

## THE BACKBONE OF SOCIETY: WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND HEALTH

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Article history:	Abstract:
<b>Published:</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	The driving element in almost all the houses today is the woman of that house. Her role is very important in all aspects of life. So if the balance of the home is to be maintained, then it is necessary to maintain the nutrition of the women in the house. The women empowerment deals with the asset handling and decision-making abilities of women. Education plays a very important role in both the driving elements: nutrition and empowerment. Education helps the women to be independent in every aspect.
<b>Keywords:</b> Women empowerment, nutrition, education	

### INTRODUCTION

Empowering women is the root for social transformation of the society. It can be done by providing good and basic education to girls in all strata of the society. Education develops a sense of awareness and literacy to deal with different problems in the society. It helps in taking correct decisions at correct instance of time. According to [1] the women empowerment can be classified into five different categories: social, educational, economic, political and psychological. The social aspect nourishes the position and status of a women in the society. It also helps in suppressing the discrimination made in the society against all odds. Educational aspect is of utmost importance. It is a matter of survival for girls. But still there are many parts in the country where the girls are denied from basic education. Education makes the girls aware about their roles and responsibilities towards the society in which they are residing. They also come to know about their rights in the society. Gaining knowledge can improve their self-esteem and self-confidence. The economic aspect makes women financial independent. The satisfaction of making money for one's need has no words. It also helps in shouldering equal responsibilities with the partner. This again goes hand in hand with correct education. The political aspect plays a very important role in some class of women. Not every woman is politically active. Now a days we see more and more women entering politics in India, which is a positive sign in the growth of our country. The political influence is going to raise voice against many issues like for eg: health and sanitation that were unattended till then. The psychological aspect aligns with the social empowerment in women. Maintaining a balance between the work life and the family is a through challenge in every women's life. She should be calm yet firm while balancing both the aspects of her life.

As women empowerment is one side of the coin the other side is the health and nutrition of a women. Nothing can be achieved without proper nutrition [2]. Women needs better health care system than men in many aspects. It is due to the reproductive system that they are exposed to some chronic diseases as compared to men. Some of the health issues from which a woman suffers are breast cancer, cervical and ovarian cancer, gynecological and pregnancy issues, depression and anxiety. Our society should be educated enough to deal with the above mentioned possible diseases. A woman's health reflects both her individual biology and her economic and physical environments. They affect the quality as well as the duration of a women's life. Still there are many girls who are victims of gender inequality especially in developing countries. Women have a specific health needs which fails to get satisfied.

### 1. IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN HEALTH

The International Council on Women's Health Issues (ICOWHI) are dedicated with the vision of promoting health, health care, and well-being of women and girls throughout the world. It is done through various activities like participation, empowerment, advocacy, education, and research. Our society should assist multidisciplinary network of women's health providers, planners, and advocates from all over the globe. They constitute an international professional and lay foundation of those committed to improving women and girl's health and quality of life. When addressing women's lives, it is crucial to examine the underlying social, cultural, environmental, epidemiological, and economic determinants of health. A woman's health status matters to herself and her family.

Women's health refers to the health of women, which is indifferent from that of men. World Health Organization defines the example of health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". There are many wider definitions and arguments on women's reproductive health which actually represents the health of a woman. These differences are further magnified in developing countries where women, whose health includes both their risks and experiences, are further disadvantaged.

The gender gap in the industrialized countries have been narrowed, the life expectancy is also affected. Gender remains an important social determinant of health, since women's health is influenced not just by their biology but also by conditions such as poverty, employment, and family responsibilities. Women have long been limited in many respects such as social and economic power which restricts their access to the necessities of life including health care, and the greater the level of disadvantage, such as in developing countries, the greater adverse impact on health.

## **2. IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

Women's empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of women to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. The aim is to investigate which national mechanisms that lead to, and are caused by, women's empowerment in developing countries. Throughout the development literature, education is considered to be one of the strongest contributing factors of women's empowerment.

Another study highlights how education can lead to changes

in cognitive ability; changes that positively affect women's capacity to reflect and act on conditions in their lives (Kabeer, 2005). Hence, education can increase women's empowerment by facilitating agency through an increase in women's ability to make decisions independently. This strengthening of one's self-worth does not only affect women's lives within the household - it also affects how they deal with the outside world. A factor that might distort the effect of education is the quality of the education. Only having access to education does not automatically imply that the level of quality is sufficient to affect the women's sense of self-worth.

Women's empowerment as well as achieving gender equality is essential for our society to ascertain the sustainable development of a country. Many world leaders and scholars have argued that sustainable development is not possible without gender equality and women's empowerment. Sustainable development accepts environmental protection, social and economic development, including women's empowerment. In the context of women and development, empowerment must include more choices for women to make on their own [3].

### **A. Economic empowerment**

Economic empowerment emphasizes women's agency, access to formal government programs, mobility, economic independence, and purchasing authority. The policy makers should implement some schemes which in turn supports job training to aid in entrance in the formal markets. One solution is to provide more formal education opportunities for women that would allow for higher bargaining power in the home. They would be provided with higher wages that would make easier for women to get a job in the market.

### **B. Political empowerment**

Political empowerment helps in creating policies that would best support the gender equality and agencies for women in both the public and private sectors. Methods that have been suggested are to create affirmative action policies that have a reservation for the number of women in policy making and parliament positions. As of 2019, the global average of women who hold lower and single house parliament positions is 23.6 percent. Further recommendations have been to increase women's rights to vote, voice opinions, and the ability to run for office with a fair chance of being elected. Because women are typically associated with child care and domestic responsibilities in the home, they have less time dedicated to entering the labor market and running their business. Policies that increase their bargaining power in the household would include policies that account for cases of divorce, policies for better welfare for women, and policies that give women control over resources (such as property rights). However, participation is not limited to the realm of politics.

