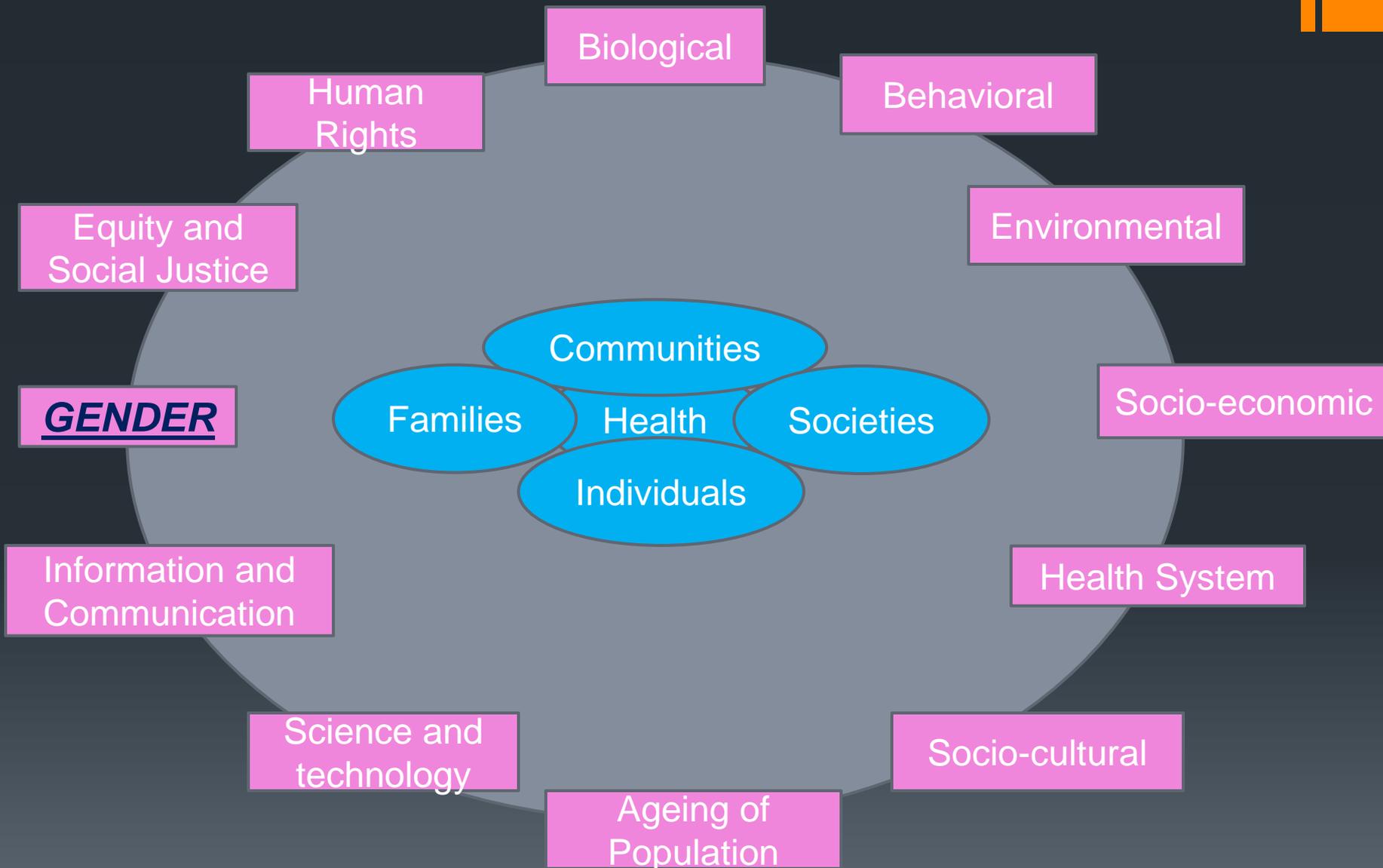


Review of Community Medicine Textbooks: Are the textbooks Gender Sensitive Enough...

