the society in which he or she lives. Are collectively known as determinants of health.

**Determinates / Factors of health**

1. Biological determinants
2. Behavioral and socio-cultural conditions
3. Environment
4. Socio-economic conditions
5. Health services
6. Aging of the population
7. Gender
8. Other factors.

**A. Biological determinants:** The physical and mental traits of every human being are to some extent determined by the nature of his genes at the time of conception.

**B. Behavioral and socio-cultural conditions:**

- a) The way people live,
- b) Cultural pattern.
- e) Personal habits.
- d) Life style.

**C. Environment:**

- a) Physical environment: Air pollution, water pollution, soil pollution. Food, excreta, refuses.
- b) Biological: I lumen being, plants, animal, micro-organisms, insects, housing.
- c) Psychosocial: Customers, occupation, religion, education.

**D. Socio-economic conditions:**

- a) Economic status.
- b) Education.
- c) Occupation.
- d) Political system.

**E. Health and family welfare services:**

- a) Immunization of children.
- b) Provision of safe water supply.
- c) Maternal and child health care.

**F. Gender: Women's health is an important issue for the society.**



## Indicators of Health

▪ **Specific Learning Objectives**

- At the end we shall be able to:
  - Describe Indicators of health
  - Compare health in Developed and Developing countries
  - Understand Health service philosophies

❖ **Indicators of Health**

1. Mortality indicators
2. Morbidity indicators
3. Disability rates
4. Nutritional status indicators
5. Health care delivery indicators

- 6. Utilization rates**
- 7. Indicators of social & mental health**
- 8. Environmental indicators**
- 9. Socio-economic indicators**
- 10. Healthy policy indicators**
- 11. Indicators of quality of life.**
- 12. Other indicators.**

### ❖ **Mortality Indicators**

**These includes: -**

- Crude Death Rate
- Expectation of Life
- Maternal Mortality Rate
- Infant Mortality Rate
- Child Mortality Rate
- Under 5 proportionate mortality rate
- Disease Specific Mortality
- Proportional Mortality Rate

### ❖ **Morbidity Indicators**

- Used to supplement mortality data.
- Morbidity rates used for assessing ill health in community are:
  - Incidence
  - Prevalence
  - Notification rate
  - Attendance rate at OPDs, health centers etc.
  - Admission, readmission and discharge rates
  - Spells of sickness.

### ❖ **Disability Rates**

- Based on premises or portion that health implies a full range of daily activities.
- Two groups:
  - **Event type indicators:**
    - Number of days of restricted activity
    - Bed disability days
    - Work-loss days within a specified period
  - **Person-type indicators:**
    - Limitation of mobility
    - Limitation of activity (ADL)
- Sullivan's Index
  - Expectation of life free of disability
- HALE (Health Adjusted Life Expectancy)

- The equivalent number of years in full health that a newborn can expect to live based on current rates of ill-health and mortality.
- DALY (Disability Adjusted Life Year)
  - Number of years lost due to ill-health, disability or ill- health.
- QALY (Quality adjusted life year)
  - Number of years of life that would be added by a medical intervention.

#### ❖ **Nutritional Status Indicators**

##### **It includes: -**

- Anthropometric measurement of pre- school children.
- Height of children at school entry.
- Prevalence of low birth weight.

#### ❖ **Health Care Delivery Indicators**

##### **It includes: -**

- Doctor: population ratio
- Doctor: nurse ratio
- Population: bed ratio

#### ❖ **Utilization Rate**

- Expressed as proportion of people in need of health care services who actually receive it in a given period.
- Proportion of infants who are fully immunized against the Seven EPI diseases.
- Percentage of population using the various methods of family planning.

#### ❖ **Indicators of Social & Mental Health**

- It includes indicators of social pathology:-
  - Suicide
  - Homicide
  - Other acts of violence
  - Other crime etc.
  - Alcohol and drug abuse, etc.

#### ❖ **Environmental Indicators**

- Reflects quality of physical & biological environment.
- Proportion of population having access to safe water
- Proportion of population having access to sanitation facilities
- Indicators relating to pollution of air and water, radiation, solid wastes, noise

#### ❖ **Socio Economic Indicators**

##### **It Includes: -**

- Rate of population decrease
- Per capita GNP
- Level of unemployment
- Dependency ratio etc.

#### ❖ **Health Policy Indicators**

- Important Indicator of political commitment
- “Allocation of adequate resources”

- Proportion of GNP spent upon health services
- Proportion of GNP spent upon health-related activities
- Proportion of total health resources devoted to primary health care.

