

# Health Issues in the Modern Age: Identifying Factors and Exploring Solutions

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## Abstract

This paper examines the contemporary health challenges faced by urban and rural populations in Odisha, India, focusing on the multifaceted factors influencing health in modern society. The research highlights the impact of environmental pollution, lifestyle choices, and mental well-being, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive understanding of these determinants. A case study involving surveys of 200 residents (100 urban and 100 rural) identified prevalent health issues such as hypertension, diabetes, and mental health disorders. The findings indicate significant disparities between urban and rural health profiles, with urban residents facing higher rates of chronic diseases linked to lifestyle and pollution. The paper concludes with actionable recommendations for public health interventions and community engagement strategies aimed at improving health outcomes.

**Keywords:** age; nutrition; chronic disease

## Introduction

As society evolves, so do the health challenges we face. Rapid urbanization, technological advancements, and shifting cultural norms contribute to a complex landscape of health issues that require urgent attention. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), urbanization has led to increased exposure to pollutants, sedentary lifestyles, and unhealthy dietary habits, all linked to rising rates of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular conditions (Zanobetti & Schwartz, 2009). Technological advancements, while offering numerous benefits, have also introduced new challenges. The rise of digital technology has led to increased screen time, which is associated with physical inactivity and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). Furthermore, cultural shifts toward fast food consumption and convenience have transformed dietary patterns, contributing to poor nutrition and related health problems (Ghosh-Dastidar et al., 2015). Understanding the multifaceted factors influencing health in the modern age is essential for developing effective interventions. This paper aims to identify key health determinants, including environmental pollution, lifestyle choices, and mental well-being, and to explore potential solutions to enhance the quality of life for individuals and communities. By addressing these factors holistically, we can foster a healthier

society that is better equipped to navigate the complexities of contemporary living. Air, water, and soil pollution are critical factors affecting health in urban settings. Exposure to air pollutants, such as particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide, has been linked to respiratory diseases and cardiovascular issues (Kumar et al., 2017). Water pollution from industrial waste and agricultural runoff leads to gastrointestinal diseases and long-term health consequences (Chen et al., 2016; Kahn & Freeman, 2014). Modern conveniences have fostered sedentary behaviors, contributing to obesity and related conditions. The WHO (2020) recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week, yet many individuals fall short. Physical inactivity is also linked to increased mental health issues, including anxiety and depression (Biddle & Asare, 2011; Bauman et al., 2012). The shift toward processed and convenience foods has significant implications for public health. High consumption of sugar, unhealthy fats, and low nutritional quality has been associated with obesity and metabolic syndrome (Mozaffarian et al., 2011; Drewnowski & Almiron-Roig, 2010). Furthermore, the increasing prevalence of fast-food outlets is correlated with higher rates of obesity in both adults and children (Zenk et al., 2014; Ogden et al., 2014). The impact of modern life on mental health cannot be overstated. Increased screen time, particularly among adolescents, is associated

with higher rates of depression and anxiety (Twenge et al., 2019; National Institute of Mental Health, 2019). Additionally, societal pressures and reduced social interactions can exacerbate feelings of isolation and stress (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015; Barlow et al., 2017). Socioeconomic factors, including income, education, and access to healthcare, significantly influence health outcomes. Disparities in these areas can lead to unequal health opportunities and outcomes (Marmot, 2015; Shaw et al., 2008). Communities with lower socioeconomic status often face higher exposure to environmental hazards and limited access to healthy food options (Rojas et al., 2015; Wallerstein & Duran, 2010). To effectively address these health challenges Implementing policies that reduce pollution, promote clean energy, and regulate harmful substances in food and water is crucial (World Health Organization, 2016; Frumkin, 2016). Communities can encourage active living through the development of parks, walking paths, and organized physical activities (Sallis et al., 2016; Anderson & Crespo, 2009). Public health campaigns focused on healthy eating and cooking classes can help combat poor dietary habits (Gorton et al., 2010; Salin & Vainio, 2016). Programs that promote mental well-being and resilience, along with access to mental health resources, are essential (Rosenberg et al., 2014; Wiggins et al., 2017). Community Engagement: Encouraging community involvement in health initiatives can foster a culture of health and support for individuals (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015; Wallerstein & Duran, 2010).

Though different studies have been conducted earlier on the topic but this is a study specific to the root cause analysis and remedies with a case study conducted in the state of Odisha, India for the growing health issue in the whole world which is a major concern in front of human society.

