

**RELEVANCE OF SALUTOGENIC MODEL IN CONTEMPORARY HEALTH****Dr. Sahil Nayan Rajnish<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Dewesh Kumar<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Vidya Sagar<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Tanya Tanu\*<sup>4</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Junior Resident, Dept of Preventive and Social Medicine, RIMS, Ranchi.<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Dept of Preventive and Social Medicine, RIMS, Ranchi.<sup>3</sup>Professor & HOD, Dept of Preventive and Social Medicine, RIMS, Ranchi.<sup>4</sup>Junior Resident, Dept of Preventive and Social Medicine, RIMS, Ranchi.**\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Tanya Tanu**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Salutogenic Model focuses on Health rather than disease. It has a promotive aspect over the modern-day, predominantly curative aspect of medicine. Even though with newer technological and scientific advancements, we have been able to eradicate and eliminate a few infectious diseases, an epidemiological transition is occurring and newer non-communicable diseases are on the rise. Shifting our focus from treating the disease to preventing is the need of our and that is what Salutogenesis talks about. Salutogenic model is one of the most powerful theories that paves the way towards strengthening the theory of health promotion globally. "Salutogenesis" has been coined using the amalgamation of two words, "*Salus*" and "*Genesis*." The word *Salus* is a Latin word which means health and the *genesis* is a Greek word which means origin. The term describes an approach to focus on factors that supports human health and well-being, rather than pivoting around the factors that cause disease which is called pathogenesis.

**KEYWORDS:** Salutogenesis, Health Promotion, Salutogenic Model, Preventive Medicine.**TEXT**

The concept of contemporary health does not limit itself to the individual with or without disease on the physical ground which can be easily diagnosed clinically. Rather, it recognizes that disease and disability can co-exist with apparent wellness which is subjective and arduous to assess clinically. With this new understanding, health is transformed from a state that requires the absence of disease to a state of wellbeing where body, mind, and spirit are fully employed to make life socially and economically productive. This concept of health is not purely philosophical but defined scientifically which is universally accepted as the World Health Organization defines the same as, "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity and ability to lead a socially and economically productive life."<sup>[1,2]</sup> This definition of health increases the curiosity to know what well-being is. Psychologist explained "well-being" as a state of individual or group of individuals based on their objective and subjective components. The objective components relate to standard of living or level of living and subjective component broach quality of life.<sup>[2]</sup>

Taking into consideration the new definition of health, newer research focuses on the growing number of individuals who are developing preventable conditions and those who are poorly managing their conditions.

This association advocates a tangible association between external factors, i.e., the environment and the agent and individual health, i.e., the host factors. Such factors could be geographical location, developmental status of the nation, industrialization, modernization, lifestyle modification, financial well-being, family dynamics, awareness, stress, which create buffer that support or hamper our ability to reach our true potential.<sup>[3]</sup> In this context many philosophers in the past have argued that health is inseparably linked with these external factors and the same observation shall hopefully prove to be powerful guide in building future health concepts.

Amongst all the promising ancient theories, the "Salutogenic model" is the most powerful which paves the way to strengthening the theory of health promotion globally. This model was introduced by Aron Antonovsky in his book, "Health, Stress, and Coping" published in the year 1979. Aaron Antonovsky was born in Brooklyn, New York, in the early 1920s. He completed his medical sociology in USA. In the 1960s he worked at the Israel Institute for Applied Social Research, under the direction of Louis Gutman, and in collaboration with the post-graduate programme for HPH at the Hebrew University and Hadassah. Later he was appointed as a professor and Head of the Department of Sociology of Health at the Faculty of Health Sciences of

Ben-Gurion University of Negev. He was the founder of this faculty.<sup>[4]</sup> He coined the term “salutogenesis” which originated from the combination of Latin and Greek words, *salus* and *genesis* respectively. The word *Salus* is a Latin word which means health and the *genesis* is a Greek word which means origin. The term describes an approach to focus on factors that supports human health and well-being, rather than pivoting around the factors that cause disease which is called pathogenesis.