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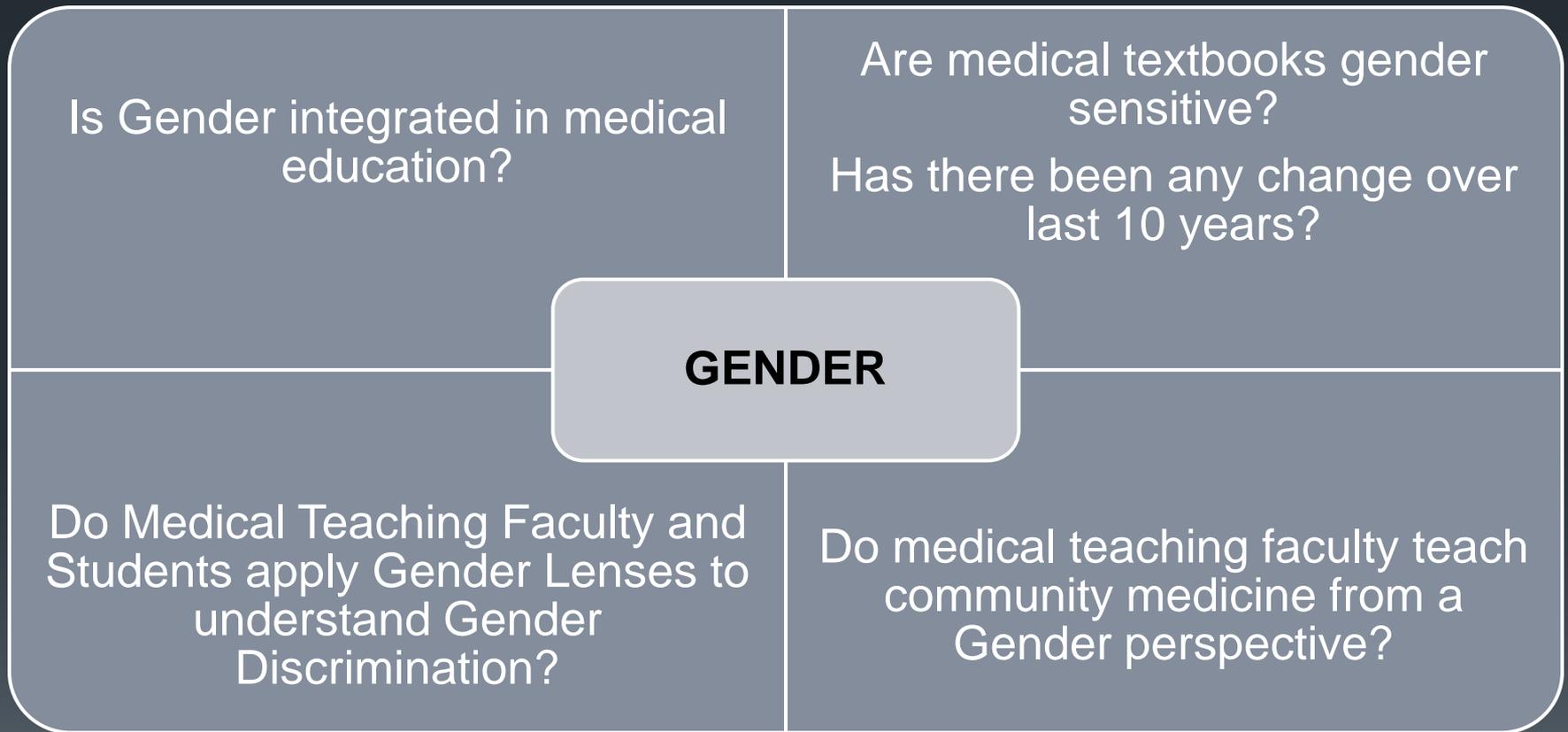


Gender as a Determinant of Health



Gender even though an important determinant of health is often ignored.

Rationale behind review of Textbooks: Time for introspection...





Review of Community Medicine Textbooks for Gender Sensitivity

- Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine – K.Park
23rd Edition
- Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine - Mahajan and
Gupta, 4th Edition
- Text Book of Community Medicine - A.P Kulkarni, Fourth
Edition
- Epidemiology and Management for Health Care - P.V. Sathe
and P.P. Doke, Fourth Edition

Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine – 23rd Edition

Chapter 1: Man and Medicine: Towards Health for All

- **23rd Edition Park Page No 1**
- *“It has been truly said that medicine was conceived in sympathy and born out of necessity; and the first doctor was the first man, and the first woman, the first nurse”*
- The textbook starts with gender bias which persists even today.
- **Doctors:** Usually perceived as **Father Figure (Authoritative, Decision Making)** and usually thought of as **males are better doctors!!!**.
- **Nurses:** Usually perceived as **Motherly Figure (Caring, Carrying out decisions taken by doctors)** and usually thought of as **females are better Nurses...**



Chapter 2:

Concept of Health and Disease

- **23rd Edition Park Page no 16 (Concept of Well-being)**
- Standard of living, Level of living, Quality of life, PQLI, HDI discussed.
- **GDI AND GEM HAVE CURRENTLY BEEN OMITTED IN THE RECENT EDITION OF PARK.**
- **Gender - Related Development Index (GDI):** reflecting achievements in the basic human development adjusted for gender inequalities *and*
- **Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM):** measuring gender inequalities in economic and political opportunities.

