

# Local Support System for UN-SDG:3@Medical Libraries: An Assessment

Ningombam Iroshini

Charoibam Ibohal Singh

## Abstract

*The paper assesses the role of local medical libraries in attaining the SDG-3, outlining various roles they performed towards realizing the health agenda. Following an exploratory approach and conducting an extensive review of related literature and personal interviews with professionals of leading medical libraries of Manipur: Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS), and Shija Academy of Health Sciences (SAHS), it attempts to trace their roles in achieving SDG-3. The study focussed on two research questions to be answered through a) a review of the past studies and b) an evaluation of the interview responses, which aims to reveal if the local libraries support the agenda of the UN-SDG:3 and if so, to what extent. However, as the analysis observations have revealed, more activities need to be executed by the medical libraries of Manipur to achieve the different targets of SDG-3. A local support system must be implemented to achieve these global goals.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development, SDG-3, Medical Libraries, RIMS, JNIMS, SAHS.

## 1. Background

Sustainable development is an approach to growth and human development that addresses the present's needs without jeopardizing future generations' capacity to meet their demands (UN, 1987). The aim is to bring a society where living conditions and resources fulfil human needs without undermining planetary integrity (Robert et al., 2005). In 2015, the UN adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, creating 17 goals called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They serve as a call to action to eradicate poverty and injustice, save the environment, and guarantee all people's well-being, fairness, and prosperity. The cornerstone of the agenda, the 17 SDGs, aims to ensure that no one is left behind by providing the most realistic and efficient means of addressing the root causes of violent conflict, human rights violations, climate change, and environmental degradation. The realization that social progress, environmental preservation, and economic growth must all be incorporated into sustainability is reflected in the SDGs.





**Figure 1: The 17 SDGs**

SDG 3 aims to secure health and wellness for everyone at every stage of life, such as communicable diseases, maternal mortality, mental health, and the healthcare workforce. The SDG-3 is supported by 13 targets that generally fall into distinct but overlapping categories: reducing mortality for vulnerable groups, decreasing communicable and non-communicable diseases, reducing risk factors (road traffic injuries, substance abuse, tobacco, pollution, etc.), making provision for general health coverage, strengthening the health sector

**Table 1: Themes of SDG-3 Targets**

Target	Themes
3.1	Maternal Mortality
3.2	Neonatal & Child Mortality
3.3	Communicable diseases
3.4	Non-Communicable Diseases & Mental Health/ Wellbeing
3.5	Substance Abuse
3.6	Road Traffic Accidents
3.7	Sexual and Reproductive Health
3.8	Universal Health coverage and access to Medicines
3.9	Pollution & Contamination
3.a	Tobacco Control
3.b	Research and Development of Vaccines & Medicines
3.c	Health financing & Health Workforce
3.d	Management of National & Global Health Risks

In achieving SDG-3, medical libraries need to play a significant role. In this regard, the present analysis aims to investigate the role and contributions of libraries of three leading medical institutions in Manipur. Both in developed and developing countries, SDGs endeavour to meet the needs of people by emphasizing that no one should be left behind (United Nations, 2015). Achieving SDGs needs collaborative work from all sections of society to ensure their sustainability.

## **2. Research Questions**

The research questions designed for the study consist of the following:

RQ 1- What roles do the medical libraries play in achieving health and well-being?

RQ 2: What efforts have the local medical libraries in Manipur played in attaining SDG-3?

## **3. Scope and Method**

With an exploratory approach, a personal interview with professionals has been conducted over and above a review of pertinent literature of leading medical libraries of Manipur, namely, RIMS, JNIMS, and SAHS. Specifically, the libraries adopted for the study are The Central Medical library, RIMS, JNIMS library, and SAHS library. A content analysis approach and questionnaire techniques are used to conduct the study. Scholarly databases like Google Scholar, SAGE, and Science Direct are employed to search for literature. Findings from this literature helped to seek information on RQ 1, and a solution to RQ 2 is established on information acquired from the adopted institutions.

## **4. Past Studies**

Libraries worldwide are well-positioned to take an active role in boosting health literacy. Libraries can ensure that the information consumers obtain is of the finest quality and comes from a reliable source. IFLA (2017) reports that historically, literacy, education, and reading libraries have been the core values that libraries have endorsed and linked in providing health services. Libraries have been known as ardent supporters of free access. Open access to health information will promote health sciences practices and research while ensuring that one has equitable utilization of adequate health information (Popoola, 2019).

