

## Physical Education, Diet & Exercise- Three Mantras of healthy life

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**Abstract:** *Illness comes as problem ridden phase of life. Health ignorance is leading the mankind walk the path of diseases, disability and early death. The bitter truth of society is that, scores of young people are forced to live an unhealthy life owing to the two main reasons. First, they are exposed to extreme work load and pressure to grow and succeed at an early age which affects the mental stability and normal growth. Second, the attraction of lucrative buffet of choices in junk food and oily eateries also inculcates the unhealthy food habits, which in the long run makes the individual succumb to diseases and illness. The solution is proper diet and routine exercise but both these terms are perceived as added pressure in place of compulsory habit. As it is said "Ignorance is not a blessing when it comes to your health". In 2015, adult mortality rate in India was 31.02 deaths per 100 populations with an average annual increase of 1.72 %. In such a scenario, one must think about improving the mental and physical wellbeing. The paper will present how rather than living a mechanical life and dying early, young people are now getting conscious of their health and increasing the physical activity. Practice of healthy diet and routine exercise, among youth, invites an energetic and healthy life. Their health awareness can contribute in training and spreading knowledge. The paper will present how by embracing health education in the "early" years, a healthy long life is ensured.*

**Keywords:** Health, Diet, Exercise, Awareness

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### I. Introduction

**Health**, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), is "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Health has been distinguished from medical care, in the Lalonde report from Canada. The report identified three interdependent fields as key determinants of an individual's health. These are:

- Lifestyle: the aggregation of personal decisions (i.e., over which the individual has control) that can be said to contribute to, or cause, illness or death;
- Environmental: all matters related to health external to the human body and over which the individual has little or no control;
- Biomedical: all aspects of health, physical and mental, developed within the human body as influenced by genetic make-up.

A **healthy diet** is a diet that helps to maintain or improve overall health. A healthy diet provides the body with essential nutrition: fluid, macronutrients, micronutrients, and adequate calories.

To be healthy, a diet should include mostly fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, with little to no processed food and sweetened beverages. The requirements for a healthy diet can be met from a variety of plant-based and animal-based foods. Various nutrition guides are published by medical and governmental institutions to educate individuals on what they should be eating to be healthy.

An important way to maintain your personal health is to have a healthy diet. Good diet help build and strengthen bones, muscles, and tendons and also regulate body processes (i.e. blood pressure). Making healthy food choices is important because it can lower the risk of diseases and it will contribute to maintaining a healthy weight

**Exercise** is any bodily activity that enhances or maintains physical fitness and overall health and wellness. It is performed for various reasons, including increasing growth and development, preventing aging, strengthening muscles and the cardiovascular system, honing athletic skills, weight loss or maintenance, improving health and to look and feel good.. Many individuals choose to exercise outdoors where they can congregate in groups, socialize, and enhance well-being.

**Physical education** is an educational course related of maintaining the human body through physical exercises. It is taken during primary and secondary education and encourages psychomotor learning in a play or

movement exploration setting to promote health. Different awareness programs by health service providers are also taking physical education at different nook and corner.

For a country's development the health and well being of the people who live in the country are utmost important. Among the people, good health of children and youth are very important as children are not only the future of our nation, but civilization and sustainable development rest on. They are the best upholders of new healthy society, social change and ecological and social balances and because of these factors it is of great importance that children should get adequate care and attention in the matter of health, nutrition and education. Young age people are adaptable to new practices and hence healthy practices in terms of proper diet, choice of food and adequate exercise should be imbibed in them in early ages that should rest with them throughout their life cycle, making it more healthy and wise. A person has to cross through many physiological stages like childhood, adolescence and old age. To cross these physiological stages one has to be healthy and sound.

