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Infertility: A Woman's Encircling Gloom**Dr. Archana Durgesh & Dr. Pooja Singh***BBDNITM, Lucknow, (U.P.) India***Abstract**

Most women are raised to think that they'll become mothers someday. For some women, motherhood is an enormous part of their self-esteem as a woman. For others, it's their premier desire. Even women who don't essentially want to become mothers are conscious of social beliefs to do so. The pressures to wed and raise a family can be enormous — to the point that women who are unable to do those things can feel as though something must be intensely wrong with them or profoundly missing in their lives.

Key Words: infertility, child, agony, ivf

Children are said to be the blessings of marriage, they are even considered God's blessing to the conjugal tie of their parents. Basically it's the couples' choice when and how many children to have. But if their plans are delayed then society becomes nasty in their own way, family friends colleagues poke incessant questions and queries. The simple conclusion that everybody reaches to is that the woman is infertile.

It's the embedded structure of the society in which we live that infertility is a woman's pain. Still we live in the spell of patriarchy where women's identity is denoted by her fruitfulness. If a woman is barren and is unable to reproduce, her existence as a woman is incomplete and she is negated in the society. She is considered an empty vessel which is useless. Her family, friends, neighborhood even at times her husband accuse her for not being able to conceive without knowing the real facts about the factors of fertility. Fertility factors differ from cases to persons. One important aspect which our patriarchal society always forgets

is that male can also be responsible for a women's infertility, after all male can also be infertile. But it is the woman who is always blamed where the issue of infertility arises. Why this society demands her to be a perfect daughter, perfect wife, and a perfect mother and if some biological abnormality does occurs in a woman, then is it her fault alone?

A mother is not defined by the number of children she has but by the love she holds in her heart. Sometimes our children tire us out and we scold them, imagine the agony of a woman and a man who say, "I just want a chance to be a father and a mother."

There is this Hindu Mythological anecdote that reminds us of baseless social jibes. Once Lord Shiva and his better half; Goddess Parvati were riding down their way on Nandi the bull. When people saw they commented, "Look two people sitting on the poor animal, they are so merciless." Lord Shiva started walking. On their way ahead another group of people saw them and commented, "Look husband is walking and

wife is riding such a shame; a *pativrata naari* will never behave in such a fashion.” Goddess Parvati got down and Lord Shiva started riding. On their way ahead another group of people saw them and commented, “Look wife is walking and husband is riding such a shame, it’s the duty of the husband to provide bare necessities to his wife, he is forgetting the holy vows of matrimony.” Now both of them got down. On their way ahead another group of people saw them and commented, “Look how silly they can ride still they are walking, how foolish.” The moral of the story is that society won’t spare you anyhow. Initially, ‘why aren’t you getting married?’ after marriage, ‘when will you start a family?’ After the first child they don’t spare you if you are silly enough to think so they are ready with another one, ‘plan your second child in time.’ Then your child’s education, career, friendship, affairs, marriage, children; the list is endless.

When will we come to senses that it’s our life and no one should have the audacity to interfere and question. Every individual entity should be provided with a space s/he is entitled and no one should put a question mark on their actions views and thoughts. Probing questions and by passing jibes can pain the woman concerned and can even turn her relations with her husband bitter. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “no one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

Women are typically seen, by others as well as themselves, as the emotional caretakers or providers of the relationship. Women typically feel responsible not only for everyone’s bad feelings, but also for anything bad that happens. When women try

to repress feelings, their emotions can become more ominous until they finally feel out of control. Their emotions can become a monster about to swallow them whole.

Women in infertile couples often protect their husbands from their own pain and feelings of failure by taking much of the responsibility for the treatments upon themselves. Men are traditionally seen as the financial providers of the relationship and are responsible for protecting the family from real or imagined dangers. Men usually feel more threatened expressing themselves since they have often been conditioned to repress their emotions. They are trained to be more instructional to take charge, to make decisions and to think without being sidetracked by emotions.

