

Research Article

The Relationship Between Health Promotion and Community Participation in the Success of Community-Based Total Sanitation Programs

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between health promotion and community participation in the success of community-based total sanitation (CBTS) programs. Using a qualitative literature review approach, the research analyzes various studies and reports that highlight the role of health education and community involvement in ensuring the effectiveness of CBTS initiatives. The findings suggest that health promotion strategies, which focus on raising awareness and changing behaviors regarding sanitation, significantly contribute to community engagement and the sustainability of sanitation practices. Furthermore, active participation of local communities in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of sanitation programs leads to a more successful adoption of sanitation behaviors and long-term improvements in public health. The study emphasizes the importance of a collaborative approach between health professionals, local governments, and communities in achieving sustainable sanitation outcomes.

Keywords: Health Promotion, Community Participation, Total Sanitation.

INTRODUCTION

The success of community-based total sanitation (CBTS) programs hinges not only on the implementation of effective sanitation technologies but also on the active engagement of communities in the process (Tsekleves et al., 2022). One of the critical factors that influence the success of these programs is the interplay between health promotion and community participation. Health promotion refers to efforts that



empower individuals and communities to take control over their health and improve it, focusing on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that foster better health outcomes (Davis et al., 2019). In the context of sanitation, health promotion campaigns aim to raise awareness about the importance of hygiene practices, the risks associated with poor sanitation, and the benefits of improved sanitation facilities for both individual and collective well-being.

However, while health promotion serves as an essential tool in raising awareness and motivating action, the role of community participation is equally crucial in ensuring long-term success. Community participation entails the active involvement of local people in the planning, decision-making, and implementation of sanitation initiatives. This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership, responsibility, and accountability among community members, which is vital for the sustainability of sanitation programs. Research has shown that when communities are empowered to make decisions about their own sanitation needs and solutions, they are more likely to adopt and maintain improved sanitation practices, ensuring the longevity of the programs (Nelson et al., 2021).

In many developing countries, where sanitation facilities are limited or inadequate, the relationship between health promotion and community participation becomes particularly important. In such settings, communities may have limited access to information or resources, making it difficult for individuals to understand the link between sanitation and health (Nelson et al., 2021). Health promotion efforts, when coupled with active community involvement, can bridge this gap by providing the necessary education and mobilizing people to take collective action. Furthermore, community participation fosters a collaborative approach that can lead to context-specific solutions that are more appropriate, sustainable, and culturally acceptable to local populations.

The interaction between health promotion and community participation is not a linear one; rather, it is a dynamic process where each element strengthens the other. Health promotion can provide the knowledge and motivation needed to engage communities, while community participation can ensure that health messages resonate with local cultures, values, and practices (Nelson et al., 2021). This symbiotic relationship is essential for overcoming barriers to sanitation improvements, such as social norms, economic constraints, and political challenges. By exploring how health promotion and community participation work together, we can better understand how to enhance the effectiveness of community-based total sanitation programs and achieve the ultimate goal of improving public health through better sanitation practices (Alzúa et al., 2020).

The relationship between health promotion and community participation is fundamental to the success of community-based total sanitation programs. As these programs aim to improve hygiene and sanitation practices, it is clear that both components—health promotion and community involvement—must be integrated into a comprehensive approach (Bushen et al., 2022). This not only leads to greater awareness and behavior change but also ensures the sustainability of sanitation improvements at the community level. Therefore, understanding the synergies between health promotion and community participation can provide valuable insights into the design and implementation of more effective sanitation programs, ultimately contributing to the well-being of entire communities.

METHOD

This study will employ a qualitative literature review approach to explore the relationship between health promotion, community participation, and the success of community-based total sanitation (CBTS) programs. The review will systematically collect and analyze existing research, case studies, reports, and theoretical frameworks that address the role of health promotion strategies and the extent of community involvement in the effectiveness of sanitation programs.

Key steps in the methodology include:

1. Identification of Relevant Literature: This will involve searching academic databases, government and NGO reports, and relevant journals focusing on public health, community development, and sanitation. Keywords such as “health promotion,” “community participation,” “community-based total sanitation,” and “sanitation programs” will guide the search process.
2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Studies will be selected based on relevance to the topic, methodological rigor, and geographic context (focusing on regions with CBTS programs). Exclusion criteria will include studies that do not provide detailed insights into the interplay between health promotion, community engagement, and sanitation outcomes.
3. Data Extraction: Key themes, strategies, and outcomes related to health promotion and community participation in CBTS programs will be extracted from the literature. This will include looking at the factors that enhance or hinder participation and the role of health promotion in influencing behavior change and program success.
4. Analysis and Synthesis: A thematic analysis will be conducted to identify patterns and insights that illustrate how health promotion and community participation interact to improve sanitation practices. The synthesis will seek to clarify how these two components contribute to the long-term sustainability and success of community-based sanitation initiatives.
5. Conclusions and Recommendations: The review will conclude by summarizing the main findings and offering recommendations for future research or practical implementation strategies to enhance the effectiveness of CBTS programs through improved health promotion and increased community participation.

