



Industrialization Effects on Agriculture and Health

ALA SARITHA¹ AND ROHIT JANGRA²

¹Ala Saritha, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai

²Rohit Jangra, Department of Community Medicine and School of Public Health, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh. Email: rohit2000jangraraj@gmail.com

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Abstract: Industrialization has profoundly impacted agriculture and human health in India. Rapid industrialization and urbanization transformed agricultural practices through mechanized farming, monocultures, agrochemicals, and GMOs, boosting productivity but causing soil degradation, biodiversity loss, pollution, and food safety issues. Increased industrial animal product consumption contributed to chronic diseases. Meanwhile, industrial pollution directly harmed human health via contamination. As India's population grows, sustainably balancing agricultural output, environmental protection, and nutritional quality emerges as a crucial challenge. This article reviews evidence on these issues and discusses potential solutions through sustainable farming practices, environmental regulation, and enhanced healthcare. Managing industrial development to safeguard the environment and population health will be critical to India's food security.

Keywords: Agriculture, Biodiversity, Health, Industrialization, Urbanization

Introduction

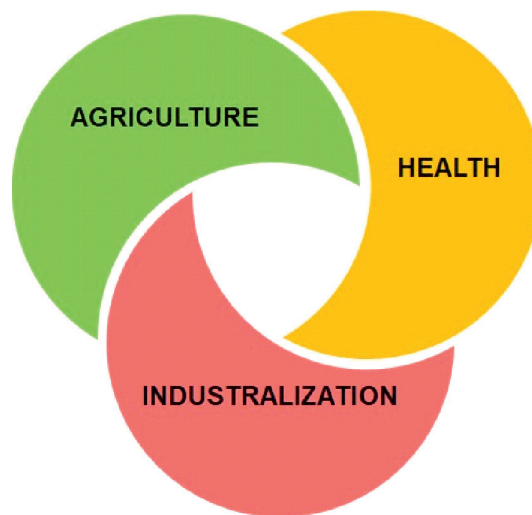
Agriculture significantly contributes to the Indian economy, accounting for 17.8% of its GDP. India is also one of the world's largest exporters of agricultural products, with rice being the primary export, followed by spices, sugar, meat, and other products. According to the 2011 Census, 54.6% of India's population is engaged in agriculture (Wanole, 2018). However, the rapid increase in industrialization has caused significant changes in the Indian economy, affecting agriculture. With the adoption of new and advanced technology and chemicals for high-yield food products, the use of insecticides and pesticides has increased, causing a reduction in soil fertility and food quality. Genetically modified hybrid fruits and vegetable seeds have also been introduced, further impacting people's health (Horrihan et al., 2002). Therefore,

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industrialization's effects on agriculture have significant implications for the economy and the population's health.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, the world's economy and the health of societies were affected. Due to restrictions on movements during the pandemic, there was a decrease in the industrial sector's contribution to the Indian economy, resulting in job losses. This has led to increased agricultural practices in some states of India. Agriculture is the only sector that has shown a positive growth of 3.4% in the financial year of 2020-2021 and has improved by 3.9% in 2021-2022.



Industrialization Impact on Agriculture and Health

India is a developing country with a population of 1.38 billion, which puts a more significant burden on food production as the population increases. To meet the demand for food, people have started using artificial methods. Health is also an important aspect, especially with an increase in the population. Malnutrition and hunger are significant health concerns in India. Due to the increased demand for health facilities, there is a direct impact on health efficiency and inflation in health services. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals for 2015 include "Zero Hunger" as the second goal to be achieved by 2030, followed by improving people's health by 2030 (Wallinga, 2009). Industrialization has negatively affected agriculture and health despite being the primary sector responsible for developing the Indian economy. Therefore, industrialization, health, and agriculture are interconnected, and changes in one component directly affect the others.

Industrialization's Impact on Agriculture

During British rule, industrialization was initiated in India, which became very important for economic development. Rapid industrialization led to several problems in rural and urban areas. People from rural areas started moving to urban areas for employment, education, and other opportunities, which increased the demand for basic needs like food, shelter, and water. An increase in food demand led to an increase in animal product consumption, which created some severe health issues like heart disease, cancer, and other chronic illnesses. Migration also caused a reduction in agricultural practices and an increase in urbanization and industrialization, which ultimately led to deforestation (Horrigan et al., 2002).

Urbanization and industrialization are interlinked as urbanization is a significant factor responsible for industrialization. The increase in industrial demand and employment resulted in people giving away agricultural land to construct industries, hoping to secure jobs for future generations and the development of the areas. However, this shift towards industrialization caused people to shift towards monoculture in the agricultural sector, which led to decreased soil fertility, increased environmental pollution, and loss of biodiversity. The use of harmful chemicals in industries and the lack of proper industrial disposal led to environmental pollution, which affected the yield and performance of soil (Hendrickson and James, 2005). As the population of India continues to increase, the issue of food security is becoming more pressing. Most people are unable to meet their daily calorie intake. They are facing the problems of malnutrition and hunger, which has led people to opt for industrial agriculture to increase food production.

The advent of industrialization has profoundly impacted agriculture, transforming farming practices and shaping the global food system. Mechanization was one of the most significant changes brought about by industrialization, reducing the reliance on human and animal labour. The introduction of machinery and technology resulted in a substantial increase in production efficiency, leading to a doubling of production in U.S. farms between 1950 and 2000, with reduced labour inputs ("Industrialization of Agriculture," 2022). This shift towards mechanization revolutionized farming practices, enhancing productivity and output.

