

Lecture on: Anthropology and public health exploring avenues for health promotion

On the 30th of August 2024, the department of Anthropology, D.H.S.K. College organized a lecture on " Anthropology and Public Health: Exploring Avenues for Health Promotion", delivered by Dr. Jenita Baruah, Associate Professor of Community Medicine, Assam Medical College and Hospital, Dibrugarh

This report explores the intersection of anthropology and public health, with a focus on identifying avenues for health promotion. Anthropology, with its emphasis on understanding cultural, social, and behavioral aspects of human societies, offers valuable insights that can enhance public health initiatives. By integrating anthropological perspectives into public health strategies, health promotion efforts can be more culturally sensitive, effective, and sustainable.

Dr. Jenita Baruah began by talking about health and well-being. What is meant by "health" in actuality. She talked on the many facets of the health wheel, including environmental, social, mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical elements. The several health determinants, which include factors like age, sex, genetics, lifestyle, social and community networks, etc., were also explained to us.

Dr. Jenita discussed how average people's dietary habits are influencing their health. She mentioned a few of them, naming -Lack of or imbalanced dietary intake, excessive pork, crab, snail, and smoked fish consumption, salt, and colacasia—which mostly oxalates renal stones—are among examples. Additionally, a number of sociocultural habits contributed to the decline in health. These behaviors could include:pregnancy-related regional customs and traditions that include feeding habits, Medical services,Techniques used in animal rearing, Japanese encephalitis and other illnesses spread by vectors, Scrub typhus, etc. Additionally, childbirth customs like covering the cord with goat poop or cow dung,High-risk behaviors including HIV, STIs, Hepatitis B and C, as well as socioeconomic circumstances.

Therefore, wellness and health promotion initiatives are essential for preventing them. Dr. Jenita listed some strategies for advancing wellbeing and health. She talked about the four pillars of health promotion, which are as follows:

- (1) product: the intended healthy behavior
- (2) Price: Adopting the desired healthy behavior comes at a significantly higher cost than anything else.
- (3) place and time: wherever you go or what is now happening, make every effort to enhance your health.
- (4) Promotion: adopting healthy information, attitudes, and practices in order to express and promote healthy behaviors. Additionally, she talked about five measures that can be taken to promote health: building supportive environments, enhancing community action, developing personal skills, developing healthy public policy, and reorienting health care.

Ultimately, she conveyed some important points, which are as follows:

- Changes in behavior don't happen suddenly.
- Actions speak louder.
- Everyone achieves more when they work together.
- Never lose sight of the audience.

- Messages inspire action.
- Teamwork,etc.

At the end of the event, there was an interactive part between the speaker and the students, where students expressed their queries regarding health and wellness.