

More women die of burns than men: Report

Chittaranjan Tembhekar | TNN

Mumbai: The death of a 78-year-old woman, Suman Marathe, following a gas leak in her Prabhadevi residence has been in the spotlight recently. The huge explosion shook her entire apartment.

But shockingly, several such women are silently succumbing to burn injuries in Mumbai. Of the total deaths during 2008 and 2009 (till August) as a result of burn injuries in the city, roughly around 70% are women, 25% are men and 5% are children, says Dr Shilpa Karnik of the National Burns Centre in Airoli.

The recent Human Development report prepared by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for Mumbai with the help of the BMC reveals that though the total number of deaths from burns have come down in the year 2005 as compared to

A BURNING ISSUE

2000, more women are succumbing to kitchen fires.

“The mortality rate and occurrence of burn incidents is more among women than men. In 2000, of the total 1,453 deaths from burns in Mumbai, 1,002 were women as against

451 men. Similarly, of the total 906 deaths because of burn injuries registered in the city in 2005, 517 were female and 389 male,” stated the report. According to Karnik, the proportion remains the same.

Dr S Keswani said most of these deaths are suicidal or homicidal. “Some times, it is difficult to get clues as a patient is rushed to a nearby nursing home and the police ignore the registration,” he pointed out. According to Keswani, the accurate number of burn cases and deaths among women is not registered or calculated as the government does not compile such statistics and police figures are incom-

plete as well as unreliable.

Dr Karnik said around 55% of the cases of burn injuries in women succumb as they receive more than 70% burns. According to Karnik, more than half of the women who die are young, up to 35 years of age.

According to fire brigade sources, the total number of female casualties is more than male in the case of fire incidents over the last one year. There were 4,967 fire emergency calls during 2008-2009 in which over 700 people got injured and over 200 died, most among them females, sources said.

chittaranjan.tembhekar@timesgroup.com