

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1868  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 16<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2025**

**MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH ISSUES IN THE COUNTRY**

**1868 # SHRI SATNAM SINGH SANDHU:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of initiatives introduced to address maternal and child health issues in the country, particularly in rural areas;
- (b) the steps taken to improve access to healthcare services for women in Punjab, especially with regard to reproductive health and family planning;
- (c) the details of measures being taken to reduce the incidence of anemia and malnutrition among women in the country; and
- (d) whether Government is taking any steps to raise awareness and prevent the rising instances of breast and cervical cancer among women in the country?

**ANSWER  
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY  
WELFARE  
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)**

(a) Under the National Health Mission (NHM), various initiatives are implemented to address maternal and child health issues in the country, including rural areas are as follows:

- **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)** is a demand promotion and conditional cash transfer scheme for promoting institutional delivery.
- **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK)** entitles all pregnant women delivering in public health institutions to have free and no-expense delivery, including caesarean section. The entitlements include free drugs and consumables, free diet during the stay, free diagnostics, free transportation and free blood transfusion, if required. Similar entitlements are also in place for sick infants.
- **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)** provides pregnant women a fixed day, free of cost, assured and quality antenatal checkup by a Specialist/Medical Officer on the 9th day of every month.

**Extended PMSMA strategy** focuses on quality antenatal care (ANC) for pregnant women, especially high-risk pregnant (HRP) women and individual HRP tracking with financial incentivization for the identified high-risk pregnant women and accompanying Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) for extra 3 visits over and above the PMSMA visit.

- **Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN)** aims to provide assured, dignified, respectful and quality healthcare at no cost and zero tolerance for denial of services for every woman and newborn visiting a public health facility, to end all preventable maternal and newborn deaths.
- **Optimizing Postnatal Care** aims to strengthen the quality of post-natal care by laying emphasis on detection of danger signs in mothers and incentivization of ASHAs for prompt detection, referral & treatment of such high-risk postpartum mothers.
- **Monthly Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Day** is an outreach activity at Anganwadi centers for provision of maternal and child care including nutrition in convergence with the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).
- **Birth waiting Homes** are established in remote and tribal areas to promote institutional delivery and improve access to healthcare facilities.
- **Outreach camps** are provisioned to improve the reach of health care services, especially in tribal and hard-to-reach areas. This platform is used to increase awareness for Maternal and Child health services and community mobilization as well as to track high-risk pregnancies.
- **Facility Based Newborn Care:** Special New-born Care Units (SNCUs) are established at District Hospital and Medical College level, Newborn Stabilization Units (NBSUs) are established at First Referral Units (FRUs)/ Community Health Centres (CHCs) for care of sick and small babies.
- **Community Based care of Newborn and Young Children:** Under Home Based New-born Care (HBNC) and Home-Based Care of Young Children (HBYC) program, home visits are performed by ASHAs to improve child-rearing practices and to identify sick newborn and young children in the community.
- **Social Awareness and Actions to Neutralize Pneumonia Successfully (SAANS)** initiative implemented since 2019 for reduction of childhood morbidity and mortality due to Pneumonia.
- **Mothers' Absolute Affection (MAA) Programme** is implemented to improve breastfeeding coverage in children which includes early initiation of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding for first six months followed by counselling on age-appropriate complementary feeding practices.
- **Nutrition Rehabilitation Centers (NRCs)** are set up at public health facilities to provide in-patient medical and nutritional care to children under 5 years suffering from Moderate and Severe Acute Malnutrition with medical complications with special focus on improving the skills of mothers and caregivers on timely, adequate and appropriate feeding for children.

- Under **National Deworming Day (NDD)** albendazole tablets are administered in a single fixed day approach via schools and Anganwadi centres in two rounds (February and August) to reduce the soil transmitted helminth (STH) infestation among all children and adolescents (1-19 years).
- **Lactation Management Centres:** Lactation Management Centers are facilities established to ensure the availability of Mother's Own Milk or Donor Human Milk for feeding of sick, preterm and low birth weight babies admitted in Intensive Care Units.
- **STOP Diarrhoea** campaign is implemented for promoting use of ORS and Zinc and for reducing morbidity and mortality due to childhood diarrhoea.
- **Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK):** Children from 0 to 18 years of age are screened for 32 health conditions (i.e. Diseases, Deficiencies, Defects and Developmental delay) under Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) to improve child survival. District Early Intervention Centres (DEICs) at district health facility level are established for confirmation and management of children screened under RBSK.