Males in infertile couples often feel overwhelmed by the intensity of their partner’s emotions as well as an inability to access their own. They tend to focus their energy back into their work, a place where they feel they can have more success.

As a result of taking responsibility for the emotional impact of the infertility, the woman experiences intense feelings, such as pain, anger, fear, etc., which, combined with the messages that her way of dealing with things is in some way dysfunctional or “crazy”, causes her to feel an anxious depression. As feelings spill out, she feels out of control and doesn’t really know how to ask for what she needs, especially from the husband she is struggling so hard to protect. She may yearn for an emotional interaction at one moment and in the next withdraw emotionally from her husband when she fears she has disappointed him. I remember once a colleague of mine sharing

her experience told me that her mother-in-law used to taunt her, “*patthar ke bhi do tudke ho sakte hain par tu ek aulaad nahi kar paegi*” (a stone can break into two pieces, but I am damn sure you can never bear a child). All this happened when she was not even married for a year. Ironically a woman is more scornful towards a woman.

Men find themselves in a position where, regardless of how well they’ve been trained to solve problems, they are helpless to make this situation better for the woman and, as a result, may give off messages that she is “too” emotional or sensitive, hoping that this will calm her down. The wife hears this as criticism of her coping and care taking skills rather than as an expression of her husband’s fears. This is the time when couples cling together for dear life, feeling that they’ve failed in the most basic of all roles: reproduction. Couples are hesitant to admit problems in their marriage, feeling that having difficulty coping would mean that their marriage is also a failure.

But when woman’s own husband turns against her calls her a *baanjh* (barren woman), there are no words of consolation for a woman who is dying to be a mother and hasn’t experienced this beautiful moment in her life. If her pain cannot be lessened at least we can be considerate enough. There are no dos but there are certainly some don’ts to be kept in mind:

- ❖ Never gossip about the woman facing this pain.
- ❖ Never ever make her realist that she has plenty of time.
- ❖ Never suggest adoption as a measure.
- ❖ Never advise IVF.

- ❖ Never make her realize that she is unfit to be a mother.
- ❖ Never say that people face worst problems.
- ❖ Never downsize her problem.
- ❖ Never tell her to chill or relax.

There is nothing more important for a woman than giving birth to her child. Every girl when young is fond of dolls and teddies but as far as we have gathered once she is married she craves for her own toy; her own child. A woman becomes a mother the very moment she opens her heart to the idea of loving and caring for a child and it is the very moment that her Mother Heart begins to blossom. It takes to be a woman to understand the pain the vacuum a woman undergoes if she is deprived of motherhood. It means a lot to her rather it is sometimes even made and created that her mindset becomes if she is a mother then its fine or else she is forced to feel it the way as if it’s the end of the world if she won’t bear and deliver a child. It won’t be gainsaid if we say that a woman is born to be a mother. It is the sweetest experience and most lovable part of man and woman relationship. A woman thinks her life to be without a hope fun and laughter even a simple smile on her lips die when she ponders on her emptiness. A woman becomes a mother the moment she gets sure that she has conceived but a man becomes a father when the child comes to the world.

Shopping works as a medicine for any woman new dresses, bags, jewelry, perfumes work as a magic but a childless woman thinks negatively as if she considers herself misfit for any item of happiness; she almost sadistic towards her own self-

denying herself even a moment of happiness. She blames herself and umpteenth times questions “why me?” Nothing can be done to lessen someone’s pain but positive experiences can be shared, a good doctor can be suggested, and the delirious woman can even be guided to have complete faith in the Almighty.

Giving birth to a child is an awesome experience; the pain withers the moment the cry of the child reaches his/her mother; it’s

the sweetest music a tone that touches her soul and a mother in her life never forgets. Childbirth is a second life for a mother people think it’s because of the pain and risk of her life that she undergoes but ask a mother she starts living only the day she becomes a mother. A mother can give up anything for the happiness of her child even her life. No one in this world can define a mother but she can be said to be a person who can take the place of all others, but whose place no one else can take.

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