Urban Health Inclusive Health Policy and Climate Resilience Inclusive Urban Health Policy

KEY MESSAGES

- Urban governance and mechanism is complex process so urban health indicators and outcome are dependent on various factors.

- Knowledge sharing and interaction between different stakeholders of city is very essential to understand the problems and solution at local level and also to build a political alliance for urban health.

- Urban health governance should provide a mechanism to for convergence between different departments and also to ensure an optimum level of appropriate public health and care services accessible to all.

- Climate change is directly or indirectly affects the outcomes of urban health so national and state urban health plan should address this challenge.

- Real time data collection and its timely analysis are essential for prevention of any epidemic as well as the future public health planning in the city.

- A good urban health governance requires vision, political commitment, institutional change and networks that are working towards similar goals

- Current national Health care system is inadequate in urban areas as its focuses only rural health.

- Community participation is essential in every process of urban health development including the program planning, implementation, decision making and policy recommendation.

1 | WHY URBAN HEALTH MATTERS FOR INDIA

For the first time in history, more people are now living in urban settings than in rural areas. By the year 2030, an estimated six out of every ten people will be living in towns or cities, with the most explosive growth expected in Asia and Africa.

One of the dominant concerns of the present age is the improving the living conditions of the rapidly increasing population living in cities. The understanding of how urban environments affect health outcomes and can produce health benefits is therefore an urgent priority, as recognized by WHO in their declaration of 2010 as the Year of Urban Health.

Urban health is a new arena in India as well as other developing nations on the other hand these countries are rapidly urbanizing. India is witnessing urbanization on an unprecedented scale with the share of urban population increasing from 28% in 2001 to 31% in 2011 which is significantly higher than the rural rate of 17.9 percent. India, as the rest of the developing world, is urbanizing rapidly. At this rate estimated 843 million people will live in Indian cities by 2050. Nearly 48 percent of the world's population lives in urban areas and the prime locus of this spurt in city dwellers are the developing countries such as India.

As per the current trends, India's future growth will largely be concentrated in urban areas, and growth will be fastest in urban slums but still we are lacking a good governance model and implementation of a dedicated National Urban Health program in India.
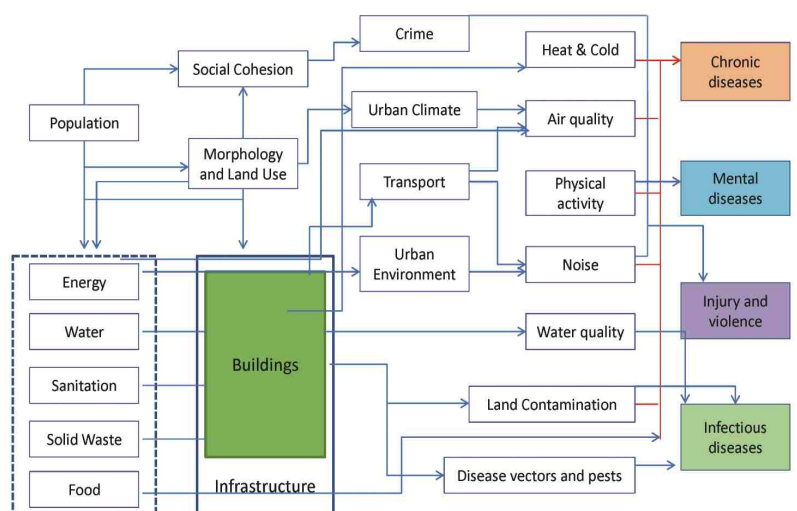
2 | URBAN HEALTH IS A COMPLEX PHENOMENON

Urban growth is dependent on various factors including geographical location, industrialization, migration, city expansions, service delivery mechanism, poverty and climatic variables, which are interrelated, therefore a minute variation in single factor could affect the overall urban growth and health outcomes of city as inter dependency of factors on each other's.

Urban health is a very complex web as various stakeholders including representatives from state and national-level ministries, municipal government departments, civil society, academicians, industries and the private sector play a pivotal role to ensure accessibility and availability of urban health services. It is very essential to act in a coordinated mechanism on the nexus of health determinants to reduce health inequities in urban settings.

3 | FACTORS AFFECTING URBAN HEALTH

The past 100 years trend showing a horizontally growth of cities in a radial manner with submerging of peri- urban areas. Cities growth has direct implications for the efficiency of urban services, including delivery of water and sanitation, provision of urban public transport, provision of industrial zone, affordable education, food and health services. Health inequalities in urban area are the result of a complex interaction of various determinants of health, including inadequate health delivery mechanism, planned urban infrastructure, necessary coordination between different stakeholders. Followings are key factors affecting the outcomes of urban health;

- Rapid migration
- Governance and convergence
- Real time data collection and monitoring & evaluation
- Industrial growth and associated hazards & risks
- Climate change

- Socioeconomic conditions
- Accessibility and affordability of health services
- Living conditions of houses
- Changing lifestyle
- Health Inequality

4 | URBAN HEALTH CHALLENGES IN INDIA

- Shortage of Urban Infrastructure – India is currently facing an unprecedented growth of urbanisation without adequate urban infrastructure and delivery system.