Excess weight is a global public health issue. Between 1980 and 2008, age-standardized mean global body mass index (BMI) increased by 0.4 to 0.5 per decade in men and women. Globally, in 2008, an estimated 1.46 billion adults were overweight and an estimated 205 million men and 297 million women older than age 20 years were obese. Furthermore, by 2030 estimates suggest up to 57.8% of the world's adult population (3.3 billion people) could be either overweight or obese. Young age overweight and obesity are global problems that are on the rise. Obesity leads to health problems like hypertension, type 2 diabetes mellitus, dyslipidaemia, left ventricular hypertrophy, non-alcoholic steatohepatitis, obstructive sleep apnoea, and orthopedic and psychosocial problems. According to WHO, 22 million children (under 5 years of age) globally are overweight. Studies on urban Indian school and college groups, from selected regions report a high prevalence of obese and overweight children. In addition, studies on Indian schoolchildren have also demonstrated that the prevalence of hypertension in overweight persons is significantly higher than those normal persons.

The inclusion of health awareness, knowledge on diet and physical activity should be an important part of wide scale health services, school programs and weight management programs run by different institutions. A combination of these three aspects may contribute to change the current scenario of increasing health problems in the long run, assuring a healthy lifestyle. It has been studies that between diet-only programs or exercise only programs and combined programs, the combined programs were more effective for adopting good health practices with visible results of improved health conditions.

To achieve the basic health standards and ensure good and long life, the below mentioned factors have been identified to be vital:

- **Variety in food:** Our body needs all the nutrients like – carbohydrate, protein, fats, vitamin and mineral to develop and function properly. Thus, we must include food from all groups.
- **Controlled portion:** Though we need to eat variation but consider moderation. All food to be taken in controlled portion. When eating out, one needs to be cautious about the choice of menu and either order small meal or share our food with friends or family. That will help to cut down on calories.
- **Eat small & frequent meal:** Small & frequent meal for about gap of 3 – 4 hours helps to keep our metabolism high, which results in good weight loss and good sugar control. Foods like fruits, nuts, flaxseeds, roasted chana and multi-grain biscuits which are handy and can be munched on in between meals.
- **Colors in plate:** We need to include all colored vegetable and fruits in our daily diet. They are rich in fiber, vitamins, and minerals and anti oxidants which helps to keep away many diseases.
- **Avoid bad fats:** We must completely avoid bad fats and include oil which is rich in unsaturated fats (MUFA & PUFA). We need to limit the saturated fats and avoid the Trans fat coming from fried foods, baked foods, packed and processed foods.
- **Check out kitchen and refrigerator:** We eat what we buy from the market and store in our kitchen. So best thing is to check out what are the unhealthy and healthy foods in our kitchen. We need to regularly clean out all the unhealthy stuff and fill it up with healthy food. This will help to avoid the food craving too.
- **Hydrate oneself:** Well hydrated body burns more calories. Thus it essential to include appropriate amount of water in diet. We need to include 2 – 2 ½ liters of water per day.
- **Exercise:** We say food is important for good health so is the exercise. One should at least exercise 150 minutes per week. It can be divided into 30 mins per day or 40 mins four days a week.

- **Stress buster:** Stress is one of the reasons for the bad health. We need to relief stress by various methods like meditation, yoga, listen to soothing music or do things you enjoy.

## II. Objectives

The objective behind the study is as follows:

1. To find out whether the combine set of diet and exercise are more popular or individual diet package orexercise package.
2. To identify the reasons why people joining diet/physical fitness classes
3. To find out if people are having good awareness and education on health
4. To find out if people are able to maintain the continuity in their life

## III. Methodology

### Study Area:

Northeast India is the easternmost region of India comprising the eight states Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. It comprises an area of 262,230 square kilometers. Assam is a state in Northeast India, situated south of the eastern Himalayas along the Brahmaputra and Barak River valleys. Assam covers an area of 78,438 km<sup>2</sup> (30,285 sq mi). Guwahati is the largest city of Assam and Northeastern India, a major riverine port city and one of the fastest growing cities in India, situated on the South Bank of the Brahmaputra River. Dispur, the capital of Assam, is in the circuit city region located within Guwahati and is the seat of the Government of Assam.

I selected the locality 'Ulubari' in the Guwahati city of Assam. Ulubari is a locality in center of Guwahati, surrounded by localities of Bhangagarh and Paltan Bazaar. This area is known for sports facilities and markets dealings with all type of sports goods. The area has Nehru Stadium, which is a multi-purpose stadium in Guwahati, Assam, India and managed by the Board of Sports, Government of Assam. Ideally this location was good for the study as different health service providers are available in this locality and hence the awareness level and participation of people living in close proximity can be studied well.

