VITAL HEALTH AND STATISTICS

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"Statistics (as used in the sense of data) are numerical statements of that capable of being analysis and interpretation and the science of statistics is a study of the principles and methods used in the collection, presentation, analysis and interpretation of numerical data in any sphere of enquiry." So, Statistics means, the science of facts and figures, a collection of number, methods dealing with condition of people, society, production, consumption and so on. Whenever we want to compare any rate of things, or consider the merits or demerits of something, we have to look to the collection of figures made previously on similar objects. When this statistics refers to matter of Health we may call it HEALTH STATISTICS.

In general sense health means the absence of disease. Health is a natural and harmonious state of bodily organs and of the mind of an individual as regards to both sensation and functions. It is a state of harmony between the person as a whole and the cosmos. The standard of normal health differs according to race, climate, heredity, occupation and mode of living. So, even if we cannot detect any disease in a person, it cannot be presumed to be a specimen of good health.

Let us take the example of a young man of twenty years, 5'-6" in Ht. and no disease is detectable in his respiratory, alimentary, circulatory, genino-urinary, reproductive, nervous or any other system, but his weight happens to be only 105 lbs. It would be difficult to employ him in army, policeforce, or in any job requiring arduous works. It is doubtful that he will be a good engineer or even a good physician. Perhaps not, because he is grossly under weight, not properly developed as he should have been. Why do we say that he is poorly developed and ill nourished? Because all the healthy young men of his age are stronger and stouter than him. In order to find out the average weight, height, pulse rate, blood-pressure, temperature of young men of a certain age we have to refer to a collection of datas of a large number of such individuals collected from time to time. It is necessary that observations should be recorded by different people engaged in different walk of life in order to tabulate and draw certain conclusions. That is why it is called as the science of counting and of average.

Subject Matter:— The subject matter of health statistics includes all the facts related to life history of persons of a country. It begins from the birth of an individual, his growth, his education, his occupation, marriage, his condition of health the incidence of disease, the result of treatment, and his death etc. It is also known as Vital Statistics. So, Vital and Health Statistics may be called the science of counting Birth and Death, counting the morbidity and mortality rate.

The Statistics depends on two main factors:

1. Registration.
2. Enumeration (Specification).
The registration means the recording and preserving the records of birth, growth, education, occupation, marriage, emigration, immigration and thereby his death. This shows increase and decrease, or variation of the number of the people living in a certain place.

Specification (Enumeration), refers to the counting of individuals of different age, sex, religion, occupation, social standard and so on.

The correct record of population is necessary not only for the numerical strength of a nation, but also for many other purposes, such as fixing and finding rate, for conscription, franchise, education of boys and girls, rationing, clothing, housing etc. etc.

Vital Statistics is the connecting link between Registration Statistics andEnumeration Statistics. The relation between the number of birth and death, mother’s death at childbirth, stillborn infants or death soon after birth, to the number of people (population) gives us the Birth rate, Death rate, Maternal and Infant Mortality rate. From that we can at once form an idea about the condition of the people of a country in matters relating to the birth or death of a person in that country.

Obviously, the correctness of the statistical figures depends on correct and sincere registration and enumeration. This is not only important for the country, but also for the individual member of the country. In India the law provides for compulsory registration of birth and death within eight days of birth or death in the nearest Registration Office (Rural, Urban or Cantonment). In our country birth and death may be registered, but it is not yet strictly practised. Census is taken every ten years by Central Bureau of Statistics, Kathmandu. It seems that importance of formulating planning and implementing Registration and Specification in Statistical Method have not been realised so far in its proper perspective. But the Panchayat System requires to have correct data as to population and production in order to formulate planning policy. Hence laws should be enacted to make registration of birth and death compulsory within a specified period of birth or death. It would not be difficult to implement compulsory registration through Local Panchayat, District Panchayats and Health Officer of town Panchayats. At the village level the Pradhan Panch can take an initiative in keeping records of birth and death in the Village Panchayat Office and the record so kept can be sent to the District Panchayat which may forward to Central Bureau of Statistics periodically. Health Officer attached to the Nagar Panchayats can play a vital role in this regard.

