

INTERNSHIP REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW) in Delhi is a premier institution under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. Established in 1977, NIHFW serves as an apex technical institute for promoting health and family welfare programs in the country. It plays a crucial role in policy formulation, program implementation, research, and capacity building in the health and family welfare sectors.

Objectives

The primary objectives of NIHFW are:

- 1. Training and Capacity Building:** To train health professionals and administrators to improve their skills and knowledge in health management, public health, and family welfare programs.
- 2. Research and Evaluation:** To conduct research and evaluation studies that provide evidence-based inputs for policymaking and program implementation.
- 3. Advisory Role:** To offer expert advice and consultancy services to central and state governments on health and family welfare matters.
- 4. Information Dissemination:** To disseminate information through publications, seminars, workshops, and digital platforms, promoting awareness and knowledge sharing.

Key Functions

- 1. Training Program:** NIHFW conducts a variety of training programs for health professionals, including doctors, nurses, health administrators, and other personnel involved in health and family welfare services. These programs cover areas such as health management, reproductive health, epidemiology, health communication, and community health.
- 2. Research Activities:** The institute undertakes research in diverse areas related to health and family welfare, including public health issues, health systems research, operational research, and evaluation studies. These research activities aim to generate evidence for improving health policies and programs.
- 3. Consultancy Services:** NIHFW provides consultancy services to government and non-governmental organizations, offering technical support in planning, implementing, and evaluating health and family welfare programs.

4. Advocacy and Policy Support: The institute plays a significant role in advocating for health and family welfare policies and programs, providing technical inputs to the government for policy formulation and implementation.

5. Educational Programs: NIHFW offers educational programs, including postgraduate courses in health management, public health, and related fields. These programs are designed to build the capacity of health professionals and enhance their expertise.

Collaborations and Partnerships

NIHFW collaborates with various national and international organizations, academic institutions, and research bodies to enhance its capabilities and impact. These collaborations help in sharing knowledge, resources, and best practices, contributing to the overall improvement of health and family welfare services in India.

Infrastructure and Facilities

The NIHFW campus in Delhi is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, including lecture halls, seminar rooms, a library, research labs, and residential accommodations for trainees and faculty. The institute also has a dedicated computer centre and telemedicine unit to support its training and research activities.

Conclusion

The National Institute of Health and Family Welfare in Delhi plays a pivotal role in strengthening the health and family welfare systems in India. Through its comprehensive training programs, research initiatives, and policy support activities, NIHFW contributes significantly to improving public health outcomes and enhancing the effectiveness of health and family welfare programs across the country.

KEY ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN OTHER THAN THE DISSERTATION

During my dissertation, I had the opportunity to attend a series of academic seminars conducted by my mentor, **Dr. Meerambika Mahapatro ma'am**, at the **National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW)**. These sessions provided in-depth insights into critical public health issues and enriched my understanding of the social dimensions of healthcare.

An Overview of Social Sciences in Health Sciences

The seminar on "An Overview of Social Sciences in Health Sciences," conducted by Dr. Meerambika Mahapatro ma'am on 28 May at the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW), provided a comprehensive insight into the multifaceted nature of health beyond clinical parameters. This engaging session emphasized the growing recognition that health outcomes are deeply influenced by social determinants such as culture, economic status, education, gender, and community structures. Dr. Mahapatro ma'am compellingly illustrated how the integration of sociological, anthropological, psychological, and economic perspectives can significantly enhance our understanding of health behaviour's, healthcare access, and health inequities. The discussions

underscored how social science approaches are essential for designing people-centred policies, addressing community-level resistance, and fostering sustainable behavioural change. The seminar emphasized the necessity for health professionals to engage meaningfully with social contexts and adopt integrated frameworks that bring together biomedical and social insights. It concluded with a strong call for collaborative, evidence-based strategies that mirror the lived realities of communities and work toward equitable and sustainable advancements in public health.

Development and Health: Primary Healthcare Approach

The seminar delivered by Dr. Meerambika Mahapatro ma'am on "Development and Health: Primary Healthcare Approach" on 6 May provided a nuanced perspective on the inextricable link between holistic development and the realization of health goals. Drawing from both historical frameworks and contemporary challenges, Dr. Mahapatro emphasized how the principles of the Primary Healthcare Approach—equity, community participation, intersectoral coordination, and appropriate technology—remain central to building resilient health systems. The lecture highlighted how health cannot be viewed in isolation from broader developmental goals such as education, nutrition, sanitation, and livelihood. Through compelling examples and evidence, the discussion explored how strengthening primary healthcare serves as the foundation for achieving universal health coverage and reducing inequalities. Dr. Mahapatro reiterated that genuine progress in public health is possible only when development is inclusive, people-centred, and rooted in the realities of the underserved. The session concluded with a strong advocacy for policy alignment, capacity building, and grassroots involvement to uphold the Alma-Ata vision in today's context.

