

152nd SESSION of the WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD

(Geneva, 30 January- 7th February 2023)

9:30 AM (CET)



**Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Government of India**

Agenda 19: Behavioural Science for Better Health

(Word count: 301)

Thank you Chair,

The path to Universal Health Coverage requires an understanding of people's health-related behaviours.

Behaviour is often influenced by biological factors, human needs, personal and family goals, resources available, media, social and environmental/community factors and all these interact in a complex manner to influence health and illness, as well as recovery and long-term outcomes.

Behaviour sciences can play a major role in preventing negative health outcomes and promoting optimal health through individual, organisational and community change.

This was very evident during Covid-19, where concepts such as masking and physical distancing relied on bringing about changes in behaviour among individuals and in the community.

Community based engagement has helped India promote health seeking behaviour especially for maternal, child and adolescent health and in reducing risky behaviours such as substance use, as well as helping in motivating people to improve health, through promotion of healthy eating habits and engagement in physical activities such as sports, yoga.

Components such as lifestyle interventions, health promotional aspects etc are an important aspect of national programs for non-communicable diseases.

Behaviour Science has also helped in improving strategic health communication and addressing social determinants of health and illness.

Chair,

lack of uniform guidelines, well-established curricula, training modules and materials and the lack of adequately qualified and experienced teachers are barriers for the wider integration of behavioural and social sciences (BSS) into medical training.

Setting standards in the field of Behavioural sciences and enhanced capacity building will reduce the gap between behavioural scientists and public health leaders and foster collaboration for improved health outcomes.

Role of behavioural sciences in the management of chronic illnesses is important and need to be integrated in disease control programmes.

There is a need for more research, capacity-building, experimentation, investment, and improved collaboration between public health experts and behavioral scientists.

Thank you!