

## **PROMOTING HEALTH IN THE NORTH WESTERN STATES IN INDIA: TURNING A DREAM OF SUSTAINABLE HEALTHCARE INTO REALITY**

by

Harpreet Kaur,

Research Scholar,

Department of Political Science,

Panjab University, Chandigarh

Email id: harpreet0561@gmail.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*Good health and well being is one of the significant subjects inculcated in sustainable development goals brought in by the United Nations in the year 2015. The targets have been set to achieve equitable and universal health care at the global levels. The member countries of the UN are proceeding towards the set goals by taking the road to sustainable development. With an aim to track sustainability in the field of health and wellbeing, this research paper attempts to locate the health care policies and schemes with special reference to north western states in India. Descriptive analysis of the health care schemes clearly depicts the real picture of health care management in Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. Along with that the study marks the signs of progress and the matters of concerns that are essential for creating sustainable healthcare in the mentioned states.*

Keywords: Sustainability, health, policy, Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh

### **INTRODUCTION**

The topic of health is considered as basic and crucial indicator for the overall development of any nation. This subject could also be seen as part of Sustainable Development Goals. The goal no 3 brings forth attention over good health and well being. The global community is committed for attaining equitable health care till 2030.

Numerous policy frameworks have been laid by the governments all around the world for attaining the aforesaid goal. Taking the same path, the government of India has taken various innovative measures for making the vision of 'Ayushmaan Bharata' into a reality. India is on the national health protection mission and abiding, are the states in India which are working at the regional level to achieve the health related goals. This research paper explores and analyses the health related policy framework set by the north western states, namely Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. The study further traces the performance of the state governments in combating various communicable and non communicable diseases. The real and current scenarios are tracked down throughout the study.

### **HEALTH POLICY ANALYSIS IN HARYANA, PUNJAB AND HIMACHAL PRADESH**

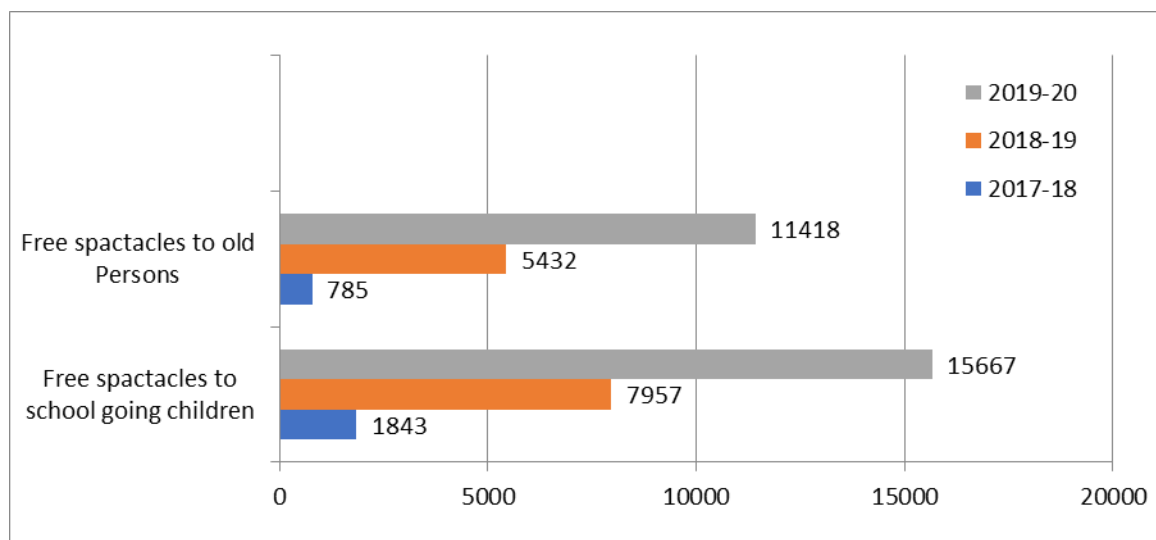
This section depicts the health care policy framework with special reference to the selected three states (Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh). The slogan of 'No. 1 Haryana' seems relevant while witnessing the progress attained by the state in the last decade. By the initiatives of the state government, end number of developments has been made in the field of health and wellbeing. State Surveillance Unit and District Surveillance Units has also been set up in the state of Haryana under the Integrated Disease Surveillance Project (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare-Government of India, n.d.). The project introduced by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare in 2004 is now covered under the National Health Mission of India. The project aims to strengthen disease surveillance system while monitoring the emerging trends in the diseases. In addition to that, the state emphasizes to control both communicable and non communicable diseases by adopting efficient strategies. Adhering to the global commitment towards controlling epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, tropical diseases, hepatitis, water borne diseases and various other communicable diseases, government of Haryana has started a Hepatitis Control Programme in PGIMS, Rohtak. Starting from PGIMS, Rohtak, the programme was extended to the entire state in the year 2017. In addition to that, the state abides by the aims of National Viral Hepatitis Control Program. Numerous free medical facilities (free diagnosis, screening and treatment) are