Social Determinants of Health

On 8th May, Dr. Meerambika Mahapatro ma'am delivered an insightful seminar on the topic "*Social Determinants of Health*", shedding light on the foundational role that social, economic, and environmental conditions play in shaping individual and community health outcomes. The session emphasized that factors such as income, education, gender, occupation, caste, housing, and access to clean water and nutritious food are not just background variables but critical determinants of health equity. Dr. Mahapatro highlighted the structural barriers that perpetuate health disparities and stressed the need for a shift in focus from purely biomedical models to a broader, rights-based public health perspective. Drawing from national and global examples, the seminar showcased how addressing the social determinants is vital for achieving sustainable health improvements. It called for a multi-sectoral and intersectional approach where health policy is aligned with social justice, economic reform, and community empowerment. Dr. Mahapatro concluded by urging future public health professionals to become advocates for change who understand that the path to better health lies as much in social reform as in clinical care.

Social Issues in Health Programs

In her engaging and thought-provoking session on "*Social Issues in Health Programs*", Dr. Meerambika

Mahapatro ma'am illuminated the often overlooked yet critical social dimensions that shape the effectiveness and equity of public health interventions. Through a multidisciplinary lens, the session examined how factors such as caste, gender, poverty, illiteracy, cultural beliefs, and stigma influence both health-seeking behaviour and the delivery of healthcare services. Dr. Mahapatro emphasized that health programs, while scientifically sound, often face challenges at the implementation level due to these deep-rooted social issues. Drawing from empirical case studies and field experiences, she highlighted the need to incorporate community perspectives, ensure cultural sensitivity, and address structural barriers that marginalize vulnerable groups. The discussion reinforced the idea that health is a social construct, and any programmatic success must be underpinned by inclusivity, social justice, and grassroots engagement. The seminar concluded with a call to action for health professionals and policymakers to design programs that are not only medically efficient but also socially responsive and ethically grounded.

Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases

The seminar on "*Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases*" conducted by Dr. Meerambika Mahapatro ma'am on 19 May offered an in-depth exploration of the shifting landscape of disease burden in India and globally. Dr. Mahapatro systematically outlined the dual challenge posed by the coexistence of infectious diseases and the rising tide of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancers, and chronic respiratory illnesses. She emphasized the importance of understanding not only the biological but also the social, behavioural, and environmental determinants that influence both disease types. The seminar delved into the epidemiological transition, highlighting how urbanization, lifestyle changes, and demographic shifts are contributing to NCDs, while communicable diseases persist due to factors like poor sanitation, overcrowding, and lack of preventive measures. Stressing the need for an integrated health system, Dr. Mahapatro advocated for robust surveillance, early detection, and comprehensive care strategies. She concluded with a call for coordinated policy actions, multi-sectoral engagement, and health promotion efforts that address the root causes and ensure equitable access to prevention and treatment services.

Health-Seeking Behaviour

The seminar on "*Health-Seeking Behaviour*", conducted by Dr. Meerambika Mahapatro ma'am on 21 May, offered critical insights into the sociocultural and systemic factors that shape how individuals recognize illness and navigate health services. Dr. Mahapatro articulated that health-seeking is not a linear process but a complex interplay of awareness, accessibility, affordability, social norms, and trust in healthcare systems. Through empirical studies and field experiences, she demonstrated how gender, education, economic status, and cultural beliefs significantly influence treatment choices, delays in care, and utilization of both formal and informal health services. The lecture stressed the importance of understanding community perceptions and traditional health narratives when designing public health interventions. Dr. Mahapatro highlighted the need for culturally sensitive, community-engaged strategies to bridge gaps in care-seeking, especially in marginalized populations. The seminar concluded by reinforcing the importance of health systems that are not only technically efficient

but also socially responsive, ensuring that every individual can seek and receive care with dignity and confidence.

Mental Health

The seminar on "*Mental Health*" conducted by Dr. Meerambika Mahapatro ma'am on 22 May brought much-needed attention to the often-overlooked dimensions of psychological well-being in public health discourse. Through a thoughtful and evidence-informed presentation, Dr. Mahapatro unpacked the complex interplay between mental health, social environment, and healthcare systems. Emphasizing that mental health is not merely the absence of mental illness but a state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being, the session addressed the deep-rooted stigma, structural neglect, and limited-service access that continue to hinder mental health support in India. The seminar explored how socio-economic stressors, gender-based violence, occupational burnout, and systemic marginalization contribute to mental health vulnerabilities. Dr. Mahapatro strongly advocated for integrating mental health into primary healthcare, community-based interventions, and school health programs. She emphasized the importance of creating safe, inclusive, and empathetic environments—both at home and in institutions—where mental health is prioritized alongside physical health. The session concluded with a call for policy reforms, capacity enhancement, and sustained awareness efforts to destigmatize mental illness and promote psychological resilience across all sections of society.

