



# HEALTH MATTERS

## • NUGGETS •

### *National Women's Day*

National Women's Day in South Africa is celebrated annually on 9 August. This day holds a historical significance, symbolizing the courage, strength, and resilience of women in the face of oppression and discrimination.

The purpose of this day is to commemorate the march that was hosted by more than 20 000 women, to the Union Building on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 1956 to protest against the extension of pass laws to women.



Additionally, the day serves as an opportunity to reflect on the ongoing challenges faced by women in South Africa, including gender-based violence, economic inequality, and access to education and healthcare. It reinforces the commitment to achieving gender equality and empowering women in all spheres of society.

### *Challenges faced by women*

Women in South Africa continue to face significant challenges, including high rates of gender-based violence and societal exclusions.

Gender-based violence remains a pervasive issue, with alarming levels of femicide, rape and domestic violence. Previously, educational and economic opportunities favoured men and limiting women's advancement and economic independence.

Despite legislative advances promoting gender equality, implementation and enforcement gaps persist. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from government, civil society and communities to ensure women's rights are upheld and opportunities for empowerment are expanded.

### *State interventions*

In South Africa, several institutions play crucial roles in promoting women's rights and combating discrimination:

- The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) is a constitutional body mandated to oversee and promote gender equality, investigating complaints and monitoring compliance with gender equality legislation.
- The Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities focuses on policies and programs to empower women economically and socially, addressing gender-based violence and promoting women's leadership.
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like the Women's Legal Centre and Gender Links provide legal assistance, advocacy, and capacity-building initiatives to support women's rights and gender equality.
- The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) monitors and promotes human rights, including women's rights, investigating complaints of discrimination and advocating for policy reforms.



#### Resources

- <https://www.dsac.gov.za/womens-day>
- <https://cge.org.za/challenges-facing-the-South-Africa-in-relation-to-gender-equality/>
- <https://www.sahrc.org.za/>