provided in the state, under the programme. Enhancing the awareness regarding hepatitis has also become a key objective of the programme. (National Viral Hepatitis Control Program, n.d.)

The National Strategic Plan has been adopted by the government of India for eliminating malaria. The government of Haryana is moving on the same lines for making malaria free Haryana. Gurugram district in Haryana is reported to have zero cases of malaria in the year 2023 and if the records maintain the similar trend, then Gurugram, could be declared as malaria free district of Haryana (Pati, I., 2024).

Apart from that, district civil hospitals and Health & Wellness Centers in Haryana are providing facilities for controlling non communicable diseases. Fully equipped physiotherapy units are found in all the district civil hospitals of the state. Various rehabilitation services are available in the districts of Ambala, Nuh, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Sonipat & Karnal (National Programme for the Health Care of the Elderly, n.d.). With an aim to combat the issue of vision impairment, the state government has set up 3 eye banks, 21 eye donation centers in government medical colleges and hospitals. 3 eye banks are under process in Sonapat, Karnal and Mewat districts. Along with that, 83 vision centers have also been set up in the state.

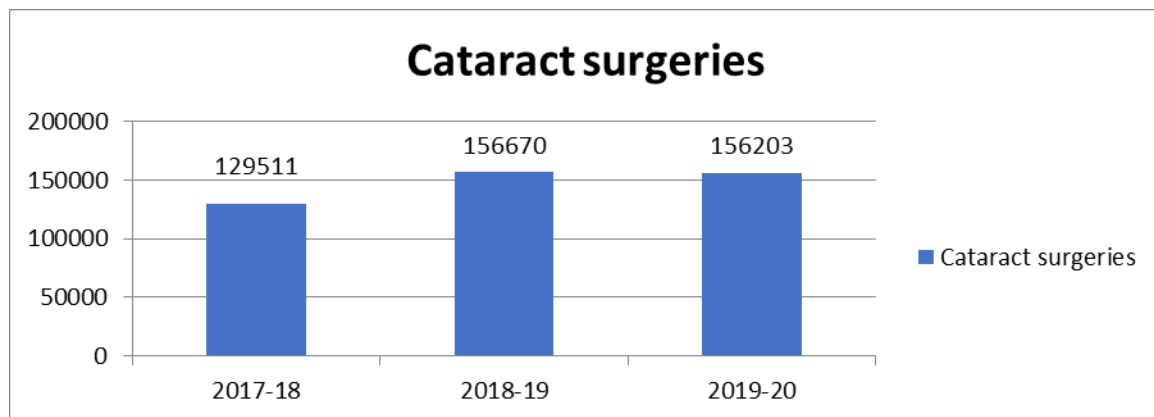
**Graph: 1. 1: Achievements of Haryana government**



Source: <file:///C:/Users/Hp/Desktop/2023011748.pdf>

Graph 1.1 presents the achievements of government of Haryana, where they have distributed free spectacles to the school going children and old age persons. The progress made over the years could be clearly depicted in the graph. The number of spectacles distributed to the school going children has risen from 1843 to 15667 between 2017-18 and 2019-20. The number of spectacles distributed to old age persons has also risen from 785 to 11418 between 2017-18 and 2019-20. Not just that the cataract surgeries have also been performed in the state and a similar upward trend could be seen over the years as shown in the Graph: 1.2, below,

