
Analysis Of Low Hygiene Practices

Irrefutably, through the common lens of basic necessities, clean water is required to achieve proper sanitation and when both the components are ensured, it will lead to hygiene and hygiene is key to health[endnoteRef:1]. As hygiene is a broader term of vicious cycle of health and any compromise with hygiene may give detrimental results related to health of hoi-polloi. [1: <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/330100/WHO-CED-PHE-WSH-19.149-eng.pdf?ua=1>]

Moving further, third type of diseases that is infectious diseases are mostly caused by poor hygiene at personal level and as well as at societal level. The lack of personal hygiene may create non-win situations like common cold, influenza, diarrhoea, and in severe cases it may also result to deadly diseases like Tuberculosis and AIDS. The poor hygiene practices is a matter of concern in the expanding world, its consequences are not limited to problems at personal level only as its consequences may be as catastrophic as the extinction of the mankind, for instance, COVID-19, pandemic, can be transmitted from animals to human and one person to another in case of poor hygiene and have caused more than 23,000 deaths worldwide as per World Health Organization[endnoteRef:2]. [2: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>]

Furthermore, in general, 40% of the global population has no access to basic hand washing facilities with soap and water at home and 1.6 billion had limited facilities lacking soap or water, and 1.4 billion had no accessibility to water and soap. In particular, sub-Saharan Africa region is most affected by low hygiene practices because around 41% of the population has no access to basic facilities of hand washing at all[endnoteRef:3]. Out of all age groups, children are most affected by the low hygiene practices. The poor hygiene practices remains the risk factor for increasing child mortality rate, childhood diseases and malnourishment. More than 50% of under-5 child deaths are caused by preventable diseases, these deaths can be prevented by spreading awareness related to benefits of good hygiene practices through strong health systems[endnoteRef:4]. [3: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/progress-drinking-water-sanitation-hygiene-2019/>] [4: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/children-reducing-mortality>]

Moving further, open defecation-poor hygiene practice is another taboo. This traditional approach is a serious health and social problem which cannot be ignored. As 76% of the global population practice open defecation and out of them, 678 million people who practice open defecation is from seven countries[endnoteRef:5]. The globe is emphasizing to end open defecation but it is not the case with Sub-African where the net cases from all the countries are stagnant[endnoteRef:6]. Globally, poor sanitation practices like not washing the hands after defecation and before eating something accounts for more than 4,80,000 deaths of due to diarrhoea every year; around 1,300 child deaths every single day. The largest solely reason of these causalities is an unsafe and unhygienic environment[endnoteRef:7]. The open defecation is also defined as fecal-oral transmission so it is not only a problem for the environment but it also attracts major social issues like poverty, and social stigmas like without proper toilet facilities, female section constantly risk rape and sexual assault while defecating in the open[endnoteRef:8]. [5: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_defecation] [6:

<https://data.unicef.org/resources/progress-drinking-water-sanitation-hygiene-2019/>] [7:
<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-health/diarrhoeal-disease/>] [8:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6364430/>]

Moreover, “low hygiene practices” is a broader term and not using sanitary products is also one of the factor of low hygiene practice. Not only inaccessibility to such products initiate poor “Menstrual hygiene” but also taboo of traditional beliefs and rituals prevent females to use sanitary products. At least 500 million women and girls lack proper access to menstrual hygiene facilities, globally[endnoteRef:9]. Compromising with menstrual hygiene may cause various health issues like fungal and urinary infections, and even make an individual vulnerable to infertility[endnoteRef:10]. [9: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/05/24/menstrual-hygiene-day-2019>] [10: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menstrual_hygiene_management]

Lastly, it has been observed that sub-Saharan Africa region is lacking behind in the world in term of healthy lifestyle, hygiene, drinking water accessibility, and proper sanitation and children are most vulnerable in every non-win situation whether it is a matter related to poor hygiene or related to open defecation problems. Therefore, to prevent the masses from low hygiene practices and to achieve access to healthy life many initiatives have been taken by various agencies like World Bank Group, WHO and UNICEF, SDG 6.2 (to make availability of equitable sanitation and hygiene for each and every individual and to eliminate open defecation by 2030)[endnoteRef:11], WSSCC’s Global Sanitation Fund (GSF)[endnoteRef:12], and many more. The way forward to promote hygiene is by agreeing on two ideas that is firstly, by making people aware of the problems linked with the low hygiene practices and secondly, by changing their behavior through the medium of influential personalities. [11: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg6>] [12: <https://www.wsscc.org/global-sanitation-fund/>]