### **C. Digital Skills empowerment**

Digital skills can facilitate women's engagement with local government and increase their decision-making power in their communities. The Women-government project India, for instance, has helped women improve their understanding of and communication with local government via ICTs. In India, the project worked with women's collectives to establish women-run, internet-connected community information centers to facilitate applications for government assistance (including welfare and entitlements), which in turn improved linkages between the collectives, local authorities and public institutions. Women with digital skills are better able to make their voices heard on local issues and influence the outcome of decisions that affect themselves and their communities. Digital skills can also empower women to participate in political movements. For instance,

the anonymity of ICTs may allow some women to avoid limitations on freedom of speech in repressive societies, while collective mobilization through online networks can enable women to campaign on gender-based issues.

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION OF BACKBONE**

#### **• Implementation of Backbone: - Women Health**

Due to lack of information, a lot of women don't even know what to look for and how to care of their health. Sure, a healthy diet and lifestyle could help you keep disease-free but you need to understand that there are several unique aspects to women's health that you need to take care of. In order to promote awareness in women health, following points are necessary to consider

#### **A. Ensuring healthy food habits**

"Food shapes the identity of people's whole life experiences because it's a bonding ritual between families, friends, and communities". The health and nutrition statuses of women and children are intimately linked. Improving the health of women and children, therefore, begins with ensuring the health and nutritional status of women throughout all stages of life, and it continues with women being providers for their children and families.

Thus, a key priority is female empowerment and women's full and equal access to, and control over, social protection and resources such as income, land, water, and technology.

#### **B. Understanding importance of Physical fitness**

Regular workout is anyway good for health. It keeps you fit and helps prevent diseases. However, for women, the importance of exercise holds much more importance - Experts say that regular workout can help improve muscle mass and reduce the rate of bone loss. Bone mass starts decreasing sometime in the 30s so if you start working out in your 20s, you can improve your bone strength and mass. Even if you are already in your 30s, you can begin working out now, it is never too late. Your calorie needs depend on your body weight and height. Women do need certain minerals more than men - iron and calcium for example. With age, women lose more bone mass than men, due to changes in hormone levels. So, they are often asked to take calcium supplements, especially after the age of 30. However, a calcium supplement won't help you much if you are deficient in vitamin D, and most experts suggest that you take your daily recommended calcium from diet and food. This is where your routine check-ups would come in handy. Your health reports will help your doctor recommend supplements for you even before you notice any signs of a mineral or vitamin deficiency or ill-health.

#### **C. Managing Sresses**

Effective stress management helps you break the hold stress has on your life, so you can be happier, healthier, and more productive. The ultimate goal is a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun—and the resilience to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on. But stress management is not one-size-fits-all. That's why it's important to experiment and find out what works best for you.

#### **• IMPLEMENTATION OF BACKBONE: - WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

Women's empowerment and achieving gender equality is essential for our society to ensure the sustainable development of a country. Many world leaders and scholars have argued that sustainable development is impossible without gender equality and women's empowerment. Sustainable development accepts environmental protection, social and economic development, including women's empowerment. In the context of women and development, empowerment must include more choices for women to make on their own

#### **D. Economic empowerment**

Economic empowerment increases women's agency, access to formal government programs, mobility outside the home, economic independence, and purchasing power. Policy makers are suggested to support job training to aid in entrance in the formal markets.[4] One recommendation is to provide more formal education opportunities for women that would allow for higher bargaining power in the home. They would have more access to higher wages outside the home; and as a result, make it easier for women to get a job in the market.

#### **E. Political empowerment**

Political empowerment supports creating policies that would best support gender equality and agency for women in both the public and private spheres. Methods that have been suggested are to create affirmative action policies that have a quota for the number of women in policy making and parliament positions. As of 2019, the global average of women who hold lower and single house parliament positions is 23.6 percent. Further recommendations have been to increase women's rights to vote, voice opinions, and the ability to run for office with a fair chance of being elected. Because women are typically associated with child care and domestic responsibilities in the home, they have less time dedicated to entering the labour market and running their business. Policies that increase their bargaining power in the household would include policies that account for cases of divorce, policies for better welfare for women, and policies that give women control over resources (such as property rights). However, participation is not limited to the realm of politics.

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#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

March 8 is chosen to celebrate International Women's Day, a date to honor worldwide all the amazing achievements women have attained and never lose sight of the many battles that still remain. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, may present a threat to many of such hard-earned achievements. The social, economic, mental, and physical adverse effects of the pandemic may hit women harder than men and thus increase gender inequality (Chen and Bougie 2020). Studies show that women are more vulnerable than men when infectious diseases outbreaks occur. In addition to the health challenges, women are faced with increased workload as schools and childcare centers closed and the office moved home. Women were forced to take over a huge load of invisible unpaid work and their burden greatly increased (Power 2020). The physical and mental impact on women is unprecedented and cannot be ignored. According to the World Health Organization (WHO 2021a), women face more difficulty in having access to healthcare due to a number of reasons including reduced educational and employment opportunities, cultural and social norms which make women focus on reproductive roles and exposure to situations that may pose psychological, physical or sexual threats. The pandemic unfortunately has worsened the situation, made women more vulnerable and the gender gap wider.

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