**Graph: 1.2: Cataract surgeries performed by the government of Haryana**



Source: <file:///C:/Users/Hp/Desktop/2023011748.pdf>

The graph shows the rising number of cataract surgeries performed with the initiatives of the state of Haryana over the years. The numbers has risen from 129511 to 156203 from 2017-2019. Apart from that, under the National Leprosy Eradication Programme the government of Haryana has made progress in bringing down the number of leprosy cases in the state. Less than 1 leprosy cases per 10000 persons is seen in Haryana. Prevalence rate in the year 2016-17 was 0.92 per 10000 persons and the prevalence rate has further lowered to 0.12 per 10000 persons in the year 2022-23 (Leprosy, n.d.). The government of Haryana also abides by the instructions set under the Mental Healthcare Act of 2017.

In addition to that Family welfare programme has also been brought up by the state of Haryana. Under the programme, couples are provided a “Basket of Contraceptives” that is to offer all methods of contraceptives from which an individual can choose according

to his/her choice. It will further help in stabilizing the population and lower the number of unwanted births. (Family Welfare Programme, 2018). All these measures have been undertaken by the government of Haryana that are contributing in the wellbeing of the people of the state.

The state of Himachal Pradesh, known for breath taking scenery and beautiful lush valleys has also taken the road to development. Keeping with Haryana, '*Sukh ki Sarkar*' is committed to provide all the health care benefits to people of the valley. The state abides by Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna, a national level scheme that was launched in 2018. Along with that, the state is implementing Mukhya Mantri Himachal Health Care Scheme (HIMCARE) since 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2019. Under HIMCARE Scheme free medical treatments are provided upto Rs. 5 lakh per year per family. Under the scheme, yearly premium amount differs for different vulnerable sections of society. Sahara Yojana is another scheme brought by the government of Himachal that aims to provide financial assistance to the patients coming from economically poorer sections. The monthly amount of Rs. 3000 is provided to the patients suffering from specific illness. **Since 2018, financial benefits are provided under Mukhya Mantri Chikitsa Sahayata Kosh. The scheme aims to enhance the health care mechanism by providing** assistance to needy poor people of the state who are having chronic diseases and serious health complications. **Various medical expenses including OPD expenses are covered under the scheme. Financial assistance under the scheme is prioritized for the families showing lower annual income levels** (Mukhya Mantri Himachal Health Care Scheme, n.d.). **The progress of the state could be seen through the Epidemic Prone Diseases Report that came in 2022. The report shows the data which conveys the progress attained by the state in building sustainable living conditions. Zero deaths were reported from dengue, Swine Flu, Hepatitis A and Hepatitis E.** (Epidemic Prone Diseases report, 2022). The efforts of the government make the state as one of the frontrunner states in India.

Along with that, holding the vision of 'Rangla Punjab, Sehatmand Punjab', government of Punjab is dedicated to improving access, quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the public health system. Nearly 800 Aam Aadmi Clinics has been set in the state under

National Health Mission. (Health, n.d.) **Mukh Mantri Sehat Bima Yojana complies with Ayushman Bharat** Scheme of the central government and it forms the flagship State Health Insurance Scheme for the beneficiaries of State of Punjab. It was launched on 20 August 2019. The scheme aims to cover 65% of the population of Punjab. It is entitlement based cashless health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year. Paperless medical treatment further makes the process smooth for the patients and saves their time. (AB PM-JAY MMSBY, n.d.). Bhagat Puran Singh Sehat Bima Yozna hold the similar aim as that of **Mukh Mantri Sehat Bima Yojana** and free treatment up to Rs. 50,000/ is rendered to the blue card holder under the scheme.

