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HER HEALTH, OUR RESPONSIBILITY

We often describe women as strong, patient, and endlessly giving. From mothers and sisters to friends and classmates, women carry multiple responsibilities with quiet determination. They wake up early, sleep late, manage studies, careers, homes, and relationships and yet, somewhere in this constant giving, their own health is silently sacrificed.

Among the many health challenges women face, anemia and poor nutrition remain two of the most common yet most ignored problems. What makes this issue more concerning is not just its medical seriousness, but the way it has become "normal". According to the World Health Organization, anemia is one of the most widespread nutritional disorders in the world, especially affecting women and adolescent girls. In India, millions of women live with low hemoglobin levels. Yet, how often do we truly talk about it?

Understanding Anemia and Nutrition

Definition: Anemia occurs when the body does not have enough healthy red blood cells or hemoglobin to carry oxygen efficiently.

Symptoms: The result is constant fatigue, dizziness, pale skin, shortness of breath, and weakness.

The Silent Struggle: Many women do not even recognize these as warning signs. They accept exhaustion as part of life, work through headaches, and ignore breathlessness, telling themselves, "It's just tiredness".

Causes: Iron deficiency is the most common cause. Nutritional requirements increase during menstruation, pregnancy, and teenage growth spurts.

Social Factors: In many households, women eat last or eat the least, with smaller portions and unspoken needs. Nutrition is rarely prioritized due to a lack of awareness, financial constraints, or deep-rooted social habits.

Breaking the Silence

The Government of India has initiated programs like Anemia Mukta Bharat to reduce anemia across the country. However, policies alone cannot change mindsets; real change begins at home when families understand that a woman's health is essential, not optional.

As students and educated individuals, we can:

Encourage mothers to go for regular check-ups.

Remind sisters to eat iron-rich foods like green leafy vegetables, pulses, fruits, nuts, and jaggery.

Have open conversations about menstruation and nutrition without embarrassment.

A healthy woman is the foundation of a healthy family and a progressive society. Protecting her health is not an act of sympathy; it is an act of justice.

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Beyond Nutrition: Social and Economic Influences

Women's health is deeply connected to education, opportunities, and social support.

Education and Awareness: Educated women are better able to make informed health decisions. Breaking the silence on menopause, mental health, and reproductive health is vital.

Economics: Financial independence increases the likelihood that a woman will seek medical care and maintain a balanced diet.

Environment: Climate change affects well-being through food insecurity and water shortages, particularly impacting women who manage household resources.

Technology: Digital health services and mobile applications are making healthcare more accessible, provided there is equal access to technology.

Conclusion: A Healthier Future

Ensuring women's well-being is a lifelong journey that must evolve from adolescence to old age. We must expand our understanding beyond just reproductive health to include mental health, chronic diseases, and workplace stress.

A nation can only progress when its women are healthy, confident, and empowered. To build a better future, we must safeguard the health of every woman at every stage of her life.

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