

ABSTRACT

GENDER INEQUITY IN HEALTH CARE : A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Dr. Srimati Nayak

Lecturer

P.G. Dept. of Sociology

Sambalpur University, Orissa

sri1003@rediffmail.com

INTRODUCTION :

Assessment of indicators of social development like life expectancy, infant mortality, and literacy in the recent decades in India has shown considerable improvement. Progress in the social and the economic sectors as well go hand in hand. However, India is one of the few countries in the world, where men and women have nearly the same life expectancy. The fact that typical female advantage in life expectancy isn't seen in India which indicates systematic problems with women's health and their health status. Maternal mortality rates in India are among one of the highest in the world. Males significantly outnumber the females with the child sex ratio (sex ratio in the age group 0-6) declined to 927 in 2001 census as compared to 945 in 1991. The role of socio-economic and cultural factors influencing women's status including health is well documented by various studies. Since gender imbalances influence women's health and well being to a large extent throughout their life cycle, it is important to understand the health consequences with a gender perspective in different settings of the society.

Behaviour has an important role in health disparity. The distinct roles and behaviours of men and women in a given culture, dictated by that culture's gender norms and values, give rise to gender differences/gender inequity there by contributing to the inequities in health status and access to health care between men and women.

OBJECTIVES :

The present study was undertaken to critically assess the existing inequalities in health care facilities in terms of women's life-cycle and socio-economic indicators in various settings.

METHODOLOGY :

In the above context, the present study has been empirical and analytical in approach by reviewing various published and unpublished works.

To conclude, improving women's health requires a strong and sustained commitment, a favourable policy environment, and well-targeted resources. Programmes and policies aimed at reducing differences at the level of education and employment between men and women must enshrine gender equity as a core value. Further, operational research supporting women's health to introduce, test, or modify programme strategies and activities and measure their impact and cost would be required to bring about changes in gender inequity.