(b) Under National Health Mission, the various steps taken by the Government of India to improve access to reproductive health and family planning healthcare services for women across India including Punjab are as follows:

- Expanded Contraceptive Choices comprises of Condoms, Combined Oral contraceptive pills, Intrauterine Contraceptive Devices (IUCD), Sterilization, Injectable contraceptive MPA (Antara Programme), Centchroman (Chhaya) and Emergency contraceptive pills.
- Compensation scheme for Sterilization acceptors provides compensation for loss of wages to the beneficiaries.
- Post-Pregnancy contraception in the form of Post-Partum Intrauterine Contraceptive Device (PPIUCD), Post-Abortion Intrauterine Contraceptive Device (PAIUCD), and Post-Partum Sterilization (PPS).
- 'World Population Day Campaign' and 'Vasectomy Fortnight' are observed every year to boost awareness on Family Planning and service delivery across all States/ Union Territories
- Home Delivery of Contraceptive Scheme by ASHAs.
- Family Planning Logistics Management Information System (FPLMIS) to ensure availability of Family Planning commodities across all the levels of health facilities.

(c) Government of India (GoI) has implemented various strategy to reduce the incidence of anemia and malnutrition among women across the country are as follows ;

- The **Anemia Mukht Bharat (AMB)** strategy is implemented to reduce the prevalence of anemia among women and children through a comprehensive life-cycle approach,

supported by a robust institutional mechanism and the implementation of six key interventions. Under this strategy, red-coloured Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) tablets are provided on a weekly basis to all women of reproductive age, and daily to pregnant women and lactating mothers for a duration of 180 days. In addition, deworming with albendazole is administered to pregnant women during the second trimester under the National Deworming Day programme. The strategy also encompasses intensified Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) campaigns, testing for anemia and treatment in accordance with standardized anemia management protocols, mandatory provision of IFA-fortified foods through public health programmes, and targeted actions to address non-nutritional causes of anemia, including malaria, fluorosis, and hemoglobinopathies.

- **Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Days (VHSNDs)** are observed for provision of maternal and child health services and creating awareness on maternal and child care including nutrition in convergence with Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):** A maternity benefit programme providing conditional cash transfers to eligible pregnant and lactating women to promote adequate rest, improved nutrition, and timely utilisation of antenatal and postnatal care services.
- **Supplementary Nutrition through Take-Home Rations (THR):** Provision of fortified Take-Home Rations to pregnant women, lactating mothers, and adolescent girls through Anganwadi Centres under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme to improve dietary intake and address maternal undernutrition.
- **POSHAN Abhiyaan:** Implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to improve nutritional outcomes for women, children, and adolescents through convergence, use of technology (Poshan Tracker), community mobilisation, and focused monitoring of nutrition indicators, including anaemia and undernutrition.  
**POSHAN 2.0:** Strengthens the delivery of Supplementary Nutrition under ICDS through standardised, fortified, and quality-assured food norms, improved supply chain management, and enhanced nutritional counselling for pregnant and lactating women.

(d) The Government of India has taken various steps in order to raise the awareness regarding breast and cervical cancer among women across country as follows;

- Screening for early detection, prevention, and timely management of cervical and breast cancer has been incorporated into Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC) through Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAM) under the National Health Mission (NHM).
- Conducting regular wellness activities, health promotion sessions, and focused behaviour-change communication to encourage early reporting and healthier practices among women.

- The preventive component of cancer care is further strengthened at the community level through regular wellness activities, health promotion campaigns, and targeted behaviour-change communication.
- Public awareness efforts on Non-Communicable Diseases, including breast and cervical cancer, are carried out through national observances such as National Cancer Awareness Day and World Cancer Day, along with sustained dissemination of information via print, electronic, and social media platforms.
- Additionally, under the National Health Mission, financial support is extended to States and Union Territories for implementing cancer-related awareness and outreach initiatives as proposed in their respective Programme Implementation Plans (PIPs).

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