Health Problems and Prospects of Women with Special Reference to India

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“A woman's health is her total well-being, not determined solely by biological factors and reproduction, but also by effects of work load, nutrition, stress, war and migration, among others”.
Introduction

• Empowerment of women can be possible if they are educated, employed and respected for which good health is very necessary.

• Tradition

• Poverty, inequality, discrimination

• Article 14 of Indian Constitution speaks about Social Responsibility and Health

• Scope & Sources
Social Evils

• Child marriage, infanticide, dowry, polygamy, divorce, prostitution, trafficking, rape, slavery, unemployment, under employment

• **Social and economic inequalities** are fundamental causes of inequalities in health. Lack of nutrition and healthy environment.

• **Poverty, inequality, and discrimination**

• Poverty & ill health—mental health, impact of poverty

• economic, and social inequalities and depression.

• Gender discrimination
Three Strata

• Lower, Middle & Upper Strata
• Discriminations between the rich and the poor; men and women; boys and girls; literates and illiterates, employed and unemployed.
Lower Strata

• **Lower class** suffers due to poverty, malnutrition and ill health.
• Slum life, male domination, domestic violence.
• Ignorance of their Rights & diseases and medical care available.
• Organ sale
• Pavement Dwellers
• Basic needs – food, shelter & clothing
• Non availability of sanitary and medical facilities.
• Unhygienic environment
• Poor quality of water & water prone diseases.
Middle Strata

- **Middle Strata** -- over work & responsibility at home and outside, stress, lack of rest and nutritious food
Upper Strata

• **Upper Strata** --- ageing, regular sickness, ignorance & no one to care.

Violence

• In all strata, physical, violence & emotional abuse exist.
• Husband’s behaviour.
• Different types of violence.
• Forced prostitution, slavery or forced marriage
• Unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion, and sexually-transmitted infections (HIV).
• Dowry deaths.
Climate change

- Climate change may harm human health.
- Even in relief measures inequality exists
- Priority to women victims is necessary.
Health Condition

• Physical disability
• Depression
• pregnancy and childbirth
• menopause
• fertility problems
• HIV/AIDS
• Obesity
• Physical problems + emotional problems add to their sufferings.
Health hazards

- **Health hazards** are exposure to a variety of chronic health hazards like noise, silica, asbestos, manmade fibers, lead and other metals, solvents, hazardous wastes, heat, and cold affecting women’s health. For construction & factory workers.

- Hostile working condition & inadequate protection cause ill health.

- Fetching water & collecting fire for rural women.
Diseases & Deaths

- inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene continue to pose a major threat to human health.
- Water borne diseases
- Child birth, abortion, miscarriage, infection, anaemia
- Infant and maternal mortality rate.
Girl Child

- Strict enforcement of laws against the practices of female foeticide, female infanticide, child marriage, child abuse, trafficking and child prostitution.
- Gender bias in feeding and educating girls
- Female genital mutilation.
Maternal Mortality

“A father excels ten Upadhhyayas in glory
But a mother excels a thousand fathers “. -----Manu

• many die in the process of becoming mothers.
• mal nutrition
• lack of health care
• involuntary sex
• unwanted pregnancy
• sexually transmitted infections
• lack of prenatal and post natal care
• complications of pregnancy and childbirth
• lack of hygiene & nutrition
• Maternity Benefits—but ignorance.
What is to be done?

• reducing of unwanted fertility,
• preventing infections
• reducing heavy physical workload
• nutritious diet.
• awareness programmes
• Empowerment of women can be possible if they are educated, employed and respected.
Old Age

• Elderly’s health in different strata;
• hospice & palliative care
• Old age homes- health problems .
Prospects

• Role of Govt & NGOs
• Elimination of inequalities between men and women
• increasing the capacity of women to care for themselves
• provision of adequate health care—Primary Health Centres, health camps, free services
• nutrition, general health
• knowledge of diseases
• reproductive rights of women
• education
• social, developmental and health consequences of HIV/AIDS—gender approach
• safe drinking water—metro water
• sewage disposal—organisations involved
• Toilet facilities—pay & use toilets
• sanitation within accessible reach of households, especially in rural areas and urban slums.
• violence against women—strictly dealt with Regulations
• Women in decision making—empowerment.
Conclusion

• Health related challenges continue.
• Needs of women to be taken care of.
• Rural and Slum women awareness of health & location of health centres
• Quality of care
• Education & mass media to end gender differences & promote health.
• Orientation to men & boys on women’s health.
• “Healthy Women, Healthy World” to be realised.