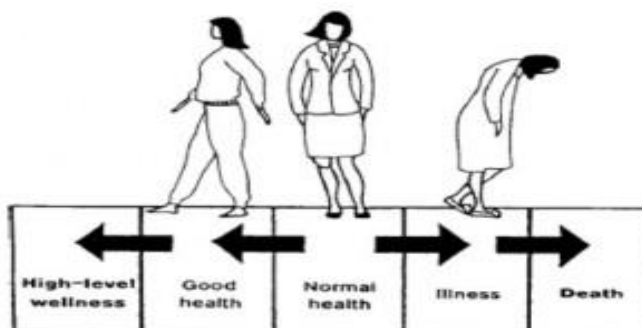
#### ❖ Other Indicators

##### It Includes: -

- Social Indicators
- Basic Need Indicators
- Health for All Indicators

## THE HEALTH-ILLNESS CONTINUUM

- The individual's state of health is one of continual change. He moves back and forth from health to illness and back to health again. His condition is rarely constant. He may wake up feeling great, develop a headache mid-morning, and feel fine again by noon.
- The health-illness continuum (see figure 1-1) illustrates this process of change, in which the individual experiences various states of health and illness (ranging from extremely good health to death) that fluctuate throughout his life.



**Figure: The health-illness continuum.**

- As we previously stated, health, just as life it is a process of continual change. And we must continually adapt to these changes in our lives in order to maintain good health and well-being. It is our adaptation or response to that change, rather than the change

itself, that affects our health



- **For example**, two students just found out about a big test tomorrow, for which they are completely unprepared. One student responds to this stressful situation (stressor) by going home, getting his books out, and starting to study. The other student breaks out into a sweat, and spends most of the evening fretting over this outrage and imagining what will happen to him if he doesn't pass the test. No doubt, this student is doing more damage to his health than is his friend. And, considering the time and energy he is expending on worrying (and not studying), he may experience even more stress when they receive their grades!
- Adaptation and effective functioning, even in the presence of chronic disease, can be considered a state of wellness. A person may be in perfect physical condition, but feel too tired and "blue" to go to work, while his co-worker, a diabetic, is at work, functioning fully and accomplishing his job.

**NOTE:** Death occurs when adaptation fails completely, and there is irreversible damage to the body.

#### ❖ What do you mean By Illness?

- An unhealthy condition of body or mind: sickness.

-Illness is a broad term that defines the poor state of mind, body, and, to a certain extent, spirit. It is the general feeling of being sick or unwell (outside the person's belief of good health).

**BELIEF**

❖ **What is belief?**

Beliefs are something that you accept or believe as true.

Or

A state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing

❖ **What is cultural practices?**

Objects, events, activities, social groupings and language that participants use, produce and reproduce in the context of making meaning in everyday life.

Cultural practice generally refers to the manifestation of a culture or sub-culture, especially in regard to the traditional and customary practices of a particular ethnic or another cultural group.

➤ **Example**

- Religious and spiritual practices.
- Medical treatment practices.
- Forms of artistic expression.
- Dietary preferences and culinary practices.
- Cultural institutions (see also Cultural Institutions Studies)
- Natural resource management.
- Housing and construction.
- Childcare practices.

## How Culture Influences Health

1. Culture is a pattern of ideas, customs and behaviors shared by a particular people or society. It is constantly evolving.
2. The speed of cultural evolution varies. It increases when a group migrates to and incorporates components of a new culture into their culture of origin.
3. Children often struggle with being ‘between cultures’– balancing the ‘old’ and the ‘new’. They essentially belong to both, whereas their parents often belong predominantly to the ‘old’ culture.
4. one way of thinking about cultures is whether they are primarily ‘collectivist’ or ‘individualist’. Knowing the difference can help health professionals with diagnosis and with tailoring a treatment plan that includes a larger or smaller group.
5. Cultural bias may result in very different health-related preferences and perceptions. Being aware of and negotiating such differences are skills known as ‘cultural competence’. This perspective allows care providers to ask about various beliefs or sources of care specifically, and to incorporate new awareness into diagnosis and treatment planning.
6. Demonstrating awareness of a patient’s culture can promote trust, better health care, lead to higher rates of acceptance of diagnoses and improve treatment adherence.