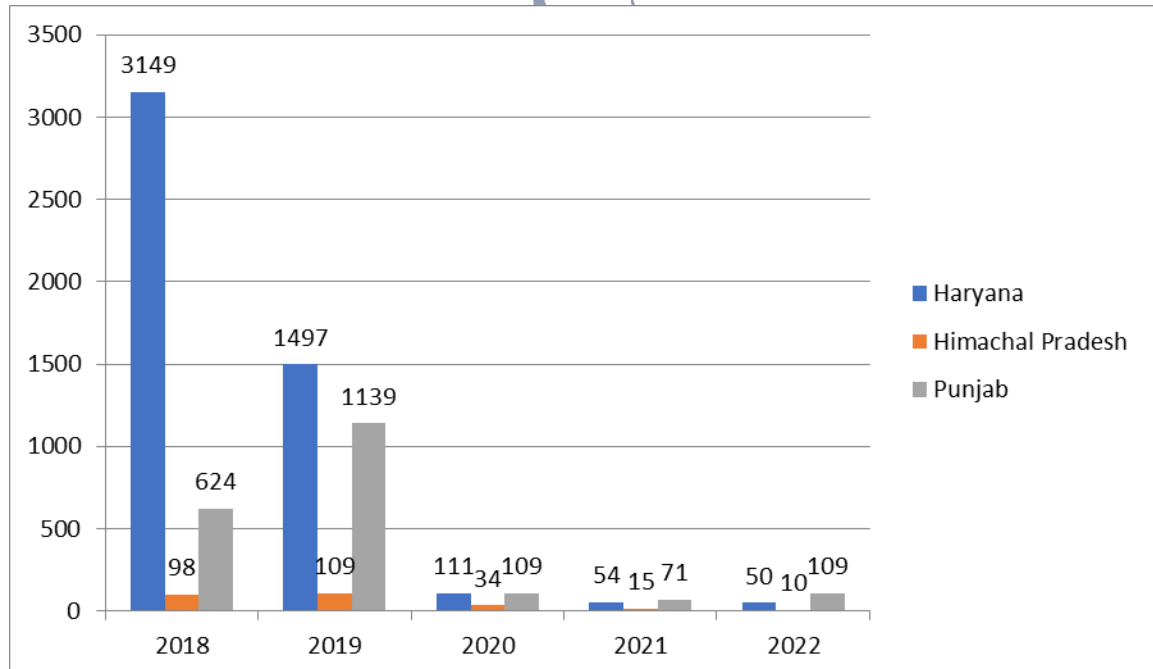
Under Janni Surkhiya Yojna, financial assistance is provided to the pregnant women. Under the programme of Shishu Surkhiya Karyakaram, cost free delivery services are provided to the prganant women throughout their pregnancy. Even the facilities of zero medical expenses for the newborn child are provided till the age of one year. There is another scheme called Kanjak Sambhal, that focuses upon bringing zero expense medical treatments for the girl children under 5 years of age. With a vision to fight cancer, Mukh Mantri Cancer Rahat Cosh Yozna, provides financial assistance to the cancer patients by providing free cancer treatment upto Rs. 1.5 lakh. Mukh Mantri Hepatitis C Relief Fund has been formed for meeting the medical expenses of the patients. Looking at the vulnerabilities of Persons with Special Abilities, District Disability and Rehabilitation Centre has been set in the state, scholarship scheme for disabled students is provided, free/half Fare travel facility to blind/handicapped persons in government buses is provided, assistive devices are distributed, free coaching for students with disabilities is planned by the state government. Along with that state government also stresses upon creating employment opportunities for them (Government Beneficial Schemes, n.d.). While winding up, it could be mentioned that the measures undertaken by all the three states are setting them on the path of development. This does not take us away from the fact that improved strategies of the government can further bring positive outcomes.

**BUILDING SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: SIGNS OF PROGRESS AND MATTERS OF QUESTION**

After tracing various health status indicators through the ‘National Health Profile- 2023’, an overview of various communicable and non communicable diseases has been provided in this section. Different health status indicators that show signs of progress and matters of concerns in the health care sector have become the highlight of this section.

India has attained success in the fields of health while moving towards creating equitable health care facilities for all. On the similar lines the states of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab has reached key stages. In case of communicable diseases, all the three states has worked tirelessly in combating various the communicable diseases. The diseases like Kala- azar, Acute Encephalitis Syndrome and Japanese Encephalitis are found to be negligible in the three states as per the year 2022. Along with that, malaria eradication drive is growing. The data provided in graph below shows the recent trends over malaria cases in three states.