Antonovsky’s basic and main concept was to create health and give more importance to the people’s resources and capacities which helps in designing the health of an individual more than the classic focus on stress, risks, ill health, and causation of disease. The whole studies of Antonovsky was dedicated in search of “how people manage stress and stay well” unlike pathogenesis which studies the cause of disease. He observed that stress is ubiquitous, but not every individual has a negative health outcome in response to similar stress. Instead, some people achieve health despite their exposure to potentially disabling stress factors.<sup>[5]</sup>

In his book “**Health, Stress and Coping**” in year 1979, he described a variety of influences that led him to question how people survive, adapt, and overcome in the face of even the most punishing life-stress experiences.<sup>[6,7]</sup> In another of his books published in 1987 named “**Unraveling the Mysteries of Health**”, he focused more specifically on the study of women and aging; he found that 29% of women who had survived Nazi concentration camps had positive emotional health, compared to 51% of a control group. His insight was that 29% of the survivors were not emotionally impaired by the stress.<sup>[6]</sup>

According to Antonovsky health was seen as a movement in a continuum on an axis between total ill health (dis-ease) and total health (ease). These are the core concepts on which “salutogenic model” is based, namely, the **General Resistance Resources (GRRs)**, the **Sense of Coherence (SOC)** and **Generalized Resource Deficits (GRDs)**. General Resistance Resources (GRRs) and the Sense of Coherence (SOC) are the positive factors which keep moving an individual towards health.<sup>[7]</sup> Quite opposite to these, the negative factors which lead the way towards disease and death of an individual and these ubiquitous forces are called **Generalized Resource Deficits (GRDs)**. GRDs erode ability to cope with stress and hardship. The GRDs are low self-esteem, isolation, poor health, lack of information, lack of education, lack of social support, and lack of money.<sup>[7]</sup>

The **GRRs** are biological, material, and psychosocial factors that help a person cope and are effective in avoiding or combating a range of psychosocial stressors. The key factor of GRRs is not what is available but to be able to use and re-use them for the intended purpose.

Typically, GRRs can be categorised as:

1. Physical and Chemical (money, material, housing, clothing, food, power, intact neurological and immune system, healthy behaviours, etc.)
2. Cognitive (intelligence, knowledge, experience, education)
3. Emotional (self-esteem, ego, identity, view of life, philosophy)
4. Interpersonal Relations (social support, interaction, commitment)
5. Macrosocial (culture stability, traditions, religion)<sup>[8]</sup>

The second most important and more generally known salutogenic positive key concept is **Sense of Coherence (SOC)**, also known as the heart of the salutogenic model. The Sense of Coherence is a theoretical formulation that provides a central explanation for the role of stress in human functioning. **SOC** reflects a person’s view of life and capacity to respond to stressful situations. It is a global orientation to view the life as structured, manageable, and meaningful or coherent. It is a personal way of thinking, being, and acting, with an inner trust, which leads people to identify, benefit, use, and re-use the resources at their disposal.<sup>[9]</sup>

The original definition of SOC is defined by Antonovsky as: “a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that (1) the stimuli from one’s internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable, and explicable; the cognitive component called comprehensibility (2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli; the instrumental or behavioural component called manageability and (3) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement; the motivational component called meaningfulness.” The sense of coherence (SOC) is the combination of individual ability to assess and understand the situation they were in and to find the way to move in a health promoting direction, and this is explained in the context of comprehensibility, manageability, and the meaningfulness.<sup>[9]</sup>

In simplified way the ability to comprehend the whole situation and the capacity to use the resources available is called sense of coherence (**SOC**). A strong sense of coherence helps one mobilise resources to cope with stressors and manage tension successfully. Through this mechanism, the sense of coherence helps determine one’s movement on the health Ease/Dis-ease continuum. The key elements in the salutogenic model development are two, firstly, the orientation towards problem solving and, secondly, the capacity of maximal use the resources available to create aura of well-being and health in every prospective.<sup>[9,10]</sup>