Chapter 5: Epidemiology of Communicable Diseases - STD

- **23rd Edition Park Page No 331 (Sexually Transmitted Diseases)**
- **Demographic factors:**
- Certain demographic factors will undoubtedly contribute to increase in STDs in the developing countries. These include population explosion;....., **increasing educational opportunities for women delaying their marriage and increasing STD risks.**
- **Social factors:**
- i. Changing behavioural patterns: In modern society, the value traditionally set on **chastity** is **in conflict** with the more recent ideas of **independence, freedom from supervision and equal rights for both sexes.**



Chapter 5: Epidemiology of Communicable Diseases - STD

- Women's vulnerability to STDs and its reasons are ignored.
- The 'triple jeopardy of women' making them vulnerable to these infections, is primarily due to:
 1. Anatomy of the vagina
 2. Semen has a high concentration of pathogens and the quantity of semen is much more than the vaginal fluid.
 3. Contact time between semen and the vaginal mucosa is longer.
- Most important reason for women's vulnerability to STDs is the prevailing social status of women, where even if they know of their husbands' sexual behavior, they cannot say 'no' to sex with them and cannot even insist on the use of condoms.

Sathe's Textbook Review

Control of Direct Contact Diseases Chapter - STI

▪ Sathe 4th Edition Page No 348 (Determinants section)

Amongst the various determinants the following determinants are also mentioned which are said to increase the number of STI cases.

1. Freedom to Women
2. Emergence of Semi professional call girls
3. Lessing religious restrictions
4. Tendency to break away from tradition
5. Increased exposure to sexual stimuli
6. Greater tolerance to sexual behaviour
7. Increasing pre and extra marital relationships
8. Reduced fear of conception due to availability of contraceptive

Mahajan Textbook Review

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

- Mahajan 4th Edition Page No 277 (Case Detection)
- For case detection among high-risk groups, the textbook advises, **“To find cases among prostitutes and call girls in brothels and red light areas...interrogation, search, interview, some persuasion or even coercion may be necessary to detect them”**
- This insensitivity of a preventive and social medicine book is serious and worrisome.



Some other considerations...

(Mahajan)

- 4th Edition Mahajan Page No 144
(Chapter 14: Host Factors and Health: Age and Sex Section)
- “An aspect of sexuality getting particular attention these days is sexual orientation, in relation to homosexuality or heterosexuality. **There appears to be a genetic basis for sexual orientation.**”
- The spectrum of human sexuality is not discussed by the author.
- The author also **does not discuss environmental influences on sexual orientation.**



Chapter 5: Epidemiology of Communicable Diseases – STD Improvement (Park)

- 23rd Edition Park Page No 331.
- **The male component of prostitution - the prostituant is equally important.** Prostitution supplies a demand; if there were no prostitutants, there would be no prostitutes.

IMPROVEMENT IN SATHE'S TEXTBOOK 4th Edition:

Crime against women in India 2012

Reference: Crime in India, National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2011 Statistics, available on

<http://ncrb.nic.in/CD-CII2011/Statistics2012.pdf>. (Accessed on 6th January 14)

No	Crime	Frequency
1	Cruelty by husband	Every 5 minutes
2	Assault on women	Every 12 minutes
3	Kidnapping	Every 14 minutes
4	Rape	Every 21 minutes
5	Dowry death	Every hour
6	Insult to the modesty of women	Every hour

Chapter 8: Demography and Family Planning (Park)

- 23rd Edition Park Page No 494 (Contraceptive methods)

“The last few years have witnessed a **contraceptive revolution**, that is, **man trying to interfere with the ovulation cycle.**”

- Appropriate word “**humans**” instead of the word “man”,
- Linking the word contraceptive revolution with ovulation puts the **entire emphasis of contraception on women.**
- It also suggests that majority of research in finding the ideal contraceptive has been **concentrated on women anatomy and physiology.**



Chapter 8: Demography and Family Planning (Park)

- **23rd Edition Park Page No 497 (Intra-uterine Device)**
- While describing the ideal candidate for an intrauterine device (IUD), its mentioned in one of the points that **woman should be in a monogamous relationship.**
- A woman with multiple partners is at high risk for PID.
- However, this point conveniently ignores the fact that the **woman's husband may be having multiple partners** and as such is at a high risk for sexually transmitted infections.



Chapter 31: Family Planning and Population Policy (Mahajan)

- 4th Edition Mahajan, Page No 609 Chapter 31: Intrauterine devices, Selection of Cases...
- “ **Retro-verted uterus** is no contraindication. Slight discharge does not matter. Mild erosion results in no harm and prolapse can be ignored. Cervical tear, infection, caesarean section, myomectomy and lactational amenorrhoea are **not contraindications**”

Chapter 8: Demography and Family Planning (Park)

- **23rd Edition Park Page No 516 (Post partum contraceptive)**
- a. “The women who have recently delivered are of **proven fertility, and are at risk to become pregnant again rapidly**
- b. At the time of delivery and during the lying-in period, **they are generally more receptive to adopt one or the other family planning method.**”
- To induce a patient to **use a contraceptive when she is vulnerable is unethical** and this sort of reasoning will ultimately lead to practices such as **inserting Copper-T's without the full knowledge and informed consent of the patient,** in her ‘best interest’.