**Graph: 1.3. Malaria Cases in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab (2018-2022)**

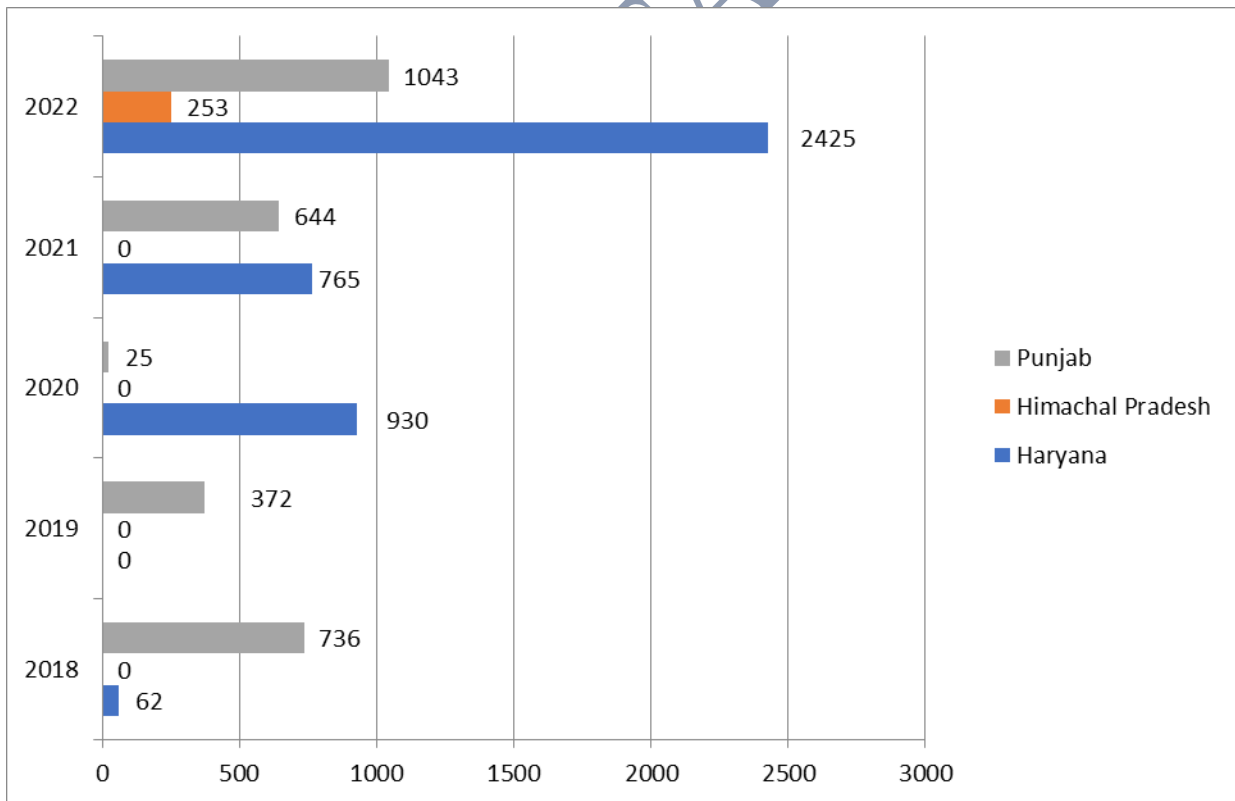


Source: [https://cbhidghs.mohfw.gov.in/WriteReadData/1892s/Final\\_Central%20Bureau%20of%20Health%20Intelligence%20July%202024.pdf](https://cbhidghs.mohfw.gov.in/WriteReadData/1892s/Final_Central%20Bureau%20of%20Health%20Intelligence%20July%202024.pdf)

The data shows the falling trend in the cases of malaria in Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. It should also be noted that there are zero reported deaths, caused by malaria. It points towards the progressive health care system in all the three states.

