



# Trivial Issues Which Predisposes Women's Towards Mental Illness

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Our social and cultural background has tremendous effect on our lives and contributes a lot to our health and experience. Our accumulated societal experiences reflect in our psychological makeup and are one important predisposing factor towards individual's health. In India changing socio-demographic and epidemiological transition has significantly affected the mental health of women. Women are pivotal and their health is very important for growth, development and productivity of the family and society. And if neglected it can lead to serious consequences towards to family and society in turn affecting the generations. Our society is witnessed with varied number of social and cultural constraints which might be problematic and may predispose individual towards mental illness.

Till today our Indian society witness culturally constructed difference among men and women roles, responsibilities, status, power. Our society whether we talk about present or past men has always enjoyed a superior position as compared to women and regarded them as their subordinate which has significantly affected womens mental health thus making them vulnerable to mental illness. Therefore it is important to address mental health issues of womens because at present mental health problems among womens constitute a wide spectrum ranging from sub-clinical states to very severe forms of disorders. Further, there lies significant difference between men and women in disease pathology. For instance men are more vulnerable to life-threatening chronic diseases, like coronary heart disease, cancer, cerebrovascular disease, emphysema, cirrhosis of the liver, kidney disease and atherosclerosis whereas womens are more susceptible to chronic disorders such as anemia, thyroid conditions, gall bladder conditions, migraines, arthritis, colitis, eczema, upper respiratory infections, gastroenteritis and short-term infectious diseases [1,2].

In Indian society changing social structure, family structure, belief system, rules, regulation, law, customs, rituals, tradition has significantly affected the womens health. And epidemiological evidences shows that 9.5 to 370/1000 of Indian population [3], suffers from psychiatric disorders and 20 percent of adult Indian population suffers with one or more psychiatry disorders.

Gender is recognized as one of the major social determinants of health. According to the American Psychological Association, gender norms refer to, 'the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for boys and men or girls and women' thus a person's behaviors are critical to their ability to fit into cultural gender norms. These gender norms can play a powerful role in a person's life since deviating from the norms associated with one's biological sex can be met with censure from peers, social exclusion, and sometimes even emotional or physical violence [4]. Therefore, it raises an issue that why disconfirming gender norms met with such vulnerability, probably the answer can be faulty early socialization where society deliberately declares specific activities, roles and behavior suited for womens. When this norms are not met with the part of womens social behavior, which society consider appropriate, results in unethical behavioral pattern from the side of authority responsible for care giving. Womens are left with two option either they have to conform or reject. In both case women meet with negative impact. When she conform the pre-decided role then she has to suffer from mental dissonance which significantly affect her mental health. Second when she refuses to conform the specific role than she has to suffer from unwanted consequences. Ultimately these all results in family dysfunction and family disharmony, in turn affecting the mental health of the women.

Our society has already labeled and stratified specific roles and activities related to men/women conduct and behavior. Further, advancement in technology, information exchange and global exposure has wired pool of information, with change in gender stereotype culminating womens to be more aware of their rights. This has significantly checked the deterioration of womens social position and predefined role related activities. But in rural and semi-urban areas it is less encouraging since a large number of womens populations are still discriminated due to prevalence of patriarchal type of family system. There large number of women is victim of household violence due to dependency on their male guardian, restricting them with their independence which creates mental dissonance among them significantly affecting their mental health. Besides this in India maximum womens are not financially independent and they have to be dependent on their male guardian if unmarried or husband if married. For each and every trivial needs they depend upon them, majorly their demand get restricted and they have no options other than to feel distressed.. In this way from early this continues and slowly this distressed piles up in them making them vulnerable to stress. Thus affecting their mental health. Therefore, financial dependency plays a major role in mental illness of women. Although societal, cultural and economic issues predisposes womens to suffers from mental health issues, besides this there are also some individuals factors which affect mental health of womens which is largely ignored. Among those factors lack of self-awareness and carelessness towards self-health are important. In India often due to lack of education especially

in rural areas womens are less aware of their health keeping practices and related factors. In rural areas, largely, there is no culture that one should be conscious about his/her health and thus largely neglect it. Also, lack of proper nutrition and less availability of medical health care facilities predisposes women to poor physical as well as mental health.

Thus we can conclude that various social, cultural, economic and individuals' factors interplay and predisposes to the risk of developing mental illness among womens.

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