

GENDER INEQUALITY AND HEALTH OF WOMEN: SOME SOCIO-CULTURAL ISSUES

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality in health in Indian society has its roots in the traditional practices and norms defined by patriarchal structures. The definitions of health for men and women are different where women's health and nutritional status is not given importance. The main causes of poor health conditions of women are girl child discrimination, less breastfeeding duration, less play and more workload, less medical attention, less nutrition, and early marriage. Gender differences also exist in the distribution of food in the household, preventive care and use of healthcare facilities. The health of women depends on a number of social, cultural and economic factors. The biological differences between men and women lead to differential healthcare requirements. There is a need to expand healthcare services in other specific areas and also for different categories of women. All efforts to improve the status of women should also focus on eliminating gender inequalities in health. The study is based on primary data collected through interview schedule and informal interviews. The paper examines the reasons for and consequences of gender disparities in health. An attempt has been made to put forth certain strategies to accommodate differential health needs of women.

KEYWORDS: *Inequality, Health, Cultural Norms*