However, the industrialization of agriculture raised ethical dilemmas for farmers. Economic pressures and constraints imposed by industrial farming practices limited farmers' choices, potentially leading to unethical decision-making (Horrigan et al., 2002). The shift towards industrial agriculture also raised concerns

about sustainability, equity, and ethical implications of constrained choices in farming.

Industrialization's Impact on Health

Industrialization has a significant impact on human health, presenting a complex interplay of advantages and disadvantages. While industrialization leads to increased living standards, economic prosperity, and improved healthcare services, it also brings about environmental challenges such as air and water pollution. Pollution from industries, like air and water pollution, can cause essential diseases in humans. Industrial pollution is a critical concern affecting public health in the most industrialized countries globally. Industrial activities release toxins into the air and water, contributing to 4.2 million deaths annually and affecting human health through carcinogens, disease carriers, and other harmful substances (Rahman et al., 2021). Studies reveal a direct link between industrial pollution, represented by CO₂ and nitrous oxide emissions, and adverse health impacts such as increased death rates (Singh Gujral and Singh, 2022), ("Industrialization, health and human welfare," 2022). Mitigating industrial pollution emerges as a crucial policy agenda to improve health outcomes.

Air pollution is a significant cause of respiratory diseases such as asthma and COPD. The release of harmful chemicals from industries is causing the depletion of the ozone layer, which in turn is leading to skin diseases like skin cancer in humans. Additionally, releasing harmful chemicals in water pollutes freshwater bodies, making them unsuitable for human consumption and causing water-borne diseases like typhoid and cholera. Research on the impact of industrialization on health reveals that despite improvements in material living standards, issues like rising working time and income inequality have complicated assessments of human welfare. The historical evidence demonstrates that industrialization has historically led to disruptions, deprivation, disease, and death during the process of economic transformation (Szreter, 2004).

Occupational health is also becoming a significant public health concern, and implementing ergonomic solutions is necessary to protect workers from physical and mental disorders. Therefore, industrialization not only affects agriculture but also has a significant impact on human health, increasing the demand for health services. This underscores the need for a comprehensive understanding of the health implications of industrialization beyond economic measures to address the multifaceted effects on human well-being.

Agriculture's Impact on Health

Agriculture's impact on health is profound and interconnected, with implications for both positive contributions and challenges. Agriculture serves as a vital source of nutrition and livelihood, significantly influencing overall well-being as both lack and excess can lead to major health problems such as malnutrition and obesity (Hawkes and Ruel, 2006). In the past, agriculture relied on internal recycling of organic matter, natural rainfall patterns, and built-in biological mechanisms that yielded modest and stable crop yields with substantial nutrition. Nowadays, people spend more money searching for organic food because farming practices use chemicals like insecticides and pesticides that reduce food quality. Sustainable agricultural practices can enhance food quality and nutrient levels, potentially reducing the risk of chronic diseases (Kirkhorn and Schenker, 2001).

Technological advancements have made farming more sophisticated through genetically engineered seeds and combining insecticides and pesticides to mitigate antimicrobial resistance during cultivation. However, agriculture also poses health risks through factors like pesticide exposure, foodborne illnesses, environmental degradation, and increased toxicity caused by allergic reactions in humans. Collaboration between the agricultural and health sectors is crucial to address these challenges effectively. Governments play a pivotal role in ensuring food safety as a public health priority, emphasizing the need for global leadership, capacity building, and sustainable practices to improve health outcomes globally (Hawkes and Ruel, 2006).

The intricate relationship between agriculture and health underscores the need for coordinated action to harness opportunities for positive impact while mitigating negative effects. Recognizing the bidirectional links between agriculture and health presents an opportunity for sectors to work together to find solutions to each other's problems. Health affects agriculture through its influence on demand for agricultural outputs, while agriculture affects health by producing food that impacts nutrition and foodborne illnesses. Addressing these complex interactions requires integrated policies, good governance, and capacity building at all levels to translate conceptual links into actionable strategies on the ground.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the multifaceted impacts of industrialization on agriculture and human health underscore the need for a balanced and coordinated approach. While

industrial development has boosted agricultural productivity through mechanization and technological innovations, it has also precipitated significant challenges like soil degradation, biodiversity loss, environmental pollution, food safety issues, and a rise in chronic diseases linked to industrialized diets. Concurrently, industrial activities have had detrimental effects on human health through air, water, and land contamination, besides occupational hazards in factory settings. Mitigating these adverse impacts emerges as a crucial policy imperative.

Moving forward, achieving sustainable progress will require harmonizing industrial growth with environmental protection, agricultural sustainability, and population health priorities. This calls for a multi-sectoral collaboration involving diverse stakeholders to transition towards regenerative farming practices, stringent pollution control measures, clean technologies, robust food safety standards, promotion of nutrient-rich diets, and enhanced healthcare access. By recognizing and addressing the intricate linkages between these domains, societies can strive towards a future that synergizes economic development, food security, environmental integrity, and optimal human well-being outcomes. A holistic policy approach informed by these complex interconnections is key to navigating the trade-offs and leveraging the potential synergies.

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