Despite making a progress in health care management, there are various concerns that call for the attention. State governments need to bring more attention upon the issue of raising Chikungunya Cases as shown in graph 1.4, below.

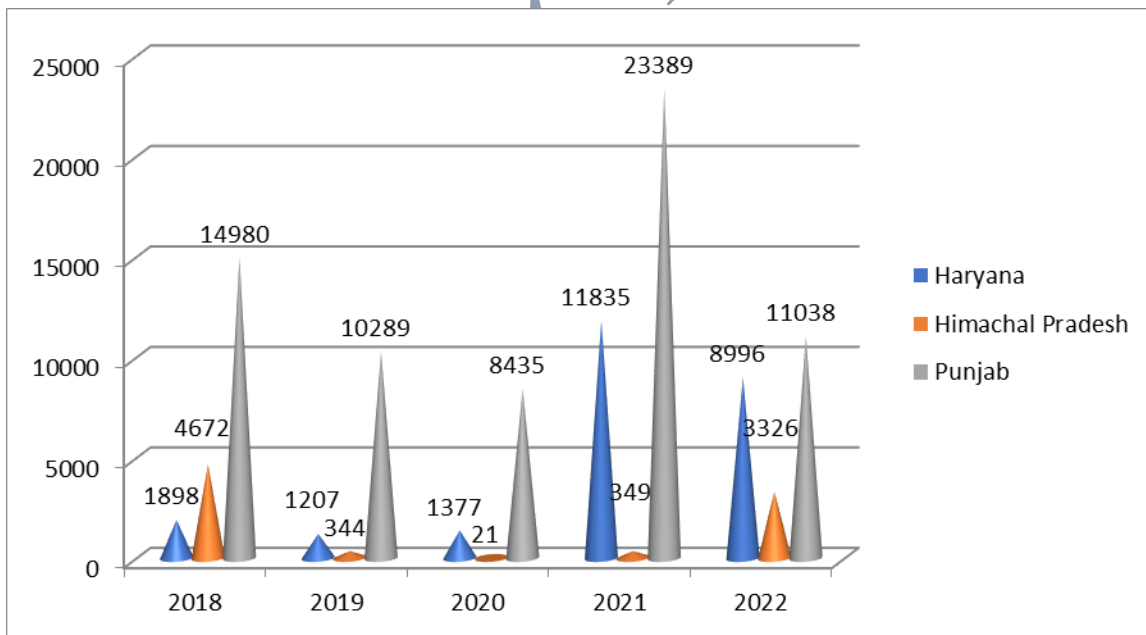
**Graph: 1.4. Chikungunya Cases in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab (2018-2022)**



Source: [https://cbhidghs.mohfw.gov.in/WriteReadData/l892s/Final\\_Central%20Bureau%20of%20Health%20Intelligence%20July%202024.pdf](https://cbhidghs.mohfw.gov.in/WriteReadData/l892s/Final_Central%20Bureau%20of%20Health%20Intelligence%20July%202024.pdf)

The data shows the upwards trend when it come to see the number of Chikungunya cases in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab (2018-2022). Between 2018 and 2022, cases in Haryana has raised from 62 to 2425, in case of Himachal Pradesh the cases has abruptly raised from 0 to 253 and in case of Punjab, the cases has raised from 736 to 1043. The trend in the cases of dengue in three states also raises the concerns as the number don't show the downward patterns. As seen in the graph below, Punjab needs to be more alert of dengue as the number of dengue cases reached the peak in 2021 in Punjab. The number of dengue cases is lower in Himachal Pradesh and Haryana comparatively.

**Graph: 1.5. Dengue Cases in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab (2018-2022)**



Source: [https://cbhidghs.mohfw.gov.in/WriteReadData/l892s/Final\\_Central%20Bureau%20of%20Health%20Intelligence%20July%202024.pdf](https://cbhidghs.mohfw.gov.in/WriteReadData/l892s/Final_Central%20Bureau%20of%20Health%20Intelligence%20July%202024.pdf)

Concerning about non communicable diseases, most specifically, cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and stroke, table 1.1 makes the picture clear.

