

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2072
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.12.2025

NEED FOR MENSTRUAL EQUITY

2072. SMT. PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI:

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

- (a) whether Government has taken cognisance of the large-scale menstrual health and hygiene challenges faced by women and girls, particularly in rural and marginalised communities;
- (b) if so, the Ministry's plan to formulate a comprehensive national policy on menstrual equity that addresses access, awareness, affordability, inclusion and safe disposal of menstrual products;
- (c) the inter-ministerial actions to ensure inclusion of adolescent girls below 15 years and women above 24 years in national data collection and menstrual health schemes; and
- (d) the steps taken to reduce the environmental impact of 113,000 metric tons of annual menstrual waste from non-compostable pads?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SAVITRI THAKUR)

(a) to (c): The Central Government has taken appropriate measures to improve menstrual hygiene practices through the schemes and interventions of various Ministries and Departments. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare implements the Scheme for Promotion of Menstrual Hygiene (MH) to improve it among adolescent girls (10–19 years). The scheme focuses on increasing awareness on MH, enhancing access to sanitary napkins, and promoting safe and environmentally friendly disposal practices. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare formulated the MH Policy for School Going Girls following detailed deliberations with the line Ministries. It streamlines access to low-cost MH products, gender-segregated toilets and safe disposal facilities, promotes MH education into the school curriculum, and prioritizes sensitization and awareness in all schools. Further, teachers and Front-line Workers - Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (FLW-ANMs), Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) and Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) are oriented appropriately in the scheme with the budget provided for the same under Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK).

Further, one of the objectives of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) components of 'Mission Shakti' is to generate awareness about MH and use of sanitary napkins.

The National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS 5) data shows that the percentage of women aged 15-24 years using hygienic methods during their menstrual cycles has risen from 57.6% in NFHS-4 to 77.3 % in NFHS-5.

Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has developed National Guidelines on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) for creating awareness on MHM in rural areas as part of its overall interventions related to behaviour change on sanitation and hygiene aspect. Further, Department of School Education and Literacy implements an integrated scheme namely 'Samagra Shiksha' under which State specific projects for varied interventions on menstrual health and hygiene including installation of sanitary pad vending machines and incinerators are approved. Ministry of Women and Child Development implements the Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) under which, one of the components is improving their health and nutritional status and to motivate them to go back to formal schooling. Ministry of Education has issued an advisory dated 07.06.2024 to all the States/UTs and the Heads of Autonomous bodies like Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan & Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti. University Grants Commission vide advisory dated 18.03.2025 has requested all Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to ensure provisions for sanitary facility at conspicuous locations in their institutions.

(d): The, Department of Health Research under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) carries out research and studies to look into the newer methods of managing menstrual health and other sustainable alternatives to sanitary napkins for their safety, acceptability, affordability, efficacy and feasibility among women in public health program setting.

In addition, 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. In the year 2021-22, approximately 34.92 lakh adolescent girls were provided sanitary napkin pack every month as per 'Health Management Information System' (HMIS) data. 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 16000 Janaushidhi Kendras have been set up across the country that provide Oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins named 'Suvidha' at Rs. 1/- per pad only. These sanitary napkins are also environmental friendly, as these pads are made with Oxo-biodegradable material complying with ASTM D- 6954 (biodegradability test) standards. The cumulative sales of Suvidha Napkins as on 30.11.2025 is 96.30 Crores.
