

Impact of globalization on health policies

As the entire population of the world is becoming a huge global family, globalization is affecting not only the health sector, but also impacting the economic, social, political, cultural, environmental and technological issues in the world. The term 'global' refers to the trend of disappearing boundaries in terms of those barriers that divide states and countries, thus allowing people in different parts of the world to easily communicate and engage with one another (Lee, 2000).

Globalization is taking place in terms of space, time, and cognition. People are increasingly considering themselves a part of a huge global village due to ease of travel and communication. With all things becoming virtual, our perception of space is rapidly changing. Also, due to advancement in technology, communication and travel has become a lot faster and people living far away are constantly in touch with each other. Different forms of media, including the Internet, is expanding so rapidly in terms of its knowledge base, that people are facing an information overload (Lee, 2000).

Globalization has a number of adverse effects on health as well. The ease of travel has led to the spread of a number of deadly diseases, particularly AIDS. Direct links have been uncovered between the extent of immigration in a region and the prevalence of AIDS in that population. In China, globalization has led to widespread economic integration and migration within the country, leading to the revisiting of a number of sexually transmitted diseases that were considered eliminated in the country. This problem is very well addressed in Thailand by means of its health policies. Another side effect of globalization that is being effectively addressed by health policies is the rise of tobacco use and related illnesses (Dollar, 2001).

The economic effects of globalization are apparent in policy making processes especially in developing countries, which reflect changes in international rules all over the world. It also leads to removal of major obstacles from the rules to help the developing countries receive better healthcare. These obstacles include debts, market instability, and no access to markets of developed countries. The objectives that are included in health policies include development of infrastructure, human resources, and political and administrative areas. As a result of globalization, the national economy needs to be opened to suit the healthcare needs and these include extent, timing and pace of healthcare policies. Social objectives also need to be integrated within policies to ensure maximum benefit out of them (Woodward et al., 2001).

Healthcare policies designed keeping globalization in mind will ensure that all economic benefits of globalization will be directed towards the poor and their healthcare needs. The design of policies is such that people in developing countries can easily access less expensive health interventions and it also leads to improvement in other services related to health such as education, sanitation, environmental protection, nutrition, and health awareness programs (Woodward et al., 2001).

In conclusion, the impact of globalization is having several positive effects on health policies and its influence is apparent especially in developing countries. The economic effects of globalization have played a very important role in allowing more money to be spent on healthcare, thus bringing interventions within everybody's reach.

References

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