



REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS OF WOMEN IN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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The bases of any society are women and children. Mothers who nourish the present and children who are the future of the country.

The saying of a famous ideologist Arastu is-

“The progress and decadence of a country depend on the progress and decadence of women.” In the fabrication of society woman is equally important as man. The formation and administration of a country is not possible without woman. The mother form of woman is a precious gift / boon of nature.

Reproductive health was defined in International population and development council (IPCD) in 1994. In its origin, fertility health, voluntary and safe sex and reproductive options have been promoted to individuals and couples with family size and timely decisions.

Following rights are included under reproductive and sexual health rights:

1. Information about sexuality
2. Sex education
3. Choosing life partner
4. Decision of being sexually active or not
5. Decision to reproduce children
6. Use of modern contraceptives
7. Right to maternity leave after delivery
8. Right to safe termination of pregnancy
9. Information on how to prevent, cure and treat communicable sexually transmitted diseases and infection.

In India reproduction is a community based decision. Women don't have an individual say in this decision. In 2011 Thomson issued a ranking on the basis of Rights of Righter's Foundation in which India was in a backward position. Gender Inequality Index GII ranks the nations on the basis of women empowerment in the fields of reproductive health, pay and education and politics.

Reproduction is the basis of nature so without sexual maturity it cannot be imagined also. Which depends on the relations between men and women. Ability to reproduce places women in separate category than men. If we talk about rights about reproduction so reproduction only means to give birth to children ? or we have a control on our reproduction ability? Do women have the freedom to take decision that when and how many children should they give birth to? Do they have the access to safe contraceptive methods? Do they have the right to safe termination of pregnancy?

Our country is a patriarchal country. Here respect of women has been associated to their ability to give birth to sons. Unless and until a woman gives birth to a son she is pressurised to get pregnant again and again by her husband and other members of the family due to which sometimes they die during pregnancy or delivery. Which is one of the reasons of maternal mortality rate.

Reproductive problems related to women - :

1. Myths related to menstruation
2. Complications of getting pregnant
3. Problems after delivery
4. Use of contraceptives
5. Unsafe abortions
6. Lack of sex education
7. Problem of menopause

1. Myths related to menstruation:- rural area of India where there is lack of knowledge and resources to young girls. There menstruation is a social prohibition. Girls are rarely told about the changes during adolescent age. Menstruation is considered impure in poor areas of India due to which there are many rules and prohibitions:-

1. They cannot go in the kitchen
2. They cannot pray
3. They cannot go in front of anybody etc.

The cloth which is used during menstruation is washed and dried in a dark room so that nobody can see and can be used again and again which poses a great risk of infection.

2. Complications of getting pregnant: in a male dominant country like India unless and until a woman does not becomes a mother, produces a son she is not considered complete. Sometimes when a woman is not able to conceive she gets many complaints and taunts. But it is not compulsory that complications arise due to women only sometimes male reproductive organs are not fully developed which may be a reason for not conceiving but due to lack of education and knowledge women are not able to oppose these allegations and accept them with ease.

3. Problems after delivery: although motherhood is delightful experience for women but after delivery women undergo a vast change physically, mentally and emotionally. Sometimes women take stress due to their weight gain and menstrual irregularities. If the woman is working she goes under depression because besides balancing home and work place she has to give her time to her baby also.

4. Use of contraceptives: India was the first country to adopt programme of family planning in 1951. In the beginning it began with male vasectomy in communities but now it has developed to various modern techniques available today.

Now a days most contraceptives are being used by women. According to reports of NHFS -4 36.1 % of rural women and 35.7% of urban women undergo sterilization whereas male vasectomy is very less among men which is 0.3% which is less than 1% also. This indicates that with passing of time male thinking has become more narrow minded with the passing of time. For family planning pills are being used by 4% and IUD/PPIUD are being used by 1.5% but with the use of these women face lot of complications like complications in conceiving again, headache, stomach ache, irregular menstrual cycle, nausea etc.

5. Unsafe abortions:- in 1971 abortion was declared legal by Government Of India. But today also due to lack of education abortions are being done in an unsafe environment and moreover practitioners are also not trained. Abortion should be done when there is a danger of life of mother from foetus. Unfortunately now it is based on the sex of the baby and it is being done repeatedly due to which internal organs of a woman are wounded and many complications arise.

According to recent figures of National Health and Family Research in 2015-16 53% abortions were done by trained practitioners 14% were done by nurse or family members. Out of these 1/3 of abortions which means 27.4% abortions were done at home due to which 19% of

women had to face health related issues.

6. **Lack of sex education:-** in a male dominant country like India education of women has always remained a challenging subject. Although many efforts were done for female education but course of education was restricted to certain subjects. Here conversation on sex education was considered a crime. Although Government of India made sex education compulsory but due to intervention of some policy makers and Government of Rajasthan it was stopped. Due to lack of sex education future citizens that is present day adolescents are not aware of the diseases which spread through sexual contact. It is unfortunate that one woman cannot talk about her private parts with another woman.
7. **Problems of menopause:-** menopause problems are faced by a woman when menstruation stops. During this time many physical and mental changes can be seen in a woman. During this time irregular bleeding, tiredness, sweating at night, dryness in vagina, and problems of memory loss can be seen.
8. **Sterilization:-** sterilization is a surgical process which helps in controlling population in which a person is unable to reproduce. Government of India encourages this by giving cash rewards. In certain states there is a sterilization quota and to fulfil this quota health workers target uneducated and poor women. Most of these women know that this surgical process is a permanent procedure due to which they won't be able to produce children in future. Health workers are paid for performing sterilization. Many health workers do not provide information regarding other contraceptives which takes them to sterilization to prevent pregnancy.

In rural areas sterilization is done mostly in camps in unsafe environment in which dozens of women remain unsuccessful.

Suggestions:-

1. Along with knowledge of private parts knowledge about diseases related to them should be given in schools and full knowledge about infections which spread due to unsafe sexual relations should be given.
2. Policy which came in 1992 of two, our two should be made a law and followed strictly and to encourage it similar health facilities should be made available.
3. Adequate knowledge of reproductive rights of women should be given to them and it should be told to them that to keep their private parts clean and healthy is their personal responsibility.
4. There are many myths regarding menstruation in rural areas which should be removed. For doing this primary health workers should go door to door in each household and counsel the women about their menstrual cycle. They should encourage women to use sanitary pads in place of cloth during menstrual flow. Sanitary pads should be made available at reasonable rates in primary health centres so that their reproductive organs remain healthy.
5. Sometimes it happens that after one abortion woman is not able to conceive again. To prevent this you should contact your health advisor and take appropriate contraceptive pills to maintain appropriate difference between two children till the time you complete your family.
6. If the continuation of the world is responsibility of both men and women in the same way it is the responsibility of both to maintain the difference between two children and control the number so males should be encouraged for vasectomy and myths related to male vasectomy should be removed.
7. It is the need of the hour to educate women. They should know it does not depend on female chromosomes whether the child will be a male or female. It depends on male chromosomes. Female only nurtures the foetus in her body. If a woman is educated enough she can oppose the violence and torture done on her and can answer the allegations laid on her that for sex of the child she is not to be blamed.
8. They should be made aware of the problems of the menopause so that they can face them without any stress. They can face many problems at this time due to hormonal imbalance. At this time they should be encouraged to perform yoga. This will give the mental peace and keep their hormones in control.

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