

Women's health and sustainable development goals

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Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is probably the world's most important and popular agenda of present era. Its importance and popularity is higher specially in health sector. Many national and international organizations and associations have themed SDGs in the year 2016/017. Women have a critical role to play in all of the SDGs.

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.¹ The SDGs, also known as the Global Goals are the universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. In September 2015, 193 world leaders agreed to 17 Global Goals and 169 targets for Sustainable Development.² The goals are categorized into 5 areas (5 P's): people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. SDGs address poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, clean water, clean energy, economic growth, industry/infrastructure, reduced inequality, sustainable communities, responsible consumption/production, climate action, sea life, peace and justice, and SDG partnerships.³ Of the 17 goals in the SDGs, goals number 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11 and 13 are indirectly related to women's health, while goal number 3: *Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages* explicitly deals with health problems including women's health issues.⁴

Women experience unique health issues and conditions, from pregnancy and menopause to gynecological conditions. Women and men also have many of the same health problems but these problems can affect women more severely.⁵ Women and girls face a number of health risks, some even before they are born.⁶ Reproductive health problems are a leading cause of ill health and death for women and girls of childbearing age in developing countries. Impoverished women

suffer disproportionately from unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortion, maternal death and disability, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and related problems. Only half of women in developing regions receive the recommended amount of health care they need.⁴ Goal 3 calls for achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health care, reducing global maternal death rates, and ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.⁴

Women are much more likely than men to be impoverished, deprived of education and opportunities, and victimized by sexual and domestic violence. Goal 5: *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls* calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, the end of all forms of gender-based discrimination, and the elimination of harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. Sustainable development depends on an equitable distribution of resources for today and for the future. It cannot be achieved without gender equality. Women's empowerment is a key factor for achieving sustainable economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability.⁴

The overarching goal of sustainable development in Nepal is to expedite a process that reduces poverty and provides to its citizens and successive generations not just the basic means of livelihood, but also the broadest of opportunities in the social, economic, political, cultural and ecological aspects of their lives.⁷ Programmes launched by the government of Nepal are focused to achieve sustainable development goals related to health. Ministry of Health has primarily paid attention to achieving the goals related to safe motherhood.

Women and girls make up more than half the world's population. They are on the frontlines -often more deeply impacted than men and boys by poverty, climate change, food insecurity, lack of healthcare, and global economic crises. Their contributions and leadership are central to finding a solution. Sexual and reproductive health and rights and empowerment of girls and women are central to sustainable development and creating a world that is just, equitable, and inclusive.⁸

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To sum up, woman as the provider, farmer, teacher, doctor, entrepreneur, minister, leader, and mother is contributing every day to her household, society and the economy. To make a healthy and prosperous family, society and nation healthy citizen is essential. Women's health is the foundation of healthy citizen. Healthier women and their children contribute to more

productive and better-educated societies. Women's health is tied to long-term productivity. Providing opportunities for deliberate family planning; healthy mothers before, during, and after childbirth, and the health and productivity of subsequent generations can catalyze a cycle of positive societal development. Thus, improving women's health is a critical element of SDGs.

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