### Study Area at a glance

Village Name : Ulubari  
City Name : Guwahati  
District : Kamrup  
State : Assam  
Ward : 32  
Language : Assamese and Bodo, Bengali, Karbi, Rabha, Boro, Garo, Tiwa  
Hospitals : 5  
Gym : 4  
Colleges : 4

**Sample:** I selected stratified random sampling. I selected the four gyms to be the first level sample where all three aspects of health education, diet and physical activities are taken into consideration. Then I randomly selected 10 samples from each gym and had interviewed them. Total 40 samples were taken

**Data collection:** I have used a combination of primary and secondary data collection.

## IV. Results & Discussions

The discussions and information collected from various respondents are tabulated below:

| Age      | Numbers | %    |
|----------|---------|------|
| 10-15    | 1       | 2.5  |
| 15-20    | 5       | 12.5 |
| 20-30    | 8       | 20   |
| 30-45    | 19      | 47.5 |
| 45-60    | 7       | 17.5 |
| Above 60 | 0       | 0    |
| Total    | 40      |      |

From the above table, it is clear that most popular age group joining fitness classes below to the age group of 30-40 years. The two main reasons are they are more conscious towards their health as they are entering the phase of adulthood plus are also keen to look fit and beautiful. At the same time, they are economically independent to afford such classes.

| <b>Table 2: Fact about Motivation towards joining classes</b> |         |      |
|---|---------|------|
| Reasons for Motivation  | Numbers | %    |
| Physical Fitness  | 11      | 27.5 |
| Weight Loss   | 22      | 55   |
| Weight Gain   | 3       | 7.5  |
| Health Problems   | 4       | 10   |
| Total   | 40      |      |

From the above table, it is clear that weight loss is the main motivation towards joining fitness classes. Obesity is a common problem these days and people realize the imp of health when they actually reach the level of obesity. Then the journey is tough and long and fitness classes are strong motivation.

| <b>Table 2: Fact about popularity of diet or exercise</b> |         |    |
|---|---------|----|
| Need  | Numbers | %  |
| Only Gym  | 28      | 70 |
| Only Diet Consultation                                    | 8       | 20 |
| Both Gym & Diet   | 4       | 10 |
| Total   | 40      |    |

From the above table, it is clear; people tend to think that exercise is the main option towards good health, especially for the people joining fitness classes. Popularity of nutritional counseling is still lagging behind.

| <b>Table 2: Fact about level of Physical education</b> |         |    |
|--|---------|----|
| Source of Knowledge                                    | Numbers | %  |
| At school  | 10      | 25 |
| At College   | 2       | 5  |
| At gym   | 26      | 65 |
| Any others   | 2       |    |
| Total  | 40      |    |

From the above table, it is clear; these days gym are the main source that people are getting conscious towards health. Though they are getting information from other sources but they tend to forget or not practice as they move with life. But education from gym stays with them as they keep practicing.

| <b>Table 2: Fact about continuity</b> |         |      |
|---------------------------------------|---------|------|
| Duration of practice                  | Numbers | %    |
| New Joinee                            | 4       | 10   |
| Below 1 year                          | 11      | 27.5 |
| 1 - 3 years                           | 23      | 57.5 |
| Above 3 years                         | 2       |      |
| Total                                 | 40      |      |

From the above table, it is clear that people after joining gym usually continue for a period of 2-3 years before they drop out. Even the group below 1 year seems to be following the continuation mode.

## V. Limitations

The study has certain limitations as mentioned below:

1. The study does not cover those group of population who are practicing regularly at home either yoga or pranayama.
2. The study could not cover the group going out for daily walking and morning jogging
3. The study could not cover the households cautious on diet and following strict food habits at home.

## VI. Conclusion

We may conclude that health education and awareness towards good health is no doubt gaining popularity by the movement needs more momentum. Fitness centres and health education to be a part of compulsory education. People need to adapt to healthy practices and ensure the god gifted body is maintained hail and healthy. More and more affordable fitness centres to be introduced. Most important diet needs to be proper and filtered by eliminating all bad and unhealthy diet. We need to work together towards a healthy movement.

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