Raghavan (2016) expressed that libraries are 'non-threatening environments where everyone is welcome to engage in conversations and pose questions, regardless of age, gender, or other characteristics. This can be

vitaly significant in boosting health knowledge, considering the multitude of health queries and difficulties individuals may face. Earlier researchers have culminated in the significance of libraries in health sciences. The eminent Rochester study of the early 1990s investigated the influences of hospital library services on clinical decision-making and found that these resources had a considerable impact on physicians' decisions about which tests to order, which medications to prescribe, what counsel to provide patients, and whether or not to order additional test procedures (Marshall, 1992). Numerous research results and reports end up in libraries or are accessible to librarians since libraries are data and information repositories. According to health literacy research reported in the literature, libraries may utilize this strength to evaluate the enforcement of SDG-3 by measuring the 13 goals of the "good health" target using easily accessible data (Whitney et al., 2017). Libraries may provide regular information summarizing data about each SDG-3 indicator using such monitoring. In addition, it is mentioned that librarians can start systematic reviews and specialized literature searches to assist health research efforts in their institution over and above library-based research. This can also guarantee that librarians contribute to focusing research attention on challenges concerning health literacy and SDG-3. Librarians will have to exchange perceptions of their interactions with one another if any specialist service, advocacy, or other SDG-related efforts in health sciences libraries are to be successful.

### **5. Role of Medical Libraries**

A medical library is an establishment that gathers, maintains, and makes recorded knowledge accessible to medical clients and anybody needing medical information (Ojo, 2015). Since its existence, the medical libraries have served health workers in every aspect, both in the training and practice stages, and has not forgotten the research stage (Uzogba, Egnetic & Onyam, 2017). Medical Libraries are crucial for the spread of health knowledge and the encouragement of active lifestyles. By giving marginalized communities access to health information when needed, they have the potential to connect with them (Ibegwan, 2013). It should be perceived as promoting and contributing to health ethical concerns, best practices, and recommendations, including the presentation of health information packages, as they are concerned with material that directly affects lives. The healthcare system of Manipur has gone through numerous stages of development. Early medical treatment was mostly restricted to customary procedures and regional cures. However, as modern medicine advanced, the state witnessed the establishment of government-run hospitals and clinics. The enactment of family planning programs and immunization campaigns improved the state's healthcare offerings even more. Therefore, disseminating health information to the right people will eventually improve society's health and well-being. There are several approaches that the medical library affiliated with the medical institutions may contribute to enhancing the health and well-being of the state's population to accomplish

SDG-3. As mentioned above, library users can raise public awareness in numerous ways to help reach the 13 objectives outlined in SDG-3. The following sections discuss the contribution of the three medical libraries.

### **5.1. Maternal mortality**

Target 1 of SDG-3 focuses on reducing maternal mortality. This requires that the mother remain healthy. She should be informed about the significance of vaccination programs in avoiding deadly diseases. In this regard, both the libraries of RIMS and JNIMS provide resources related to vaccination programs for mothers.

### **5.2. On Neonatal & Child Mortality**

Target 2 centers focus on preventing the deaths of infants under five years of age. Children's vaccination programs are implemented at government health centers in every nook and corner of the state. The public should be informed of the program's importance at all costs. Immunizing infants is the most essential step towards eradication of neonatal mortality. The Central Medical library, RIMS, provides information on immunization programs and schedules to the library's users and visitors.

### **5.3. On Communicable Diseases**

Every year, millions of people become infected with HIV, millions contract Tuberculosis (TB), and millions fall ill from malaria. They are curable and preventable diseases of poverty and inequality. The battle against these illnesses can be won. AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria are preventable. Those PLWHAs can impressively extend their lives for several years, and malaria and tuberculosis can be treated. Thus, staying current on various methods for combating these diseases is critical to stopping the problem. Target 3 of SDG-3 focuses on eradicating this illness. It also focuses on combating hepatitis and water-borne sickness. The Central Medical library, RIMS, periodically displays flyers and posted signage explaining the many measures to avoid this global epidemic. The library also provides a hand sanitizing station; thus, these communicable diseases can also be cured up to some extent.

