

WOMEN HEALTH IN INDIA:ISSUES AND SCHEMES

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ABSTRACT

Women's health needs to be front and center- it often isn't, but it needs to be.

-Cynthia Nixon

Women has been regarded as the bearer of life. Women is bestowed with the responsibility of producing young ones for the continuity of life. Women has always been regarded as the patient and hardworking individuals. Women not only give rise to new life but also nurture the young ones with their motherhood and compassion. Women plays a number of roles in their life. So it can be said that women deserve the best education and the best medical facilities.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

In this paper, the writers have focussed on the women health schemes and other aspects of women health.

Keywords: women health issues, health schemes.

Introduction

Since innumerable times women has been considered as the weaker sex in comparison to men in our country. Women health is the basic requirement of each and every women to live a better life. Women have the full right to better education and better health facilities. Women are enlightened to be the owners of their life and the way they want to live their lives. Women need not any shoulders to cry on because in the present scenario women has been empowered with legal rights to live their independently. No one can control them like robots. They possesses the ability to learn new things and be physically and socially a better member of this community. They need not be under anyones' control as God has made each and every individual a unique person. Each person has some qualities which makes them different from others. Our duty is just to identify that unique quality and then act according to become successful in our lives.

In order to live a decent life one has to take care of their body. Health can be best managed through education. Spreading awareness about the health issues and its maintenance can be best done through education. It is the education route that is the most successful action because it lets individuals to know about their body and how to

take care of it. The step by step education which is being provided aids in the development of a healthy person. This applies not only to men but also to the women community to the largest extent.

- Kamalapur, Sunil Kumar M; and Reddy, Somanath (2013) in their paper on “women health in India :An analysis” studied about the various issues that affect a women’s health like nutrition and other formal healthcare issues.
- Kushwah, Vandana (2013) in their paper on “the health status of women in India” discussed about the percentage of awareness about various Government health programmes and other issues related to it.
- Dr. Prof. Mrs. V. Balambal (2011) in their paper “Health problems and prospects of women with special reference to India” studied about the importance of women in our society and how to deal with their issues by taking care of their health.

PROBLEMS PERSISTENT IN INDIA REGARDING WOMEN ‘S HEALTH

India is considered as a land of various cultures and traditions. In one way these add to the rich diversity in India. However at some points these cultures and traditions mend their effects in a negative way. This leads to certain drawbacks which are as follows:

- Breast cancer: Industrialisation and westernisation has taken a toll on our cultures and society. This has led to the intake of western diet and delayed child birth age. These all effect the health of women which may even lead to fatal diseases like cancer.
- HIV/AIDS: There is a major percentage of women who are not given education in India. This leads to unprotected sex which leads to spread of diseases like HIV. An HIV patient is treated as an outcast in society as there is no proper awareness of this disease.
- Cardiovascular Health: In India women are not only considered as weaker sex but also the neglected sex which is proved by the higher percentage of women being affected with cardiovascular diseases. This clearly shows that the women need more attention.
- Mental Health: In India there are a large number of cases being reported of abuse by their spouse. This leads to disturbance in the mental health of women who may get depressed and commit suicide in severe cases.

CAUSES OF WOMEN HEALTH DETERIORATION

Women in India has been regarded as the neglected sex in comparison to men. There are a number of reasons as to why the women has been given such a status. Some of the reasons are as follows;

- Son is regarded as the “kul ka Deepak”. It is believed that it is the son that carries the name of the family to future generations.
- Son is regarded as the old age caretaker of parents .
- Girls are regarded as the burden on the family as parents have to arrange for dowry at their wedding . Girls are referred to as “paraya dhan”.
- Gender discrimination also plays a major role . Boys are given more nutritious food than girls as it is boys who are the bread earners of their family.
- Female foeticide in various parts of the country causes the disturbance of sex ratio.
- Superstitions and various social evils like child marriage etc affect the health of females.
- Lack of absence of proper hygiene facilitates the spread of various diseases especially in rural areas.
- No proper education system for girls also results in lack of awareness of health issues, for example purdah system does not let girls to attend school.
- No proper hospitals for the successful delivery during child birth.
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SCHEMES FOR WOMEN HEALTH IN INDIA

Various schemes have been put forward for the improvement of women's health status in India. These schemes are as follows

- The Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana conditional maternity benefit plan

It was introduced in 2010. It comes under Ministry of Women and Child Development. Its objectives are to provide cash to pregnant women so that they can have a safe delivery and a better health services. It helps mothers to follow Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices for the first six months.

It is basically a cash transfer scheme to pregnant and lactating mothers. The mothers who are already employees in organisations are exempted from this scheme as they are entitled for paid maternity leave.

- Janani Suraksha Yojana

It was introduced on 12th April 2005. It comes under National Rural Health Mission. It is a modification of National Maternity Benefit Scheme. Its main objective is to bring down the number of deaths occurring during child birth. A large number of women die during delivery. In order to reduce the mortality rate this scheme was introduced to help mothers during and after pregnancy and also allows for safe delivery to prevent the death of mother and infant.