## Methodology

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather data on health issues in Odisha. A sample of 200 participants was divided equally between urban and rural residents. Surveys included questions on demographic information, health status, lifestyle choices, and environmental exposures. Data were analyzed using statistical methods to identify the prevalence of health issues and correlations between lifestyle factors and health outcomes. Qualitative

interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into the participants' experiences and perceptions regarding their health and environmental influences. The analysis highlighted key themes related to pollution, dietary habits, mental health, and socioeconomic factors affecting health outcomes.

## Case study on human health conditions in Odisha

The health landscape in Odisha, India, presents a complex interplay of urban and rural dynamics that significantly influences the well-being of its residents. Rapid urbanization, coupled with persistent rural challenges, may lead to a variety of health issues. This case study aims to explore the health status of urban and rural populations in Odisha, focusing on the prevalence of chronic diseases, lifestyle factors, and environmental influences. By employing a mixed-methods approach, the study gathers quantitative data through surveys and qualitative insights through interviews, enabling a comprehensive understanding of health determinants in these distinct settings. As urban areas expand, residents face unique health challenges, including increased exposure to environmental pollutants, sedentary lifestyles, and mental health issues exacerbated by the pressures of modern living. In contrast, rural populations contend with limited access to healthcare, dietary deficiencies, and economic stressors that contribute to significant health concerns. Preliminary findings indicate that while urban residents exhibit higher rates of conditions such as hypertension and diabetes, rural populations are not immune to these issues, highlighting a concerning trend that transcends geographic boundaries.

The study also emphasizes the role of socioeconomic factors and environmental exposures, which further complicate the health profiles of both urban and rural communities. By analyzing data from 200 participants in the age group of 30 to 80, equally divided between urban and rural residents, this research seeks to uncover the underlying causes of health disparities and to propose targeted interventions. Ultimately, the findings will contribute to the development of comprehensive public health strategies aimed at improving health outcomes in Odisha, addressing the need for the state and for other parts of the world also as the similar situation most likely to prevail in most part of the world or situation might be worse as Odisha still in the stage of transition to the highly modern society.

**Table 1:** Health Issues Among Urban Residents of Odisha (n=100).

| Sl. No. | Health Issue         | Number of People | Percentage (%) | Remarks                                |
|---------|----------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1       | Diabetes             | 24               | 24%            | Significant concern, lifestyle-related |
| 2       | Hypertension (BP)    | 30               | 30%            | Most prevalent health issue            |
| 3       | Digestive Issues     | 20               | 20%            | Linked to dietary habits               |
| 4       | Respiratory Issues   | 10               | 10%            | Possible pollution exposure            |
| 5       | Stress/Anxiety       | 16               | 16%            | Mental health issue                    |
| 6       | Obesity              | 14               | 14%            | Lifestyle factors contributing         |
| 7       | Skin Conditions      | 12               | 12%            | Common in urban environments           |
| 8       | Allergies            | 8                | 8%             | Seasonal and environmental factors     |
| 9       | Miscellaneous Issues | 5                | 5%             | Includes joint pain, fatigue           |
| 10      | No Notable Issues    | 4                | 4%             | Indicates good health                  |

**Table 2:** Health Issues Among Rural Residents of Odisha (n=100).

| Sl. No. | Health Issue         | Number of People | Percentage (%) | Remarks                            |
|---------|----------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1       | Diabetes             | 16               | 16%            | Increasing concern                 |
| 2       | Hypertension (BP)    | 20               | 20%            | Significant health issue           |
| 3       | Digestive Issues     | 30               | 30%            | Linked to dietary habits           |
| 4       | Respiratory Issues   | 12               | 12%            | Linked to environmental factors    |
| 5       | Stress/Anxiety       | 10               | 10%            | Economic pressures contributing    |
| 6       | Obesity              | 10               | 10%            | Emerging lifestyle issue           |
| 7       | Skin Conditions      | 6                | 6%             | Commonly reported                  |
| 8       | Allergies            | 8                | 8%             | Seasonal and environmental factors |
| 9       | Miscellaneous Issues | 7                | 7%             | Includes joint pain, fatigue       |
| 10      | No Notable Issues    | 6                | 6%             | Indicates good health              |

Observations for Urban Residents of Odisha

As per the study and outcome given in table 1 among the urban residents of Odisha, the health issues reflect the complexities of modern urban living. In a sample of 100 individuals, 30% reported hypertension, making it the most prevalent health concern, closely followed by diabetes, which affected 24% of individuals. Digestive issues were noted by 20% of the population, indicating possible dietary challenges. Stress and anxiety were prominent, with 16% highlighting mental health concerns associated with urban pressures. Obesity was reported by 14%, suggesting lifestyle factors such as sedentary behavior and poor dietary choices. Respiratory issues were noted by 10%, likely linked to urban pollution. Additionally, 12% reported skin conditions, and 8% experienced allergies. Miscellaneous health issues, such as joint pain and fatigue, were reported by 5%. Encouragingly, 4% of participants reported no notable health issues, indicating that some individuals maintain good health despite urban challenges. These findings suggest a need for comprehensive public health strategies that address both physical and mental health in urban settings.

