

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4039
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24TH MARCH, 2023**

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH OF WOMEN

4039: SHRI JAGANNATH SARKAR:

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken any steps to address the cultural barriers related to reproductive health of women in the last few years; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY
WELFARE
(DR. BHARATI PRAVIN PAWAR)**

(a) & (b):

Government of India has taken adequate steps to provide awareness related to importance of early registration of pregnancy, importance of Antenatal Care and regular check-ups, and Institutional Deliveries, Nutrition, Healthy Diet, and Healthy Lifestyle through the following initiatives among all pregnant women to ensure Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child Adolescent Health & Nutrition (RMNCHA+N) services.

- **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)** provides a minimum package of antenatal care services including investigations and drugs on the 9th day of every month.
- **Monthly Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Days (VHSND)** - Community Outreach for provision of maternal and child care services.
- **Mother Child Protection (MCP) Card and Safe Motherhood Booklet** is a counselling and family empowerment tool which ensures tracking of mother and child.
- **Outreach camps** are provisioned for improving the reach of health care services especially in tribal and hard to reach areas. This platform is used to increase the awareness for the Maternal & Child health services, community mobilization as well as to track high risk pregnancies.
- **Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) portal** is a name-based web-enabled tracking system for pregnant women and new born so as to ensure seamless provision of regular and complete services to them including antenatal care, institutional delivery and post-natal care.

- Under **Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)**, two doses of Tetanus and Adult Diphtheria (Td) vaccine are administered to all pregnant women within a gap of 28 days between the doses, to prevent the occurrence of neonatal tetanus. To increase the uptake of Td vaccine, Interpersonal communication (IPC) is taken up by the frontline workers emphasizing the need and the importance of vaccine. Besides IPC, pregnant women are also counseled during Village Health and Nutrition days (VHNDs), mother's meeting and other local meetings. Further, religious leaders, community influencers are also engaged to increase the awareness about the Td vaccines in pregnant women.

The Government has also taken following steps to promote Family Planning in the Country: -

- **Mission Parivar Vikas (MPV)** is implemented in 13 States for substantially increasing access to contraceptives and Family Planning services.
- **Family Planning Media Campaign** - A 360-degree holistic Family Planning media campaign was developed and disseminated across the Country.
- **World Population Day & Fortnight** is observed every year to boost awareness and service delivery across all the States/ UTs.
- **Expanded Contraceptive Choices** with inclusion of new contraceptives namely Injectable contraceptive (Antara programme) and Centchroman (Chhaya).
- **Post-pregnancy contraception** in the form of Post-partum Intra-uterine contraceptive device (PPIUCD), Post-Abortion Intrauterine contraceptive device (PAIUCD), and Post-partum Sterilization (PPS) are provided to beneficiaries.
- **Condom boxes** have been set up in health facilities to enable clients to access condoms in privacy.
- Scheme for **Home Delivery of contraceptives** by Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) at doorstep of beneficiaries.

At the same time, Comprehensive Abortion Care (CAC) is an important program under RMNCHA+N strategies under National Health Mission. It aims to provide safe and legal abortion services to women who need to terminate a pregnancy due to certain therapeutic, eugenic, humanitarian or social grounds. There are many stigma, myths and misconceptions related to social and cultural issues for abortion.

Information Education Communication (IEC)/ Behavior Change Communication (BCC) activities are essential part of Antenatal & Post Natal Services provided at community & facility level. Many IEC materials have been developed for sensitizing community, health care providers and other stake holders for safe abortion services. Booklets and leaflets for sensitizing ASHAs have been developed on information related to abortion and for overcoming the barriers to abortion care services. Counseling services are also provided during provision of comprehensive abortion care services.
