

## EMPOWERING WOMEN'S HEALTH

### A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Women's health is a critical issue that affects not only individuals but also societies and economies worldwide. In India, as well as across the globe, there are three key areas that demand our attention and action for the betterment of women's health. This article explores these crucial aspects, supported by data, to shed light on the challenges and opportunities in women's healthcare.



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### Maternal Mortality Rates (MMR):

Maternal mortality rates (MMR) remain a pressing concern worldwide, and India is no exception. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2019, India had an estimated MMR of 113 per 100,000 live births. Although this represents a significant improvement from previous years, it's still far from the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030.

Efforts to reduce maternal mortality rates include increased access to antenatal care, skilled birth attendants, and postnatal support. India's Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) and the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) are notable initiatives that have contributed to this decline. Continued investment in maternal health infrastructure and education is crucial for further progress.

## **Reproductive Health and Access to Family Planning:**

Access to reproductive health services and family planning is fundamental for women's health. Data from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) suggests that in 2019, over 200 million women in developing countries, including India, lacked access to effective contraception.

Challenges like geographical disparities and socioeconomic factors in India continue to hinder access.

According to UNICEF, in 2019, only 51% of women in India received antenatal care from skilled healthcare professionals, highlighting the need for improvement. Expanding access to contraception and family planning counseling is crucial for reducing unintended pregnancies, promoting spacing between births, and improving overall maternal and child health. Ensuring these services are readily available and affordable, especially in rural areas, can significantly impact women's health.

## **Gender-Based Violence:**

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive issue affecting women's health worldwide. According to data

from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) in India, nearly 30% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical or sexual violence by their spouse.

Globally, an estimated 1 in 3 women has experienced either physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.

Efforts to combat GBV include legal reforms, awareness campaigns, and support services for survivors.

India's Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao program and the One Stop Centre scheme are examples of initiatives addressing GBV. Eradicating GBV is not only a human rights imperative but also a crucial step towards improving women's mental and physical health.

## **Conclusion:**

While significant strides have been made in women's health, disparities and challenges persist both in India and worldwide. To truly empower women's health globally, continued efforts, policy reforms, and healthcare accessibility are essential.

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