As per the study and outcome given in table 2 in the rural population of Odisha, health issues present a

different profile, reflecting the unique challenges of rural living. In this sample of 100 individuals, digestive issues emerged as the most common concern, affecting 30% of participants, likely due to dietary deficiencies and limited access to diverse foods. Hypertension and diabetes were reported by 20% and 16% of individuals, respectively, indicating that these conditions are not confined to urban areas. Respiratory issues were reported by 12%, potentially linked to environmental factors such as smoke from cooking. Stress and anxiety were noted by 10% of participants, influenced by economic and social pressures in rural life. Obesity was also present, affecting 10% of individuals, showing that lifestyle factors are influencing rural health as well. Skin conditions were reported by 6%, and allergies were noted by 8%. Miscellaneous issues, including joint pain and fatigue, were reported by 7%. Notably, 6% of individuals indicated no notable health issues, suggesting that some rural residents are managing their health effectively. Overall, these observations emphasize the necessity for targeted health initiatives that address the specific needs and conditions of rural communities in Odisha.

The comparison between urban and rural health in Odisha reveals critical insights into the overall decline

in human health in modern times. While rural areas may seem to present fewer health issues, the data shows that significant health challenges persist across both settings. The high rates of hypertension and diabetes in urban residents reflect the stressors of urban living, while similar conditions in rural populations highlight that these issues are not exclusive to city dwellers. Moreover, dietary deficiencies and environmental factors contribute to health problems in rural areas. This situation calls for targeted health initiatives that address the specific needs of both communities. Comprehensive public health strategies are essential to combat the alarming trends and improve overall health outcomes,

underscoring the urgency for action in a time when human health is increasingly at risk

### Identifying Factors

Different factors which impact the human health needs to be analysed properly with root cause. Things which will mostly affect the human health are intakes to human body, the environment where they live and the socio-economic condition which affect the mental and physical health of human being. The things which are consumed by human bodies are becoming polluted day by day like air, water, beverages, food and thoughts as given in figure 1. All the elements need to be analysed in details.

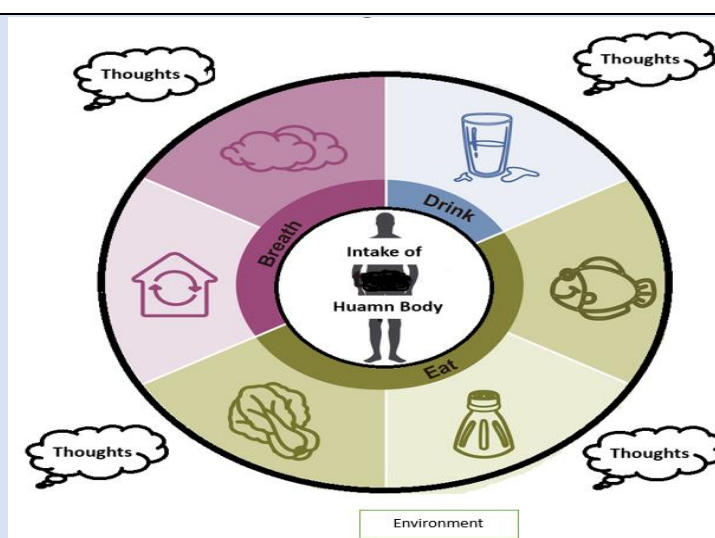


Figure 1: Different intakes to human body.

### Polluted air and Its Impact on Human Health Vehicle Emissions

Cars and trucks release nitrogen oxides and particulate matter, which can lead to respiratory diseases, cardiovascular issues, and aggravated asthma.

### Industrial Emissions

Factories emit pollutants such as sulfur dioxide and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), contributing to poor air quality and increasing the risk of lung cancer and heart disease.

### Burning Fossil Fuels

Power plants and residential heating that rely on coal, oil, or gas release greenhouse gases and other pollutants, exacerbating respiratory conditions and increasing mortality rates.

