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**A STUDY ON THE AWARENESS LEVEL OF THE BENEFITS OF
MEDICAL INSURANCE IN RURAL INDIA WITH REFERENCE TO
NASHIK DISTRICT, MAHARASHTRA**



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ABSTRACT

India's success will be in the hands of rural development. Hence the rural community is taking lot of effort to help the nation through their self-less hardworking in the agricultural field. If they want to change their life style then they should know more information about everything. Health is the major part and health Insurance is the most respected scheme for everyone. Though the people are having everything in their hands but they have shortage of awareness about various health insurance schemes used for claiming their health damage. Everyone

has money in hand but no one has medical insurance because the mentality of the rural people because they think that they have good health so what is need of health insurance so they don't buy health insurance. This study aimed to attempt to find out the awareness level of insurance in the rural society and make aware about health insurance in Nashik district.

KEY WORDS

Health Insurance, Public Health, Rural Development, Rural Awareness, Rural Growth

RESEARCH PAPER

Introduction:

Health insurance is one of the important approaches that can help in boosting universal healthcare coverage through improved healthcare utilisation and financial protection. Insurance markets in India are showing clear signs of expansion, requiring insurers to be innovative in their approach towards achievement of sustainable growth. Insurance occupies an important place in the complex modern world since risk, which can be insured, has increased enormously in every walk of life. This has led to growth in the insurance business and evolution of various types of insurance covers. The insurance sector acts as a mobiliser of savings and a financial intermediary and is also a promoter of investment activities. It can play a significant role in the economic development of a country, while economic development itself can facilitate the growth of the insurance sector. The importance of insurance is unquestionable in modern economies as it serves a broad public interest and is vital to individuals 'security.

Statement of the Problem:-

Health insurance is one of the fast emerging components of savings as an important mechanism to finance health care needs of the people. The need for an insurance system that works on the basic principle of pooling of risks of unexpected costs of persons falling ill and needing hospitalization by charging premium from a wider population base of the same community. The opening up of the health insurance to the private sector by the Insurance Regulatory Development Authority (IRDA) Act 2000 has provided immense opportunities for both the public and the industry for better utilization of health care facilities. With this kind of situation prevailing, there has not been much progress in the coverage of our population within the rural segment of India's health insurance system. This is due to lack of awareness on part of the public with medical insurance.

Objectives of the Study:

The study is undertaken with the following objectives:

- To know the extent of the awareness about the health insurance scheme in rural area.
- To find out the source of information for the awareness of medical insurance.
- To analyse the various benefits are taken form insurance company.
- To evaluate the utilization of benefits of insurance by the rural policy holder.

Scope of the Study:

The study is aimed to provide valuable inputs to the government for implementing insurance schemes. The study helps us to understand how much medical health insurance is reached to rural area. How much people are using medical health insurance. Is government reached to rural segment of India to provide insurance scheme?

Methodology:

The study is mainly depending on the primary data. The study is descriptive and analytical. Exploratory research is adopted to collect the data directly. The descriptive research is applied for gathering the existing information from various sources like magazine, newspaper, journals, literature review etc.

Sample size:

It is ascertained from the total population of the selected region and it is two hundred respondents only.

Sampling technique:

Non-Probability convenient sampling Nature of data collection is primary in nature

Area of Coverage:

The study has covered areas like Malegaon, Manmad, Yeola, and Nashik town, Lasalgaon and Nadgaon.

Limitations of the study:

Time and distance made the researcher to restrict the study to only the above said places.

Health Insurance scene in India:

Health insurance can be defined in a very narrow sense where individual or group purchases in advance health coverage by paying a fee called "premium". But it can be also defined broadly by including all financing arrangements where consumers can avoid or reduce their expenditure at the time of use of services. The health insurance existing in India covers a very wide spectrum of arrangements and hence the broader interpretation of health Insurance is more appropriate. Health insurance is very well established in many countries. But in India it is a new concept except for the organized sector employees. In India only about 2 per cent of total health expenditure is funded by public/social health insurance while 18 per cent is funded by government budget. In many other low and middle income countries, contribution of social health insurance is much higher.

Data Analysis:

Table 1 shows the awareness on the health insurance schemes

Awareness	Respondent in number	Respondent in %
yes	124	62
no	76	38
Total	200	100

Source: Primary data from Nashik district in Maharashtra, India

Table 2 depicts the sources of information for knowing the health insurance schemes

Sources	Respondent in Number	% to Total
News Paper	24	19.35
TV Add	35	28.22
Radio	18	14.51
Agent	7	5.64
Relative & Friend	23	18.54
Hospital	17	13.70
Total	124	100

Sources: Primary data from Nashik district in Maharashtra, India

Note: From the total sample size only 124 respondents have been considered because others were not aware of the insurance schemes.

Table 3 shows the utilization of health insurance benefits.

Awareness	Respondent in number	Respondent in %
Yes	124	62
No	76	38
Total	200	100

Sources: Primary data from Nashik district in Maharashtra, India

Table 4 reveals the Awareness about insurance Scheme

Name of the companies	Yes in numbers	In %
ICICI	17	8.5
RELIANCE	27	13.5
BAJAJ ALLIANZE	13	6.5
MAX	18	9
STAR HEALTH	28	14
Tata	11	5.5
UNITED INDIA	10	5
NOT AWARE	76	38
Total	200	100

Sources: Primary data from Nashik district in Maharashtra, India

Table 5 shows the utilization of the Maharashtra government's Mahatma Jotiba Phule lifesaving health insurance scheme in Nashik district in Maharashtra, India

Respondents	Respondents in number	%to total
Yes utilized	108	54
No/not utilized	92	46
Total	200	100

Sources: Primary data from Nashik district in Maharashtra, India

Note: The response have been collected from all the respondents in Maharashtra district in Maharashtra, India to know the utilization of health insurance scheme by the government of Maharashtra and the benefits utilized. Accordingly 54% of the population is using the benefits through various hospitals for higher treatments.

Findings Based On the Objectives.

This study has unfolded the following facts in the light of the objectives undertaken by the researchers:

- The awareness about the health insurance schemes in the rural sector is found to be only 62% and the TV Ad are playing a major role in creating awareness among the respondents where the rest are not aware of the prevailing schemes.
- Health benefits are most utilized in rural hospital.
- Among those who are aware of the existing benefits, only 62% of them are utilizing the existing insurance schemes.
- The people in the rural part are having a vague awareness among the existing market players in the rural insurance segment Star health is identified as the premier Insurance Corporation. It is known I rural part of nashik district.
- The Government's health saving insurance schemes are best utilised among the rural customers.

Conclusion:

- This study provides a clear analysis of the clear perception on the insurance companies and its impact on the rural part.
- It is evident from the study that the role of government is so effective in creating awareness regarding the various schemes to be availed by the rural population.
- The study highlighted that rural part of customers are utilizing health benefits.

Recommendation:

- The government can make better utilization of local bodies, schools and colleges, Public health centres, Panchayats etc. in creating more awareness for insurance schemes and utilization of the government provided benefits.
- Insurance companies have to focus on the rural markets with more aggressive marketing strategies.
- Government has to establish a few nodal centres in order to provide support for the enhancement of health benefits in rural segment.
- Some street plays, documentary films in vernacular language, mock situation etc., can help in creating awareness on health insurance programmes among rural populations.

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