Even educated people of our country attach little importance to registration of birth and death. Never-the-less they need to have a Certificate such as place of birth or date of birth. Registration may be an asset on the question of Nationality, of employment, for conscription in army, passport, marriage, succession, franchise, insurance policy for any other purpose. One wonders how many of us can produce a birth certificate when required or substantiate claim of certain age by documentary evidence. Horoscope or the entry as to age in school may indicate age of a person. At times Kitabkhana may show age. But none of these can be taken as conclusion proof of age. One often hears grumblings of Government Servants that they have to retire few years earlier because of their false entry of age in their Seat Role Forms. To avoid all these embarrassment one has to adopt the practice of Registration at the time of birth. To begin with School should henceforth demand a proof of registration of birth for admitting in schools.
Suppose a boy aged ten years, is declared to be only seven years old at the time of admission in a school. He studies and competes with boys who are really seven, which does not seem to be fair to the younger boys. Then he is assumed to have graduated at tender age, taking credit which he does not deserve. Moreover he gets an advantage over his contemporary on the question of retirement from the Government Service. That is surely a social injustice. A Birth Certificate will cure these evils.

Responsibility of registration lies primarily with the parents of newly born child, and then with Doctors or Nurses or Midwives, who are concerned with the confinement and delivery. In case of death, Registration should be done by the intimate relatives Physicians who issue the death certificate (which is not practised as yet in our country). The Pradhan Panch of the area should maintain and record and send them to the Central Bureau of Statistics, Kathmandu, by the end of the month. Unless population is correctly calculated the figures related to birth, death, disease, economics condition would be incorrect. The incidence of Malaria, Cholera, or Accidents per thousand of population, the mortality of infant per thousand of the babies born, all these statistics facts fall flat if the total number of the people are not known correctly.

Now, some interesting figures about the population statistics of our country as a whole should be quoted. We know that the census takes place every ten years, the last census was in 1990 and the next will be in 1970 running on. The total area of our country is about 142,200 square K.m., population 10.685,000 i.e. per each square mile near about 180 people in average. The annual rate of population growth was estimated 1.78% from 1961-1966, 1.81% from 1966-1971. On this basis the population projected for 1971 is 11,248000. However estimate growth of the population and the actual annual rate of growth may vary. Sex ratio is for every 100 women there are 97 men. The percentage of child bearing age (15-45 years) is about 26.9%. The increase in population is near about 600 per day. The population will be 11,865,000 by 1970 with an annual rate of population growth 2.7% based on a crude death rate of 27/1000 population and a crude birth rate 54/1000 population according to the estimation of National Health Survey. The population of Nepal is thus, expected to be doubled by 25 years if the above birth and death rate remain constant. It is expected that the death rate will fall at a faster rate than the birth rate and then the population may be doubled in 20 years.

According to the Health Development Project, Medical facilities available in our country may be assessed from the following statistics. The total number of Hospitals for the whole of our country are 56 including Government and Non-Government Hospitals. The total number of available beds are 2045. Zonal and district hospitals provide medical care for the people and referral services for peripheral Health Units. As per Doctors Population ratio, one Doctor is available per 30,528 number of people. At present about 330 qualified Doctors and near about 300 qualified nurses are available. Besides Hospitals there are near about 100 Health Centres and 45 Health Posts and few other Government dispensaries throughout the country. Besides doctors and nurses there are about 90 Health Assistants and 220 Auxiliary Health Workers available at present for health services.

All the schemes for improvement or development of a country depend on the correct information of statistics and comparative figures. For that purpose the initial data should be correctly
entered and prepared. It is the duty of every citizen to have birth, death and infectious disease duly registered.

For individual interest also as already quoted above, every educated person should maintain family record, birth certificate of all members, Death certificate and if poesible marriage certificate too.

Let us quote W. J. King's words— "Statistics is a most useful servant but only a great value to those who understand its proper use."

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