### Agricultural Practices

The use of fertilizers and pesticides can release ammonia and other harmful chemicals into the air,

leading to respiratory problems and potential neurological impacts.

### Polluted water and Its Impact on Human Health

#### Industrial Discharge

Factories discharging heavy metals and toxins into water bodies can cause serious health issues, including cancer, neurological disorders, and organ damage.

#### Agricultural Runoff

Pesticides and fertilizers leaching into water supplies can result in waterborne diseases and long-term health effects, including endocrine disruption and reproductive issues.

#### Plastic Pollution

Microplastics in drinking water can lead to various health concerns, as they may carry harmful chemicals and toxins that can affect gut health and overall well-being.

### Contaminated Drinking Water

Unsafe drinking water can lead to gastrointestinal diseases and chronic health conditions, especially in vulnerable populations like children and the elderly.

### **Polluted Beverages and their Impact on Human Health**

Polluted beverages, which include contaminated drinks such as sodas, juices, and alcoholic beverages, can have significant negative effects on human health. Here are some key impacts

#### **Chemical Contaminants**

Beverages can contain harmful substances like pesticides, heavy metals, and industrial chemicals that can lead to long-term health issues, including cancer and neurological disorders.

#### **Microbial Contamination**

Improper handling and storage can introduce harmful bacteria and viruses into beverages, leading to foodborne illnesses, gastrointestinal infections, and severe dehydration.

#### **Artificial Additives**

Many commercially processed drinks contain artificial sweeteners, colors, and preservatives, which may disrupt metabolic processes and contribute to conditions like obesity, diabetes, and allergic reactions.

#### **Excessive Sugar**

High sugar content in soft drinks and energy drinks can lead to obesity, dental issues, and increased risk of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

#### **Alcoholic Beverages**

Contaminants in alcoholic drinks, such as methanol or high levels of congeners, can cause acute poisoning, liver damage, and long-term health problems, including addiction and mental health disorders.

#### **Plastic Pollution**

Bottled beverages can leach harmful chemicals from plastic containers, such as bisphenol A (BPA), which is linked to hormonal disruptions and other health risks.

### **Polluted food and Its Impact on Human Health**

#### **Pesticide Residues**

Consumption of fruits and vegetables with pesticide residues can lead to acute poisoning and long-term health risks, including cancer and hormone disruption.

### **Food Processing**

Highly processed foods often contain artificial additives, preservatives, and unhealthy fats, contributing to obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.

### **Microbial Contamination**

Improper food handling can result in foodborne illnesses from bacteria like Salmonella and E. coli, leading to severe gastrointestinal issues and, in some cases, hospitalization.

### **Nutritional Deficiencies**

The prevalence of processed foods lacking essential nutrients can lead to deficiencies, affecting overall health, immune function, and energy levels.

Polluted thoughts and Its Impact on Human Health

### **Misinformation**

The spread of false information can lead to anxiety and confusion about health issues, affecting mental well-being and decision-making.

### **Social Media Impact**

Constant exposure to negative news and societal pressures can contribute to stress, anxiety, and depression, impacting overall mental health.

### **Echo Chambers**

Limited exposure to diverse viewpoints can foster unhealthy thought patterns and increase feelings of isolation and distrust, affecting social connections and mental resilience.

### **Cognitive Overload**

The barrage of information in the digital age can lead to mental fatigue, decreased attention span, and difficulties in processing information, impacting cognitive health.

### **Lack of Care and maintenance of human body**

The human body is the most complex machine that requires regular maintenance for optimal functioning; neglecting proper care can lead to various negative impacts on physical, mental, and emotional health. For instance, chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease may arise from sedentary behavior and inadequate physical activity, which can weaken muscles and bones, leading to musculoskeletal issues and decreased mobility. Poor nutrition and insufficient sleep can weaken the immune system and disrupt hormonal balance, affecting metabolism and mood. A lack of exercise further exacerbates muscle weakness, cardiovascular problems, and decreased bone density. Neglecting

yoga and flexibility training can result in reduced flexibility, poor posture, and increased stress levels. Additionally, poor time management can hinder self-care practices, heightening stress and disrupting sleep patterns. Mental health can suffer from cognitive decline and mood disorders, while neglecting emotional regulation through yoga may lead to chronic stress and burnout. Socially, inadequate maintenance can result in isolation, reduced motivation, and strained relationships. Long-term consequences include an increased risk of chronic diseases, dependency on medications, diminished quality of life, and a shortened lifespan, highlighting the critical importance of proactive health maintenance for overall well-being.