### **5.4. On Non-Communicable Diseases & Mental Health/Well-being**

SDG-3 fourth target, which focuses on encouraging mental health and well-being, also aims to reduce the early death rate from non-contagious diseases like cancer, diabetes, etc. It has been observed that none of the three libraries conduct workshops or counseling sessions on mental health awareness. However, they displayed inspirational quotes on bulletin boards and display boards to uplift the user's spirits. However, in

preventing a person's suicidal tendencies it may be a small step, it will ultimately help in some small way to resolve their inner battle.

### **5.5. On Substance Abuse**

Substance abuse and addiction have serious ramifications for our existing social institutions, including crime rates, hospitalizations, child abuse, and neglect, and are rapidly consuming limited public funds. The fifth target is to improve alcohol misuse treatment and prevention, including narco-drug abuse. Due to the seriousness of the substance addiction issue, all three institution's libraries do not entertain intoxicated persons on their campus. The library has erected notices prohibiting the consumption of drugs and alcohol on campus.

### **5.6. On Road Traffic-Related Accidents**

Target 6 set out to reduce road traffic accident-related deaths and injuries worldwide by fifty percent. According to WHO, almost 1.119 million people lose their lives annually due to automobile accidents. The principal reason for death for juveniles and youths has been traffic-related accidents, which also resulted in property damage. These losses are the result of the cost of care, along with reduced productivity for individuals killed or crippled by their injuries, over and above the lost time from work (or school) for family members who have to attend to the injured. A library can promote the raising of public knowledge about road safety rules. Central Medical, RIMS, and JNIMS libraries have displayed signage emphasizing traffic safety guidelines on their campuses.

### **5.7. On Universal Health Coverage (UHC) & Accessibility to Medicines**

Target 8 emphasizes universal coverage of primary health care services and ensures everyone has access to high-quality, safe, and reasonable essential medications. Patients would save a significant amount of money, and if necessary, medications would be offered free of charge to all patients who are getting public health institutions. Free pharmaceutical distribution has been the most essential measure, thus, to lessen the trouble of medical expenses. The SDGs of Universal health coverage may be attained through safe, effective, high-quality, and affordable generic pharmaceuticals. Many pharmaceutical companies, state programs, and non-profits have programs that provides free or low-cost medicines. The public may use the library to access all this information. The Central Medical library, RIMS, offers information about several initiatives and amenities through flyers and pamphlets.

### **5.8. On Pollution & Contamination**

Libraries adopted for the research provide hygienic and clean water for drinking and other purposes—these supports fulfilling target 9 of SDG-3. The target seeks to significantly minimize the mortality rate and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and pollution of air, water, and soil pollution. All the three library premises are litter and plastic-free zones, contributing to reducing the mortality rate caused by unsafe water, unsafe sanitation, and lack of hygiene.

### **5.9. On Tobacco Control**

An estimated 1.3 million people passive smokers die, accounting for over 8 million people who die annually from tobacco and its related products. There are endless effects of using tobacco products, including lung cancer, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema. It increases the chance of heart-related diseases and has been linked to other cancers like leukemia, cataracts, and pneumonia. The government should develop initiatives to limit tobacco usage. The implied goal of 3. of SDG-3 is to enhance the enactment of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control worldwide. It set a standardized age prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15. Keeping in view the significance of the goal, all the adopted libraries in the research take the initiative of declaring their respective libraries as tobacco-free zones. Such simple action will save countless lives from the health-mentioned risk.

## **6. Findings and Discussion**

The above discussion has given us the present position and status of the medical libraries in achieving SDGs. In this regard, RIMS has made a significant effort to promote SDG-3 by encouraging online and offline database subscriptions on the fitness and well-being of human society. All authorized users of the library have access to these resources. The library provides posters and papers on healthcare programs and services, along with vaccination regimens of all kinds. Bulletin and display boards also feature inspiring words to raise visitors' spirits. The libraries also impart awareness about the necessity of child immunization. A hand sanitization station and clean water are available throughout the library. The library does not let inebriated people inside. The library of JNIMS has also made major efforts to support SDG-3 by increasing online and offline database subscriptions for human society's health and well-being. All legitimate library customers have access to these materials. Various indications to avoid communicable diseases such as malaria, HIV, and tuberculosis are displayed around the library. The collection has posters, articles about healthcare programs and services, along with immunization regimens of various types. In order to lift