- Accessible and Affordable health service delivery model – Health indicators of urban poor are worst compare to rural area. A large number of urban poor often live in unlisted slums/settlements which prohibits them for accessibility of health services. Irregular employment, migration and socio-economic conditions are the key challenges for health service affordability.

- Urban Health governance – Urban health policy in Informative phase so dedicated urban health governance is very essential to address health issues of most vulnerable sections living in urban area.

- Need-based unique model – Each city has unique requirements in terms of urban health due the complexity of health determinants, so dedicated projects in addition to state and national health program could improve specific urban health challenge.

- Convergence and coordinated mechanism – A number of public health programs are being implemented by various departments under the state and national projects/program but effective convergence and coordinated mechanism is lacking to reduce the duplication of work.

- Climatic variable and its impact on Urban Health - Climate change has major environmental health impacts in urban area. Key vulnerability factors including coastal or geographic location, river side area and extreme weather condition (urban health Ireland) could increase the vector or water borne diseases on a greater extend. State and national intervention are still lacking the climate change focused interventions due unavailability of evidence based research and documentation.

- Community Participation- Currently community participation is lacking in project/program planning, implementation and policy recommendation which ultimately affects the outcomes of urban health program.

- Urban Health Management skills -

- Dual System of health care (Public and Private) - is currently lacking.

UrSMS (Urban Service Monitoring System): A case study of Surat

- As part of the Rockefeller Foundation's ACCCRN initiative, TARU Leading edge Pvt. Ltd. conceptualized & established a Short Message Service (SMS) enabled UrSMS for the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) to provide the near real-time data to Health Department from different health institutions*. This information enables health department to predict disease outbreaks based on number / distribution of cases across the city and also to take prompt action to prevent further spreading. An automated SMS alert system for health officials and data operators is in place which gets triggered when a particular disease crosses a certain threshold decided by Health officials.

- The Urban Service Monitoring System (UrSMS) has two interfaces:

- A mobile interface for sending structured data via SMS.

- A personal computer interface with internet mapping service for visualising the information as charts, reports and maps.

- For more detail, please go through following link; http://surat.ursms.net/cms/home.aspx

- UrSMS health module having 13 Major Hospitals IPD, 39 Urban Health Center, 63 Other Private Hospitals and Labs and 357 Sentinels Canters.

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5 | WAY FORWARD

- It's time to give adequate space to urban health in health planning as well to include climate change resilience perspective in urban health policy and planning.

- A coordinated mechanism by local governance (Department of Urban Development, Department of Solid Waste Management, Health Department, and Department of Water Supply etc.), community members, academicians, local experts and industrialists is essential to address the urban health challenges.

- Evidence based research and real time data collection could make difference for effective planning and policy recommendation for urban health in India.
- A dedicated national level urban health with sufficient infrastructure and human resources is essential for improvement urban health indicators.
- Public Private Partnership approach can be applied to ensure the urban health services. In sustained public private partnership role of institute (Academic/Research) is critical and such mediator is required to improve the health care delivery system.
- Urban health system including urban infrastructure needs to be strengthened and sustained as per the evidence based science to ensure that the system is prepared to face climate change as well as disasters.
- Usage of IT for real data collection and its analysis by local governance is essential urban health planning and necessary timely action.
- Monitoring & Evaluation of health interventions by both community leaders as well as service providers is essential to ensure the health services and successful program implementation.

POLICY BRIEF OVERVIEW

Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN) is a network of cities in India, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Bangladesh and Vietnam, experimenting with a range of activities that will collectively improve the ability of the cities to withstand, to prepare for, and to recover from the projected impacts of climate change. One of the key intervention focuses to build policy debate around UCCR. Policy makers seek evidence-based guidance as a foundation for decision-making. ACCCRN India partners have been working with cities in India since 2008 and it highlights sound practices, demonstration projects and interventions on building resilience to climate change.

It was recognized to tap the knowledge and develop evidence-based Policy Briefs to address the needs of the decision makers at the level of the national/state and city government on UCCR. In the period 2013-2014, ACCCRN India is producing a series of UCCR policy guidance briefs. For a complete list of reports, case studies, policy briefs, please visit www.acccrn.org

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