### **Remedies and Solutions for Health Impacts from Pollution**

To mitigate the negative impacts of pollution on health, a multifaceted approach is needed, focusing on prevention, education, and proactive health management.

#### **Air Quality Improvement**

To improve air quality and reduce pollution, it is essential to advocate for clean transportation by supporting policies that promote electric vehicles and public transportation, which can significantly decrease vehicle emissions. Enhancing indoor air quality is also crucial; this can be achieved by using air purifiers, maintaining proper ventilation, and regularly changing air filters in homes and workplaces. Additionally, reducing industrial emissions is vital, and this can be accomplished by encouraging regulations that limit emissions from factories and promoting cleaner production technologies. Finally, planting trees and creating green spaces in communities can greatly benefit air quality, as trees absorb pollutants, making community planting initiatives an important part of the solution.

#### **Water Quality Protection**

To protect water quality, it is essential to implement proper waste management practices that support initiatives aimed at reducing industrial discharge and ensuring the safe disposal of hazardous waste. Promoting sustainable agriculture is also crucial; advocating for practices that minimize the use of pesticides and fertilizers, such as organic farming, can significantly enhance water quality. Improving water treatment infrastructure is another vital step, as supporting investments in systems for clean drinking water and advanced wastewater treatment can help

ensure safe water for communities. Additionally, raising awareness about the impact of plastic use is important; reducing single-use plastics and promoting recycling programs can effectively minimize plastic pollution, further protecting aquatic ecosystems and improving overall water quality.

#### **Beverage Safety Measures**

To ensure beverage safety, it is important to choose natural and organic drinks that are free from artificial additives and harmful chemicals. Practicing safe beverage storage is also crucial; proper storage can help prevent microbial contamination, and being mindful of expiration dates ensures that drinks are consumed while still safe. Additionally, limiting the intake of sugary and alcoholic beverages can significantly lower health risks associated with high sugar consumption and toxin exposure. Supporting local producers is another effective measure; purchasing beverages from local sources that prioritize quality and safety can contribute to healthier options while also fostering community sustainability.

#### **Food Safety and Nutrition**

To enhance food safety and quality, it's essential to wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly to remove pesticide residues and any contaminants. Choosing whole, minimally processed foods helps avoid artificial additives and preservatives, contributing to better health. Practicing safe food handling is crucial; following proper food safety guidelines can significantly reduce the risk of microbial contamination. Additionally, educating individuals about nutrition and promoting awareness of balanced diets rich in essential nutrients can combat deficiencies and improve overall health, fostering a more informed and health-conscious community.

#### **Mental and Emotional Well-being**

To improve mental health and well-being, it's important to limit exposure to misinformation by critically evaluating sources and prioritizing credible health resources. Engaging in mindfulness practices such as yoga, meditation, or mindfulness can enhance emotional regulation and reduce stress. Encouraging healthy social connections is vital; fostering relationships and participating in community activities can help combat feelings of isolation. Additionally, managing digital consumption by setting boundaries on social media use and moderating news intake can reduce cognitive overload, promoting a healthier mental landscape.

#### **Overall care and maintenance of human body**

To promote overall health and well-being, it's essential to incorporate regular exercise into daily routines, which improves cardiovascular health and reduces stress. A balanced nutrition plan should focus on a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins to support optimal health. Prioritizing adequate sleep is crucial; maintaining good sleep hygiene ensures restorative rest, which is vital for cognitive and emotional health. Additionally, scheduling routine health check-ups helps monitor health status and catch potential issues early, allowing for timely intervention and better health outcomes.

### Community and Policy Action

To foster a healthier environment, it's important to advocate for health policies that aim to reduce pollution and improve public health. Educating and empowering communities through workshops and seminars can raise awareness about the impacts of pollution while promoting healthier lifestyles. Additionally, collaborating with local organizations focused on environmental health and wellness initiatives can strengthen community efforts and create a more sustainable approach to improving health outcomes.

### Conclusion

The research underscores the urgent need for targeted public health strategies to address the rising health challenges in Odisha. Both urban and rural communities face unique but interconnected health issues, with pollution and lifestyle choices emerging as critical determinants. Effective interventions must encompass policy changes to reduce environmental hazards, promote healthy living, and improve access to healthcare. Furthermore, fostering community engagement and awareness will be essential for sustaining health improvements. By implementing a holistic approach that addresses both physical and mental health, we can create healthier environments and enhance the quality of life for individuals across Odisha. The study calls for collaborative efforts among policymakers, health professionals, and communities to combat the pressing health concerns of the modern age.

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