We have entered an era where health problems are new and nascent due to modernization and industrialization. Industrial Revolution, Scientific Revolution,

technologies, and advanced knowledge in every field undoubtedly took the standard of living and understanding of human at the next level. Modernization has had great impact on person hygiene, sanitation, living style and understanding of diseases especially common communicable illness and helped in amelioration of infectious diseases and acute medical conditions. Nowadays with new advancement in the field of health care system we can combat those medical illnesses which were said to be fatal and a huge health related burden to the nation decades back. Unfortunately, today our whole effort in being healthy is disease centred. During the whole course of illness, the focus is disease and disease designing towards the reach of cure as an outcome rather than understanding the causation of the disease itself. All our resources and effort have been devoted to getting rid of disease, while we know that mere absence of any disease does not mean that an individual is healthy as per WHO defined health.

To be entitled as healthy an individual needs to be fit in various dimensions of health along with physical, such as mental, social, emotional, vocational, spiritual, philosophical, cultural, socio-economical, and environmental. So, it can be concluded that, an individual who is only fit physically cannot be diagnosed as healthy in a holistic sense, the same way an individual cannot be said to be healthy if he is suffering from a chronic illness and is able to cope well with his illness, even though the other dimensions of health meet the criteria of health perfectly.<sup>[11]</sup>

Industrialization and modernization have created new health issues even after addressing the important requirements such as proper health facilities, improved sanitation, and decent standards of living, yet there is rise in emotional and mental burden which is becoming a matter of concern for the whole wide world. Luxurious lifestyle, high standard of living and high income has now become the criteria for assessing individual well-being, but in reality nowadays, the urge to achieve such goals is the main cause of stress, insecurity and unhappiness of the mankind. To achieve happiness, we are now increasingly focused on the conscious mind but forget that happiness is the need of our subconscious mind. We forget that being happy is the ultimate outcome of being healthy, if an individual is unhappy, unable to overcome from their stressful situation, unable to utilize resources available, both internal and external. The contemporary health issues are, extremes of temperature due to climate change, respiratory illness due to air pollution in early age group, motor vehicle accidents, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual and physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexually transmitted disease etc. Thus today, the matter of biggest concern is how to get rid of it, and what should be done to create health.

Many scientists developed Public Health in its modern version to solve the new health problems with the shift of focus from the biomedical paradigm towards social and psychological prospective. Among all the theories the "salutogenic model" has once again become the subject of discussion and is attracting everyone's attention towards itself in the field of health promotion.<sup>[12]</sup> Salutogenic model gives the answer as to why people despite stressful situations and hardships stay well. The theory can be applied at an individual, a group, and a societal level.

The salutogenic perspective focuses on three aspects.<sup>[13]</sup> Firstly, the focus is on the problem or the stress which is considered as risk factor or factors of causation of ill effect of a person's physical, mental, emotional, social and financial status and such negative factors are termed as Generalized Resource Deficits (GRDs). Now the negative impact of modernization and lifestyle modification on individual health and well-being can be considered as GRDs which is disease or death promoters. The salutogenic model can help in identifying what are the GRDs of every individual, this could be work stress, unemployment, unsuitable job, poverty, lack of education, morbid disease, chronic illness, personality, habits, emotional stress, environmental stress, increasing risk of motor vehicle accidents, behavioural change in family and society, cultural change etc. which have a negative impact on the individual health and societal well-being.<sup>[13,14]</sup>

Secondly, General Resistance Resources (GRRs) are the biological, material, and psychosocial factors that make it easier for people to perceive their lives as consistent, structured and understandable.<sup>[14]</sup> The GRRs are considered as resources found within people, society, immediate and distant environment that can be put to use and re-use to deal with the stress and challenges of life. In contemporary scenario GRRs can be identified as genetic and psychosocial character of an individual, intelligence, knowledge, better understanding of risk factors, recent advancement in the field of health, better treatment options, better health care facilities, advanced technologies, information technologies, coping strategy, constitutional rights, nation and international health planning, social support, ties, commitment, cultural stability, religious philosophies and preventive health orientation.<sup>[15]</sup> With the knowledge and awareness of GRRs a person and society can easily retrieve positive component from modernized and modified world to cope with its stress and deficits. If a person has these kinds of resources around, there is a very high chance that he/she will be able to deal with the challenges of life better.

