

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UN-STARRED QUESTION NO. 3834**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05.04.2023

**AWARENESS ABOUT SANITATION AND MENSTRUAL HYGIENE**

3834. SHRI SUJEET KUMAR:

Will the Minister of Women and Child Development be pleased to state:

- (a) the schemes formulated by the Ministry to distribute sanitary products to tribal women who are living in hilly regions and forests which are not accessible by motorable roads; and
- (b) the steps taken by the Ministry to create awareness about sanitation and menstrual hygiene in remote tribal dominated areas of the country, including Odisha?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) & (b): The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare implements the Scheme for Promotion of Menstrual Hygiene among adolescent girls including tribal girls in the age group of 10-19 years since 2011. The major objectives of the Scheme are to increase awareness among adolescent girls on Menstrual Hygiene, to increase access to and use of high quality sanitary napkins by adolescent girls and to ensure safe disposal of sanitary napkins in an environmentally friendly manner.

Further, since 2015-16, the Menstrual Hygiene Scheme is supported by 'National Health Mission' (NHM) through State Programme Implementation Plan (PIP) route based on the proposals received from the States. The States have been instructed to take up procurement of sanitary napkin packs at prices reached through competitive bidding. Currently, 26 States/ UTs implement the scheme either with NHM budget or combined budget of NHM and the State. In the year 2021-22, approximately 34.92 lakh adolescent girls were provided sanitary napkin packs every month as per 'Health Management Information System' (HMIS) data.

Capacity building of health functionaries is also supported under NHM to sensitize them towards the scheme and for seamless implementation of the Scheme. Communication material targeted at adolescent girls, their gatekeepers, influencers and community at large developed by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW), other partner ministries, States, Development Partners and NGOs is in use to create awareness on healthy practices during menstruation and to dispel the myths and misconception around it. The role of the Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) under the Scheme is similar in all States/ UTs. ASHAs hold monthly meetings with the adolescent girls in their area to talk about health issues including menstrual hygiene management. The sanitary napkin packs are provided to the adolescent girls at subsidized rates by the ASHAs.

The Government has also taken initiatives to improve the accessibility of sanitary napkins and good quality medicines at affordable price. The Department of Pharmaceuticals under Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers implements the Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojna (PMBJP), which is an important step in ensuring the health security for women. Under the project, over 8800 Janaushidhi Kendras have been set up across the country that provide Oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins named 'Suvidha' at Rs. 1/- per pad only.

The positive results of the initiatives taken by the government are reflected in the report of National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS 5), which shows that percentage of women aged 15-24 years using hygienic method of protection during their menstrual period has increased from 58 % in NFHS 4 (2015-16) to 78 % in NFHS 5 (2019-21). Similarly, the usage of Sanitary Napkins has also increased from 42% to 64%.

Under 'Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)' [SBM(G)] implemented by the Government, each State submits its consolidated plan for the whole State to the Government of India for sanitation activities to be taken up under the programme in the rural areas of State in the form of Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) each year, for approval of National Scheme Sanctioning Committee (NSSC) of SBM(G).

Sanitation being a State subject, activities under SBM(G) are implemented by the State Governments. Under the programme, Government of India provides technical and financial supports to the States to supplement their efforts to improve sanitation status in the rural areas. Under SBM(G), flexibility have been provided to States in choosing the right toilet technology depending on topography, ground water levels, soil conditions, etc. To facilitate the States to choose appropriate technology for toilet, a handbook on technological options for on-site sanitation in rural areas was also issued by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India.

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