Journal Clubs Conducted at NIHF

Every Friday various presentations are given by various students at NIHF. Which includes MD students, DHA students, and PGDPHM students on different topics. The trainee attended four such presentations.

A. Under 5 child Mortality

The seminar focusing on Under-5 Mortality conducted by MD students from the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHF) provided a rich analysis of the issues related to childhood mortality. Therefore, starting from this seminar social concern was explored in its breadth and concerning the interconnections between health crises related to nutrition, infectious diseases, inadequate health care, and socio-economic inequity. The MD students made convincing arguments with efficient facts, and results were put into detail regarding why it is high time for specific and multifaceted approaches toward the problem of under-five mortalities. Talks continued the relevance of community involvement, on the services focusing on maternal and child health care, and on the need to develop a sound healthcare system to increase the chances of deserving children getting quality care on time. The seminar called on all players to work together and embrace policies that have empirical evidence in the fight against under-5 mortality as a positive way forward to enhancing the quality of children's future globally.

B. Integrated Healthcare and Integrative Medicine

We will aim to explore the topic of “Integrated Healthcare and Integrative Medicine” in our seminar to consider a cohesion of various techniques along with approaches used by doctors to sharpen the facets of improvement and efficiency in handling human health. It details the WHO’s full definition of the term reflecting on its broad meaning and asserting on health as a multidimensional concept encompassing the physical, mental, and social domains. An analysis of integrated care is discussed concerning integration types, specifically, horizontal, vertical, and cross-sectoral integration, with an explanation of the need to have connected healthcare services to continuously and comprehensively manage the health of a population. The difference is made between the Western, or allopathic, medicine and the Eastern, or CAM, medicine and the relation between them as well as the relation of both to the patients. This elaboration proceeds to the concept of integrative medicine in India where the biomedical practices are incorporated with the Indian systems of traditional medicines under AYUSH to achieve the goal of WHOLENESS in the provision of medical services. In India, the example of the NIMHANS and the Department of Integrative Medicine at Safdarjung Hospital can be noted as evidence of the development of the institutionalization of integrative healthcare in the country, thus underlining how crucial it is necessary to integrate various systems of medicine to introduce effective changes to the sphere and to serve the patient in the best possible way.

C Disaster Management

The Disaster Management seminar that was organized by the MD students at the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW) covered every nook and corner of the disaster management spectrum. In today’s seminar, the topic was dissected to show the complexities involved in disaster management to appreciate the broad spectrum of disasters that can occur in various parts of the world. In this regard, participants discussed issues that touched on risk assessment approaches, how emergency response plans were developed, and post-disaster management solutions. Conducting the seminar along with support of real life as well as theoretical case scenarios and examples, the importance of the concept of disaster risk reduction and preparedness was well emphasized as a way of improving preparedness and disaster coping mechanisms at individual, social, and institutional levels. This was based on cross-sectoral coordination with actors from governmental and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and the locals for all-inclusive disaster risk management. The chairman and members of the seminar mulled for more funding and support to the authorities to bolster disaster preparedness as it reviewed the vital and critical necessity of building strong communities that will enable them to improve on their response to disasters and impact on lives and sources of income.

D National Oral Health Program

The newly launched National Oral Health Programme or the NOHP proves to be an ambitious step to escalate the oral health standards of the country, according to the seminar conducted at the National Institute of Health

& Family Welfare (NIHFW). The goals and aims of establishing NOHP therefore involve raising awareness on effective oral hygiene, the prevention of conditions that affect the teeth and jaws, and the incorporation of oral health care in other healthcare systems. Targeting a major social problem of poor dental care in India, the program successfully increases the access of population to the modern dentistry in district hospitals and hard-to-reach areas by deploying newly equipped departments. Besides offering care, NOHP implements the other three dimensions in which education is a key focus through campaigns for brushing, flossing, and dental checkups. Using synergy, NOHP mobilizes both private and public sector resources to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the programs. For instance, the program's training activities involve not only dentists but also general healthcare personnel, creating strong connections with overall healthcare services. From this perspective, NOHP seeks to promote the wellbeing of a healthier population which shall especially help in improving the dental health of the nation and thus ensure the construction of a happier nation.

Orientation Visit at MOTHER AND CHILD TRACKING SYSTEM (MCTS)

The Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS) is a name-based system that monitors the health care of pregnant women and children in India. Its goal is to minimise mother and newborn mortality and fertility rates by delivering timely and personalised health care. MCTS records all everyone's health encounters and informs health professionals and doctors to any missed services. MCTS also operates a female-oriented contact centre (number 10588), which serves 21 states and employs two doctors. The call centre collects data and generates reports using a Ministry-provided questionnaire. MCTS is a comprehensive and efficient system for improving the quality and results of maternal and child health care.