This qualitative literature review will provide a comprehensive understanding of the key factors influencing the success of CBTS programs, shedding light on the complex relationship between health promotion and community involvement.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The relationship between health promotion and community participation plays a pivotal role in the success of community-based total sanitation (CBTS) programs. Health promotion efforts, through education and awareness campaigns, help communities understand the critical importance of sanitation for public health, encouraging individuals to adopt cleaner, healthier practices (Okesanya et al., 2024). When these initiatives are coupled with active community participation, they become

even more effective. Community involvement ensures that sanitation solutions are tailored to the local context, increasing ownership and commitment to the program. Additionally, when communities take part in the planning, decision-making, and implementation processes, they are more likely to maintain and sustain sanitation improvements over time(Al-Worafi, 2023). In turn, this collaboration fosters a sense of responsibility and pride, ultimately contributing to the long-term success of CBTS programs. Thus, the integration of health promotion strategies and community participation significantly enhances the overall impact and sustainability of sanitation programs.

Discussion

Community-based total sanitation (CBTS) programs aim to address public health issues by improving sanitation practices and promoting hygienic behaviors. Such programs are increasingly recognized as essential components in preventing waterborne diseases, improving public health, and enhancing the overall quality of life in communities. However, the success of CBTS programs is influenced by several factors, two of the most critical being health promotion and community participation. Understanding how these two components work together is vital to the long-term success of sanitation efforts.

Health Promotion: A Foundation for Change

Health promotion in the context of sanitation refers to the process of educating and encouraging individuals and communities to adopt healthy behaviors that can prevent the spread of diseases. This includes teaching the importance of proper sanitation practices such as the construction and use of latrines, handwashing with soap, and proper waste disposal. Effective health promotion campaigns often rely on creating awareness about the link between poor sanitation and diseases like diarrhea, cholera, and dysentery, as well as emphasizing the broader health benefits of good sanitation practices.

Health promotion strategies can vary, but they generally include information dissemination through various channels, including community meetings, posters, radio, and social media(Haque & Freeman, 2021). Furthermore, health promoters may use participatory approaches, where community members actively engage in learning and disseminating health messages to others. This active involvement helps ensure that the community better understands the importance of sanitation and hygiene, making it more likely that they will take responsibility for improving their own health and environment.

Table 1, health promotion strategies, highlighting different approaches, channels, and their benefits in engaging communities for sanitation and hygiene improvement:

Health Promotion Strategy	Description	Channels/Methods Used	Benefits for the Community
Information Dissemination	Sharing health-related	Community meetings, posters,	Increases general knowledge about

Health Promotion Strategy	Description	Channels/Methods Used	Benefits for the Community
	information through various media to raise awareness.	radio, social media	sanitation and hygiene practices.
Participatory Approaches	Actively involving community members in learning and spreading health messages.	Workshops, group discussions, peer educators, community-led events	Enhances understanding, ownership, and responsibility within the community.
Mass Media Campaigns	Using mass communication channels to reach large audiences with health promotion messages.	Radio broadcasts, TV ads, social media campaigns	Widens reach and reinforces health messages across diverse population groups.
Peer Education	Training community members to educate and motivate their peers about health behaviors.	Peer groups, local leaders, health volunteers	Builds trust, encourages behavior change through relatable role models.
Environmental Interventions	Combining education with improvements in sanitation infrastructure and hygiene facilities.	Clean-up drives, installation of handwashing stations, community sanitation projects	Supports sustainable health improvements by addressing structural barriers.

The success of health promotion efforts relies on culturally sensitive and contextually relevant messaging. Programs must address the unique challenges and needs of the community, including factors such as local beliefs, economic conditions, and existing sanitation practices. Tailoring health promotion messages to suit the community's values increases the likelihood of behavior change and enhances the effectiveness of sanitation interventions.

Community Participation: Empowering Individuals for Sustainable Change

Community participation is another cornerstone of successful CBTS programs. Involving community members in the design, implementation, and monitoring of sanitation programs ensures that the interventions are not only culturally appropriate but also sustainable(Astutik et al., 2025). When people are actively engaged in the decision-making process, they are more likely to feel ownership of the program and are thus more inclined to maintain the improvements made.