**Table: 1.1. State wise cases of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (2022)**

State	Diabetes	Hypertensio n	Cardiovascul ar Diseases	Stroke	Common Cancers
Haryana	97,628	1,09,876	2,990	228	1,649
Himachal Pradesh	21,913	37,050	426	145	3,800
Punjab	1,96,389	2,34,219	8,859	1,256	7,034

Source: [https://cbhidghs.mohfw.gov.in/WriteReadData/l892s/Final\\_Central%20Bureau%20of%20Health%20Intelligence%20July%202024.pdf](https://cbhidghs.mohfw.gov.in/WriteReadData/l892s/Final_Central%20Bureau%20of%20Health%20Intelligence%20July%202024.pdf)

It should be noted that the number of patients possessing diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular diseases and stroke is higher in case of Punjab as compared to the other two states. Yet the data depicting these diseases in Haryana and Himachal Pradesh cannot be overseen. Addressing the health issues in the three states requires a multi-pronged approach encompassing prevention, treatment, and public health initiatives. This includes addressing the root causes of health disparities through social and economic interventions, improving access to healthcare, and promoting healthy behaviors. Additionally, research and data collection are crucial to understand the specific health needs of each region.

## CONCLUSION

Cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases, malignant and other neoplasms, digestive diseases, fever of unknown origin, unintentional injuries: other than motor vehicle accidents, perinatal conditions, respiratory infections, unintentional injuries: motor vehicle accidents are top causes of death in between 2017-19. The health care policies should be made while paying attention towards such facts. Improving the healthcare system in India requires a multi-pronged approach that addresses infrastructure, accessibility, affordability, and quality of care. **Strengthening primary healthcare**, increasing healthcare funding, improving medical workforce, enhancing health insurance, affordable healthcare and adopting the disease preventive approach are the key strategies that can help in enhancing the health care mechanism in India.

**REFERENCES**

*AB PM-JAY MMSBY.* (n.d.). State Health Agency.  
<https://sha.punjab.gov.in/shapunjab/index.php>

*Epidemic Prone Diseases report.* (2022). Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Himachal Pradesh.  
[https://himachal.nic.in/showfile.php?lang=1&dpt\\_id=19&level=1&lid=21491&sublinkid=21175](https://himachal.nic.in/showfile.php?lang=1&dpt_id=19&level=1&lid=21491&sublinkid=21175)

*Family Welfare Programme.* (2018, April 1). Health Department, Haryana.  
<https://haryanahealth.gov.in/scheme/mahatma-gandhi-national-rural-employment-guarantee-act/>

*Government Beneficial Schemes.* (n.d.). Government of Punjab.  
[https://pulsa.punjab.gov.in/media/documents/Govt.\\_Beneficial\\_Schemes\\_Booklets.pdf](https://pulsa.punjab.gov.in/media/documents/Govt._Beneficial_Schemes_Booklets.pdf)

*Health.* (n.d.). Punjab Development Commission. <https://pdc.punjab.gov.in/en/pdc-key-sectors/health-and-social-welfare/>

*LEPROSY.* (n.d.). Health Department Haryana, India.  
<https://haryanahealth.gov.in/scheme/leprosy/>

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare-Government of India. (n.d.). Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme(IDSP). <https://idsp.mohfw.gov.in/>.

*Mukhya Mantri Himachal Health Care Scheme.* (n.d.). Swasthya Bima Yojana Society.  
<https://www.hpsbys.in/>

*National Programme for the Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE).* (n.d.). Government of Haryana.

<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s31177967c7957072da3dc1db4ceb30e7a/uploads/2023/01/2023011795.pdf>

*National Viral Hepatitis Control Program (NVHCP).* (n.d.). Health Department, Haryana. <https://s31177967c7957072da3dc1db4ceb30e7a.s3waas.gov.in/provider/state-government/>

Pati, I. (2024, October 21). *Malaria Cases on Rise in Hry: Tally 168 Now Double Last Year's Count*. Times of India. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/gurgaon/surge-in-malaria-cases-in-haryana-hits-168-nearly-doubles-from-2023/articleshow/114404829.cms>

CGCTA