What is more important than the resources themselves is the ability to use them, and this ability is termed as Sense of Coherence (SOC), the third and more generally known salutogenic key concept. It identifies a global and pervasive sense in individuals, groups, populations, or systems that serves as the overall mechanism or capacity

for this process. SOC reflects a person's view of life and capacity to respond to their stressful situations. This could be personal way of thinking, being and acting of an individual which helps in identification and use and re-use of the resources available. SOC consist of three elements comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness.<sup>[16]</sup>

Comprehensibility refers to the extent to which an individual perceives the stimuli that confronts him/her, which is acquired from the internal and external environments, and making cognitive sense of the information received or available in an ordered, consistent, structured, and clear manner. The person scoring high on the sense of comprehensibility expects that stimuli they encounter in the future will be predictable, ordered, and explicit. Manageability is the extent to which a person become cognizant to resources at their disposal that are adequate to meet the demands posed by the stimuli. Meaningfulness refers to the extent to which a person feels that life is meaningful and it makes sense emotionally, i.e., it is worth investing effort to solve their problems and fulfil their demands and is worth investing energy in, is worthy of commitment and engagement, and stressors are seen as challenges rather than burdens.<sup>[16,17]</sup>

The SOC is the capability to perceive that one can manage in any situation independent of whatever is happening in life. Antonovsky postulated that SOC was mainly formed in the first three decade of life. Thereafter, only very strong changes in life could upset and change the SOC. The face validity of the SOC scale seems to be acceptable.<sup>[17]</sup> Becker et al. in their review article have introduced the theory of Salutogenesis as "Prospective" and suggest the expansion of salutogenic model into the science of positive health.<sup>[18]</sup> Poppus et al. conducted a study in which they revealed that the workers with high SOC had nearly half the risk of CHD when compared to individuals with low SOC.<sup>[19]</sup> Antonovsky's unexpected death left the research area without its natural leader. Over the years so many studies are available which are carried out all over the world inspired by salutogenesis. Today there have been studies in at least 32 countries comprising of both Western countries and countries such as Thailand, China, Japan, and South Africa.<sup>[20]</sup> Up to 1993 the SOC questionnaire had been used in at least 14 languages.<sup>[21]</sup> There are additional translations in at least 19 languages. All in all, the SOC questionnaire has been used in at least 33 languages. The SOC scale seems to be a cross culturally applicable instrument. However there has not been any real attempt to analyse and evaluate this research field since 1992. Finally, a review by the Institute of Medicine in USA on what is needed for the Public Health in 21<sup>st</sup> century made a central point of necessity to find a coherent health concept, the salutogenic model would perhaps serve the purpose.<sup>[4,21]</sup>

In conclusion, while major strides are being made in the field of curative and preventive medicine, the field of promotive medicine is often overlooked. A major hurdle in our path is the lack of capital gain from a health promotive market which in turn affects political will and commitment as well as investment and resources in health promotional activities. The time is rife for us to start looking at Health from a different perspective, a perspective where being Disease Free aims at not contracting the disease at all rather than focusing on curative and rehabilitative services. The concept of Salutogenesis is age old but was lost somewhere along the way and it is now that we have finally started to track and revive it back into existence. Health promotion through Health Education in the form of Information, Education and Communication and Behaviour Change and Communication along with Lifestyle Changes which should encapsulate exercise, hygiene, sanitation, and proper nutrition needs to be done. The age-old practise of Yoga has been revitalized and numerous studies have indeed proven its role in health promotion and prophylaxis. Increasing Community Mobilization and Community Awareness regarding all these health promotive strategies at the grassroot level shall prove to be of immense help in spreading the concept and practise of Salutogenesis. Political Will and Commitment is equally important as both funds and resources are tied to it. Though a distant dream and still in its nascent stage, if someday Salutogenesis is achieved, it shall revamp the entire landscape of modern medicine. There will be a rapid shift in practise of medicine from curative to preventive and this in turn shall uplift the health of mankind.

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