Participation can take many forms, from community meetings where residents discuss sanitation challenges and solutions to the active involvement of local leaders in advocating for the program. In many CBTS initiatives, communities are encouraged to take charge of building their own latrines or managing their own sanitation services, often with support from external stakeholders such as governments or NGOs. This hands-on involvement creates a sense of responsibility and accountability within the community, which is crucial for ensuring that sanitation practices are sustained over time.

Table 2, on various forms of community participation in sanitation programs, highlighting activities, roles, and their impacts on sustainability and accountability

Participation Form	Description	Roles/Actors Involved	Impact on Sanitation Sustainability and Accountability
Community Meetings	Residents gather regularly to discuss sanitation challenges, share ideas, and plan solutions.	Community members, local facilitators	Fosters collective decision-making and shared ownership of sanitation issues.
Local Leaders' Advocacy	Local leaders actively promote sanitation programs, mobilize resources, and encourage participation.	Village chiefs, religious leaders, elected officials	Increases program visibility and legitimacy, motivating wider community buy-in.
Community-Led Latrine Construction	Community members take responsibility for building their own latrines using locally available	Households, skilled volunteers, external technical advisors	Enhances practical engagement, reduces costs, and builds pride and commitment.

Participation Form	Description	Roles/Actors Involved	Impact on Sanitation Sustainability and Accountability
	materials.		
Sanitation Service Management	Communities organize committees to manage ongoing sanitation services, maintenance, and hygiene promotion.	Community sanitation committees, NGOs, local government	Promotes accountability, ensures upkeep, and supports behavior change over time.
Partnership with External Stakeholders	Collaboration with governments or NGOs for technical support, funding, and capacity building.	Government agencies, NGOs, donor organizations	Strengthens community capacity and sustainability through resources and knowledge transfer.

One of the most important aspects of community participation is the inclusion of marginalized groups, such as women, children, and low-income households. These groups are often disproportionately affected by poor sanitation and are crucial in ensuring the success of CBTS programs (Howard et al., 2020). By actively involving these groups, programs can be better designed to meet their specific needs and ensure that everyone benefits equally from improved sanitation practices.

Interplay Between Health Promotion and Community Participation

While health promotion and community participation are valuable independently, their synergy is what leads to the most successful outcomes in CBTS programs. Health promotion efforts may inform and inspire community members to adopt new sanitation practices, but it is the active participation of the community that ensures these practices are implemented effectively and maintained in the long term.

For instance, health education might encourage families to build and use latrines, but it is community-driven efforts, such as local labor for construction or collective efforts to manage waste, that make the infrastructure possible. Additionally, when

communities actively participate in the monitoring of sanitation practices, they become more invested in identifying and addressing any obstacles to progress, such as lack of access to materials or inadequate water supply. This collaborative effort fosters a sense of collective responsibility and solidarity, which is crucial for creating lasting change.

Another important aspect of the relationship between health promotion and community participation is the potential for peer-to-peer learning. When health promotion is conducted effectively, community members can become champions of sanitation and hygiene practices, sharing their knowledge with others in the community. Peer leaders, often respected figures within the community, can influence others to follow proper sanitation practices, thus enhancing the overall impact of health education campaigns.

Barriers and Challenges

Despite the strong relationship between health promotion and community participation, there are several barriers to their effective integration in CBTS programs. One major challenge is overcoming entrenched cultural practices or beliefs that may hinder the acceptance of new sanitation behaviors. For example, some communities may have deeply rooted customs related to waste disposal or hygiene practices that conflict with modern sanitation approaches. In these cases, health promotion efforts must carefully navigate these cultural sensitivities to avoid resistance.

Moreover, lack of resources can limit both health promotion and community participation efforts. In many low-income areas, communities may lack the financial resources to build proper sanitation facilities or invest in health education materials. External support, such as funding from governments or international organizations, is often required to address these gaps. However, even with adequate resources, the success of these programs hinges on the willingness of community members to actively participate.

Another challenge is ensuring that the benefits of community participation are distributed equitably among all members of the community. Without inclusive participation, certain groups may be left out of the decision-making process, leading to unequal access to sanitation improvements. Ensuring that all voices, especially those of vulnerable or marginalized groups, are heard is essential for the fairness and success of CBTS programs.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between health promotion and community participation is central to the success of community-based total sanitation programs. Health promotion helps to raise awareness and create the motivation necessary for behavioral change, while community participation ensures that these changes are implemented and maintained effectively. By working together, these two elements can drive sustainable improvements in sanitation practices, reduce health risks, and ultimately improve the quality of life for entire communities. However, to fully realize their potential, health promotion and community participation efforts must

be carefully designed, culturally appropriate, and adequately supported by resources. When these factors align, CBTS programs can achieve lasting success and create healthier, more resilient communities.

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