## **Cultural Practice/Beliefs Related to Health, Illness, and Care of Sick Person**

- Getting up early in the morning and taking bath.
- Early to bed and early to rise (in the morning).
- Drinking tulsi water every day will keep the body healthy.
- Drinking water stored in the copper vessels.
- By keeping jasmine flower, over the breast of the postnatal women will suppress the secretion of milk and consumption of garlic will produce more milk in lactating mother.
- Circumcision of the male child is a cultural trait commonly observed in Muslim families, is one way to prevent urinary tract infection.
- Occurrence of chicken pox, measles, mumps are due to the curse of the goddess and the affected child is bathed with neem leaves and taken to the place of worship and isolation will be followed.
- In a chicken pox affected chickens family keeping the neem leaves at the entrance, prevents the spreading of the disease to the neighbor hood.
- Giving iron object during convulsion period will reduce the intensity of fits.
- Eating papaya fruit during the first trimester and last trimester will induce abortion and premature delivery.
- After burn injury applying honey will induce better healing process.
- Pardha system by Muslim women still followed which causes vitamin D deficiency.
- Wearing gold ornaments below waist level in prohibited.
- Cleaning of the house, taking hygienic care and putting rangoli in front of the house. Offering pooja will give blessing for the entire family.
- Women should not lie in supine position while in the group.
- Mental illness can be treated by placing the client in the Masjid and specialized temples.
- Polygyny is accepted social phenomena in certain religion.
- Male child is preferred by the Hindu parents as they believe that the son will perform their last nights.

## **Cultural beliefs or practices related to Food & Nutrition**

- Periodic fasting will help in cleansing the GIT. (Weekly by Hindus, during the month of the Ramadan Muslims, following length days by Christian).
- Brshmins and vysyas will not consume garlic, onion and non- vegetarian foods.
- Avoiding cold food (butter- milk, curds, cucumber, guava fruits) item during common cold.
- In post-operative period, consumption of channa, dhal, and fatty foods to be avoided.



- Excess eating of mangoes will cause heat boils in the face and body.
- Pregnant women will eat mud/ash/chalk powder/lime powder as it enhances the normal development of the fetus.
- Beet root consumption enhances blood production in the body.
- Rich people consume more often, saturated food, which causes obesity.
- Alcoholism drug abuse is indications of rich class and complex society's culture.

### **Cultural beliefs and practices during pregnancy**

1. A woman and her partner chose not to share the news of her pregnancy immediately but waited until her pregnancy was 3 months along.
2. The expectant mother is encouraged by the family to seek early prenatal care.
3. Positive thinking, images, and music are encouraged during pregnancy for a healthy baby.
4. People in rural areas believe that if a pregnant mother eats more the baby in her womb will become big and it will make it difficult at the time of her delivery. (So they let the pregnant mother eat less food).
5. People of rural areas use **tabij or pani-pora** or they used to feed the pregnant mother roots of trees as a sacred culture to protect both the pregnant mother and child from the harm of black omen.
6. At the time of pregnancy forced the mother to sleep only on her left side.
7. They don't let the pregnant mother go outside of the home after the evening.
8. Pregnant women will eat mud/ash/chalk powder/lime powder as it enhances the normal development of the fetus.
9. It is prohibited in a time of pregnancy to eat twin bananas because she will deliver twin babies then.

### **Cultural beliefs / Practices during childbirth**

1. In the village pregnant mothers are unwilling to take modern treatment.
2. In villages Muslims families believe that if the delivery will be done by a male doctor then it will be a sin so they like to make the delivery at the home rather than a hospital.
3. When pregnant women feel **labour pain** (প্রেসব বেদনা) they took her to **atur ghor** (house).
4. They placed the placenta into the land because they believe that it will save the newborn baby from any kind of harm.
5. When it started labour pain of a pregnant mother in our rural area, uneducated midwives keep pregnant mother u-turn direction and give small punch to their buttock cause there is a superstition that it help deliver a child safely.
6. In village, they will not provide any food for the pregnant women from the start of labour pain till the baby is born.
7. In Hindu families of the village, they made the mother and the new born baby to stay nearly one month in atur ghor.

## **Cultural Beliefs and Local/Traditional Practice during Breast Feeding**

- One study of 120 cultures showed that 50 withheld the infant from the breast for 48 hours or more due to the belief that colostrums was "dirty", "old", or "not real milk".
- A mother who may be reluctant to give colostrums feeds in a western hospital may be passionately committed to exclusive breastfeeding later on.
- Women in Kenya who are strongly instructed to avoid breastfeeding after quarrels to prevent "bad blood" entering the milk and affecting baby. This may mean breastfeeding is paused or a mother's rights are infringed by family members or neighbors, yet she doesn't speak up for fear of conflict.
- Several cultures - traditional groups in Papua New Guinea and the Gogo tribe of Tanzania among them - emphasize the need for the woman to be celibate during breastfeeding. A mother may be torn between her desire to breastfeed in an environment when food after weaning may not be plentiful and her desire to satisfy her husband. A husband who is often not expected to also remain celibate.

## **Cultural Practices Which Have Beneficial Health Effects**

1. Getting up early in the morning and bathing.
2. **Drinking tulsī**, and water every morning.
3. Drinking water stored in an earthenware pot.
4. Early to bed, early rise.
5. Periodic fasting for cleaning the gastrointestinal (GI) tract.
6. During times of stress, the individual appeals to God to get moral support and protection.
7. Circumcision of Muslim male child reduces urinary tract infection.

