

# Determinants of Women Health: A Study in Kohima District of Nagaland

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**Abstract**—The research entitled “Determinants of Women Health” was carried out in the Kohima District of Nagaland. The research was carried out to examine the health status of women in the present society of Kohima. The importance of women health and their role in bringing greater change and development in the family and the rural society at large are examined. The scope of the study was to study the health condition of women, the different health problems and the impacts of women health in the society.

## INTRODUCTION

### Women Health in India: An Overview

Men and women are both equal and play a vital role in the creation and development of their families in particular and the society in general yet the struggle for health equality remains as one of the major concern all over India. India being the second most populous country comprise of 1210.19 million populations with 48.5% female and 51.5% male.

Women in India, especially those living in the rural villages are less fortunate to receive accurate and affordable health services as compared to the women in urban areas. Sexual and reproductive health is a major concern for women in rural areas. Rural women are often vulnerable to pregnancy and childbirth-related deaths, disabilities, unsafe abortions, reproductive cancers, HIV/AIDS and other serious health issues. The overall health status is diminished by the lives they are forced to live under the harsh realities of life such as poverty, malnutrition, illness and injury which are frequently the consequence of long hours of physical labour in unhygienic and dangerous conditions. The strains of childbirth and caring for multiple children and not having enough to eat and take proper care are the major causes effecting women health.

Women in North-East region enjoy a much higher status than the women belonging to the other states of India. The status of women differs from society to society in India. The status of women greatly determines her health condition. With the practice of matrilineal system in Meghalaya, the women in the state enjoy a much higher status than the women in other states of the region. It has been observed that women in the northeast region are less educated and unaware of the health issues and they lack awareness on health, hygiene and family planning.

A study on the health and nutritional status of women in Assam states that the majority of the women in north eastern states are Anaemic. More than one fourth of the women folk suffer from moderate to severe anaemic in Meghalaya and Assam.

Female literacy also plays an important role in improving the health and nutritional status of women. The literate women in the North Eastern region are very much concerned about their health, nutritional facilities and also give more importance to the hygienic conditions, which in turn decreases female mortality rate.

### Women in Nagaland

Naga women enjoy more privileges and a higher status than women in other parts of India. The traditional culture of the Nagas itself provides more equality between men and women as compared with the mainstream of Indian society. Social evils such as beggary, rape, female infanticide, sati, dowry and purdah were not much prevalent in the Naga society yet the birth of a boy is generally preferred in the Naga society as the lineage of a clan and family is traced through a male child. This patriarchal system is reflected by the notions such as man as the bread winner and the protector of the society and women being subordinate to their households.

As per 2011 census, Nagaland has a population of 19,80,6002 of which male and female are 1,024,649 and 9, 53,853 respectively. According to the Economic Survey 2012-13, the maternal mortality ratio of 1lakh live birth is 20-11.

## OBJECTIVES

- To study the health status of women.
- To find out the health problems in the rural area.
- To study the impact of women health in the study area.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

- Women face a greater number of unavoidable health risks because of their unending domestic works and their negligence to take proper medications.

- The women are ignored by the society not because of illiteracy and unemployment but because of the tradition, customs and norms.
- Women are subjugated to men because of the patriarchal system in Nagaland.
- The study found out that there is male child preference in the study area.
- Majority of the women are school dropout or uneducated.
- The findings show that older and uneducated women have more number of children and educated women are more aware of their health, nutrition and hygiene.
- The health centres are easily accessible to the women yet the majority of the people refer indigenous healers.
- The majority of the women had received maternity benefits.
- The majority of the women in the study area are suffering from critical health problems like kidney, typhoid, heart, sugar, womb, tuberculosis and blood pressure.
- The study also found out that women reproductive role is the major reason for the ill health of women. The majority of the women had undergone major operations during delivery.
- The majority of the women neglect their health issue because of financial problems.
- Women are confined not only to domestic works but they are also engaged in other allied sectors and business ventures.
- Women have great impact in the family and the society because of their role to take care and nurture their family.

## CONCLUSION

Women play an important role in building and nurturing the family. Therefore, every women should be treated equally and take good care. Proper medication and early check up should be made for pregnant women and others. Health education, awareness programmes and seminars on women health should be provided to every family so as to adopt healthy behaviour and lead to a socially useful and productive life. Family planning should be encourage and made aware to all man and woman. The mindset of the people should be changed and equality should be brought in the society. Every family should realise the importance of a girl child and differentiation should not be made when a boy or a girl child is born in the family.

It can be concluded that education is the main indicator for the development of women status and her health in the society. Women form a vital part in the society, and hence without them, society would have been like a building without its pillars. Therefore, women should be respected and give equal treatment in the society.

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