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Govt releases health data, calls it a step towards digitization

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The 11th edition of National Health Profile (NHP)-2015 prepared by the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI) was released by the union minister for health and family welfare, Mr J P Nadda on September 22, 2015. The E-book (digital version) of the annual document, which has been prepared for the first time, was also released.

The National Health Profile covers demographic, socio-economic, health status and health finance indicators, along with comprehensive information on health infrastructure and human resources in health. CBHI has been publishing National Health Profile every year since 2005.

Speaking at the function, the health minister stated that the data is an important source of navigation. "It helps in understanding the goals, our strengths and weaknesses and it is also an important means to strategize. Good compiled data enables the policymakers to make evidence-based policies and aids effective implementation of various schemes," he added.

The health minister said that the e-book of NHP-2015 is a step towards realizing Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi's vision of Digital India. He stated, digital documents give us an opportunity for wider dissemination of information. He added that we now need to work towards converting documented data into "real-time" data. While digital data helps us to be more efficient, real time data helps to monitor our schemes and efforts in real time. Mr Nadda mentioned further, "Analysis of the data, to understand what it narrates, is equally important. Interpretation of data enhances its value, he said. It is necessary for people who work with data to be skilled in its analyses also. He suggested holding seminars/workshops to further that goal."

Speaking on the occasion, Mr B P Sharma, health secretary stated that data is not only important for understanding the health indicators of the country, but it also provides an opportunity to monitor the situation. "The National Health Profile - 2015 indicates that significant progress has been made in the country for various health outcomes, which is an encouraging signal," he said.

The National Health Profile highlights substantial health information under six major indicators viz. demographic indicators giving information about population statistics and vital statistics, socio-economic indicators which gives the information on education, social indicators, economic indicators, employment, housing and amenities, drinking water and sanitation, health status indicators which provide information about the incidence and prevalence of common communicable and non-communicable diseases, reproductive and child health according to States/UTs and a short overview of national programme for prevention and control of cancer, diabetes, cardio-vascular disease and stroke (NPCDCS).

The health finance provides an overview of public expenditure on health, household out of pocket expenditure (Oop) on health, health coverage and insurance, external assistance to government for health sector programmes and public expenditure on health with international comparison along with explanatory notes on health data.

The section on human resources provides an overview of availability of manpower working in the health sector, while health infrastructure provides details of medical and dental colleges, AYUSH institutes, nursing courses and paramedical courses, admissions to BDS and MDS courses.

Also present at the release function were director general of health services, Dr Jagdish Prasad and senior officers of the ministry of health and CBHI.