This scheme provides cash to the women belonging to Below Poverty Line and ST category. It also includes ASHA(Accredited Social Health Activist) who are the female volunteers working for safe delivery of pregnant women.

- Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram

It was introduced on 1st June 2011. Its main objective is free and cashless delivery and also providing free drugs to pregnant women. This scheme also provides treatment to newborn babies who are sick for 30 days after birth. The scheme also includes free transport to hospitals and back to home. The scheme is extended to cover sick infants.

- Beti Bachao Beti Pado

It was introduced in October 2014 and launched on 22nd January 2015 at Panipat, Haryana. Its main objective was to focus on the decreasing child sex ratio. It aims at gender discrimination, protection and education of girl child.

OTHER ASPECTS OF WOMEN HEALTH IN INDIA

- Village health and nutrition day

It is organised to spread awareness among women for their health benefits and also provide counselling on menstrual hygiene, family planning and breastfeeding.

- Reproductive and child health camps

This programme is also known as Parivar Swasthya Sewa Divas(Family Health Day). This camp aims at child examination and proper check up of women by a gynaecologist.

- Family planning

This programme aims at maintaining a manageable size of the family. Its main objective determine the age of marriage and the birth of first child. It also suggest that there should be atleast 3 years difference between the successive child births.

- Total fertility rate

It is the average number of births a women has till the age of 50 years. For this family planning practices such as contraceptive pills, copper T etc has been followed.

- Adolescent reproductive and sexual health:

The individuals within age of 10-19 years are considered as adolescent. For the accomplishment of this objective of improving adolescent health various schemes have been put forward. Some of these schemes include Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls(SABLA), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan etc.

- School health programme

It was introduced to cater to the needs of the school going children. It takes into account the children in the age group of 6-18. It covers the physical and mental health of children. It looks after the disability, deficiency and early diagnosis of diseases. It also provides the counselling services.

- Weekly iron folic acid supplementation

Deficiency of iron leads to anemia in children. Anemia occurs due to poor intake of nutrients in diet. It leads to weakness among students. The girl students are mostly affected with anemia due to onset of menstruation cycle. This programme facilitates the intake of weekly iron tablets to combat the iron deficiency. The programme is lead under controlled supervision.

- Immunization

Immunization is necessary to eradicate diseases which affect the children and finally affecting their physical ,mental and social life. The most prominent example of eradication of disease is polio eradication. Thus a universal immunization programme covers all the related diseases which should be eradicated so that a childs' development is proper and manageable.

ASPECT(PERCENTAGE TERMS)	(NFHS-3) 2005-06	(NFHS-4)2015-16
Women literacy	62.50	74.70
Men literacy	79.10	86.90
Institutional deliveries	47.66	80.46
Marriages before age 18(females)	36.27	23.10
Marriages before age 21(males)	29.80	23.10

Data source is National Family Health Survey-4

AYUSHMAN BHARAT SCHEME

This scheme is introduced in the latest budget and it aims at universal health coverage. This scheme was announced by Union finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley on 14th March 2018. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi officially declared this scheme on 14th April 2018 at the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti. The Prime Minister said ,

“The Ayushman Bharat Scheme is not limited to simply providing a service , but also invokes public participation so that we can create a healthy , capable and content New India”.

This scheme aims at development of Health and Wellness Centers around the whole country. It is considered as the world's largest universal health coverage scheme.

ROLE OF EDUCATION ON WOMEN HEALTH

Education plays an important role in the improvement of women health. If we provide education to young girls then they will be aware of the various physiological processes of their body. They will be able to plan their future in a much better way. With education they can decide when to get married and also plan their future in a much better way. With the help of family planning programme they can decide about the size of their family. These decisions for their future will bring positive outcomes for their country as well. By deciding about the size of their family they can curb the population explosion and this will finally result in a healthy country. Various programmes started by the Government for education of girls have provided as a boon for them.

CONCLUSION

The health of a mother and child is a more telling measure of a nations' state than economic indicators.

-Harjit Gill.

Mother Teresa is the best example who devoted all her life for serving people. She was considerate to helping people and to overcome their miseries. She helped women and children to live a decent life and took care of them with love and compassion. Mother Teresa says,

“It is not how much we do,
But how much love we put in the doing.
It is not how much we give,
But how much love we put in the giving.”

By going with the words of Mother Teresa , we can say that each and every individual has a right to live a decent life. It is our right to live and no one can deny it. The Government schemes and policy provide individuals to live a healthy life irrespective of what societal strata they belong to or what sex they belong to. Every country should aim at building a healthy status of all its citizens.

Women should be given much more importance as it is they who run the families and also who work for the development of their country. Women are the caretakers of their children and nurture their families. So women should be empowered and should be given facilities so that they can live a better life.

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