visitors' spirits, bulletin boards and display boards provide inspirational phrases. The library also provides information on the importance of children's immunizations. The library has a hand sanitization station and clean water accessible to all. The library does not let drunk persons inside. Finally, the library has a smoke, rubbish, and plastic-free zone. Shija Academy of Health Sciences, the first homegrown private medical college in North-East India, started its first session in 2021. Because it is still in its early stage of development, the library lacks numerous capabilities that may help users achieve SDG-3. At the very least, the library does not allow intoxicated users. The library, like the other two, is free of tobacco, litter, and plastic free zone. There are several ways in which a medical library might assist in accomplishing SDG 3: to promote healthy living among people. However, they could not put them into effect due to limited resources. A medical library, by taking a few steps, can partner with the Institute's many departments and NGOs working in various health sectors to offer health lectures and seminars on the numerous goals to improve people's health and well-being. Libraries must be prepared to give basic knowledge on any trade that promotes health and well-being. Understanding where current vested interests can be acting against the accomplishment of certain goals over and above where corporate and civil society partners might cooperate with local and national government policies may also be helpful. Effective implementation of this necessitates proactive engagement and improved coordination between government ministries and departments, along with various levels of government, as well as between state and non-state actors, including business and non-governmental organizations.

## **7. Conclusion**

The incorporation of fitness and well-being as goals in the SDGs emphasizes the significance of health and wellness in our lives. Furthermore, IFLA's acknowledgment of libraries' responsibilities in attaining the SDGs highlighted a crucial issue that librarians and different information professionals must address. Over and above to the earlier works of collection management, knowledge sharing, advocacy, and research, libraries and information professionals can expand to provide evidence-based information for health promotion and preventive medicine. This includes imparting knowledge, attitudes, and skills to change behaviour, increase compliance, and improve health. Based on the above study, medical libraries and information professionals in Manipur have been helping people meet the community's health requirements. Medical libraries of Manipur might implement several global initiatives by libraries and librarians. This will put them in a deliberate position to help Manipur attain the SDG-3, ensuring physical fitness and well-being. Policy frameworks with a comprehensive, integrated, and holistic viewpoint must be developed to attain



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Locally available medical libraries should develop new mechanisms and services towards this goal.

### References

1. Asi, Y.M. & Williams, C. (2018). The role of digital health in making progress toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 3 in conflict-affected populations. *International Journal of Medical Informatics*, 114. 114-120. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijmedinf.2017.11.00>
2. Fisa, R. (2022). Effects of Interventions for Preventing Road Traffic Crashes: An Overview of Systematic Review. *BMC Public Health*, 22 (513). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-12253-y>
3. Marshall, J. G. (1992). The impact of the hospital library on clinical decision making: The Rochester study. *Bulletin of Medical Library Association*, 80(2), 169–178
4. Mbagwu, F.C. et al. (2020). Achieving Sustainable Development Goals Two and Three: Role of Academic Libraries. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 3995
5. Mensah, J. (2019). Sustainable development: Meaning, history, principles, pillars, and implications for human action: Literature review. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1653531>.
6. Ojo, A. (2015). The new role of medical Librarian in the information communication technology (ICT) age. *International Journal of Computer and Information Technology*, 4 (2), 197 – 20
7. Poola, B.O. (2019). Involving Libraries in Improving Health Literacy to Achieve Sustainable Development Goal-3 in Developing Economies: A Literature Review. *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, 36(2). 111-120. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hir.12255>
8. Robet, K.W., Parris, T.M. & Leiserowitz, A.A. (2005). What is Sustainable Development? Goals, Indicators, Values, and Practice. *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*. 47(3). 8-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00139157.2005.10524444>
9. Sunderwall, J. & Forsberg, B.C. (2020). Understanding Health spending for SDG 3. *The Lancet*, 396(10252). 650-651. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30963-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30963-6)
10. Uzoagba, N. C., Egneti, N. & Onyam, I. D. (2017). The role of medical librarians in Nigeria and the challenges of digital age to clinical care. *European Journal of Scientific Research*, 147 (1), 97-106
11. Waage, J.C. et al. (2015). Governing the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Interactions, Infrastructures, and Institutions. *The Lancet Global Health*, 3. e251-e252.

12. Whitney, W., Keselman, A., & Humphreys, B. (2017). Libraries and Librarians: Key Partners for Progress in Health Literacy Research and Practice. *Stud Health Technology Information*, 240. 415–432

**About Authors**

**Ningombam Iroshini**, Research Scholar, Manipur University, Manipur

Email: iroshningombam.2019@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2536-5300>

**Charoibam Ibohal Singh**, Professor, Manipur University, Manipur

Email: ibohal68@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7768-885X>