Some other considerations...(Mahajan)

- 4th Edition Mahajan Page No 151 (Sexual Behavior)
- “The ultimate cause of septic abortions, associated with much maternal morbidity and mortality, is uncontrolled sexual behavior.”
- The author does not find it important to discuss lack of accessibility (Physical, Financial and Social) to health care facilities for women, delay in seeking treatment and lack of decision making authority for women as a likely cause for septic abortions.

A.P Kulkarni

Fourth Edition: Review of Textbook



Demography and Family Planning

- Contraceptive Methods:
- Even if women might have knowledge of contraception the critical pathway of converting this desire into action is dependent on communication skills, power structure, social, cultural factors and decision making capacity.
- This is not discussed.



Certain Gaps Identified

Infertility finds no mention...

- Medical students need to be sensitized about infertility as a social problem.
- Infertility is a major social problem resulting in mental stress, anguish and social ostracism for women.
- The burden of tests the woman alone has to undergo to prove her fertility.

Certain other gaps...

- Menopause and Peri-Menopause
- Osteoporosis
- Stress Urinary Incontinence
- Prolapse Uterus
- Genito-urinary fistulas
- Indoor Air pollution: Non Smokers COPD
- Women Agricultural Workers
- Many of national health programs like RMNCH+A women oriented, there is a need for initiatives like Adolescent Boys Initiative too.
- Do Women become visible to the textbooks only while discussing demography and population problems???



Chapter 11: Medicine and Social Sciences (Park)

- **23rd Edition Park Page No 671 (Role)**
- Further while discussing the **ROLE** it is mentioned that in a single day, a man may play a role of husband, father, employee,.....
- There is no mention of women and the **triple burden** that she faces of:
 - **Managing her professional life**
 - **Managing personal life** and
 - **Managing family life** including **managing children.**



Chapter 11 Medicine and Social Science

- **23rd Edition Park Page No 686 (Cultural factors in health and disease 2. Environmental Sanitation)**
- The **violence faced by women due to lack of toilets** in rural areas is not mentioned.
- Women sometimes have to wait till day-break (sunrise) in order to relieve themselves as they are afraid of going to open fields after sunset as they may be subjected to sexual violence.

Chapter 11 Medicine and Social Science

23rd Edition Park Page No 687 (Cultural factors in health and disease)

5. Personal hygiene

Bathing: The women after menstruation must have a purifying bath; after childbirth, there may be two or three ceremonial baths, the time for which is fixed upon the advice of the priest.



Chapter 17: Mental Health (Park)

- **Women have to face adverse situations that are detrimental to their mental health.**
- **Domestic Violence where the majority of the victims are women**
- **Sexual abuse and harassment at the workplace (including harassment while travelling)**
- **Sexual abuse of children**
- **These are not discussed in the chapter on Mental Health**

Chapter 21: Health Care of Community (Park)

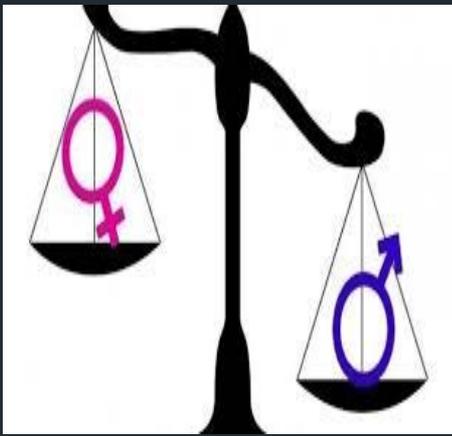
- Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) (Page No 894-895) :



- While discussing MDG's only Goal no 1,4,5,6,7,8 are discussed.
- THUS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS GENDER IN THE FORM OF MDG GOAL 3 IS LOST.**
- Note: SDG's have not yet discussed in the latest editions of textbooks.

Taking it forward...

- Gender inequalities and gender discrimination is a fact & we all (both men and women) are gender biased to a certain degree.
- Medical students imbibe gender sensitivity from their teachers and medical textbooks.
- There has been little change over the last 10 years (as compared to EPW review of 2005) in our community medicine textbooks.
- Urgent need to make medical textbooks gender sensitive by sensitization of authors and motivating them for revisions in future editions.



Gender Sensitive
Medical Textbooks
will go a long way in
making future medical
students, teachers
and society in general
more gender
sensitive.

THANK YOU...