### **Cultural change**

The term "cultural change" is used by sociologists and in public policy to denote the way society is changed. The society takes on new cultural traits, behavior patterns, and social norms, and creates new social structures as a result. This level of societal change occurs from contact with another society (for example, through war or mass migration), invention and diffusion of innovations (automobiles or a smart phone in every pocket?), and discovery.

## **Definition of Cultural Changes**

**According to Horton & Hunt:** "Changes in the culture of society is called cultural change.

**According to Kingsley Davis:** "Cultural changes encompasses occurring in any branch of culture including, art, science, technology, philosophy etc. as well as changes in the forms and rules of social organization."

**According to David Dressler and Donald Cams:** "It is the modification or discontinuance of existing 'tried' and 'tested' procedures transmitted to us from the culture of the past, as well as the introduction of new procedures."

## **Sources of Cultural Change**

- 1. Discovery:** Discovery is a new perception of an aspect of reality that already exists.
- 2. Invention:** Invention is the combination or new use of existing knowledge to produce something that did not exist before
- 3. Diffusion:** Diffusion is the spreading of cultural traits from group to another group.
- 4. Acculturation.**
- 5. Assimilation:** It is the process of combination of two cultures into one culture with comprising cultural traits.

## **Factors Causing Cultural Change**

### **➤ Factors of Cultural Change:**

**There are three main factors of cultural change:**

**(i) Contact:** The contact between two societies will obviously change the culture of both the societies through the process of "cultural diffusion" and "acculturation".

**(ii) Technology Evolution:** Any technological evolution in the country will bring a change their culture also. For example, changes in production technology, changes in the means of communication, changes in the means of transportation, etc.

**(iii) The geographical and ecological factor:** The geographical and ecological factor is a natural or a physical factor. The climate or rainfall, attitude of the place, closeness to the sea decides the culture and lifestyle of the people. Any change in the physical features will automatically lead to a change in their culture, habits and way of living.

# FOLK & TRADITIONAL HEALERS

## Folk

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**Definition:** A **folk healer** is an unlicensed person who practices the art of healing using traditional practices, herbal remedies and the power of suggestion.

The healer may be a highly trained person who pursues their specialties, learning by study, observation and imitation. In some cultures a healer might be considered to be a person who has inherited the "gift" of healing from his or her parent. The ability to set bones or the power to stop bleeding may be thought of as hereditary powers.

## Traditional Medicine

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Traditional medicine refers to health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plant, animal and mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises, applied singularly or in combination to treat, diagnose and prevent illnesses or maintain well-being.

**DEFINITION of Traditional Medicine:** WHO Traditional. medicine is defined as “the sum total of the knowledge, skill and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the. Maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical.

**Definition of FOLK:** Folk may be defined as the great proportion of the members of a people that determine the group character and that tends to preserve its characteristic from of civilization and its customs art and crafts legends traditions and superstitions from generation to generation

## Types of traditional healers in Bangladesh

There are four types of traditional healer in Bangladesh. **There are:**

**1. AYURVEDIC:** Ayurvedic medicine also known as **Ayurveda** is one of the world's oldest holistic (whole-body) healing systems; it was developed thousands of years ago in Bangladesh. It is based on the belief that health and wellness depend on a delicate balance between the mind, Body and spirit. The primary focus of Ayurvedic medicine is to promote good health, rather than fight disease. But treatments may be recommended for specific health problems.

**2. HOMEOPATHIC:** Homeopathy or homeopathic medicine is the practice or medicine that embraces a holistic, natural approach to the treatment of the sick). Homeopathy is holistic because it treats the person as a whole, rather than focusing on a diseased part or a labeled

sickness. Homeopathy is natural because its remedies are produced from natural sources, whether vegetable, mineral, or animal in nature.

**3. RELIGIOUS HEALER:** The Muslim religion in Bangladesh is mixed with a lot of pre-Islam folk traditions. Bangladeshis believe in shamanism and the poems of fakirs (Muslim holy men who are exorcists and faith healers), Ojhaa (Shamins with magical healing powers), and Bauls (religious mendicants and wandering musicians).

**4. UNANI:** Unani medicine is a form of alternative medicine with origins dating back to several thousands of years. With foundations based on the teaching of Hippocrates and with contributions from some great Greek philosophers like Galen and Razes, this system of medicine was further developed in the middle ages by the Persians and Arabs.

### Fundamentals of Unani Medicine

Unani medicine is based on the principle that the key elements fire, air, water and earth collectively play a vital role in maintaining a person's health. It is believed that diseases result due to the imbalance of these four elements. Furthermore, the body obtains its nourishment from four humors namely: blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile. These humors need to be in equilibrium to maintain a healthy state.



FIG: AYURVEDIC



FIG: HOMEOPATHIC



FIG: RELIGIOUS HEALER



FIG: UNANI

**END**