

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2666**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.08.2023

**MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRACTICES**

2666. MS. S. JOTHIMANI:

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

- (a) whether the Government is considering to make it mandatory for all public toilets to have sanitary pad dispensing machines and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) the data on the amount of expenditure incurred by the Ministry in conducting awareness campaigns and sensitization programmes for menstrual hygiene practices, since 2014, year-wise;
- (c) whether it is a fact that States are unable to cover majority of adolescent girls under the Scheme for Promotion of Menstrual Hygiene due to limited funds and inadequate capacity building programmes for ASHA/Anganwadi workers/teachers;
- (d) if so, the steps taken by the Government to solve these issues; and
- (e) whether the Government is considering to implement the provisions for mandatory menstrual leave in workspaces and educational institutions, along the lines of maternal leave and if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (e): Government has taken appropriate measures to improve menstrual hygiene practices through the schemes/ interventions of various Ministries/ Departments. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare implements the Scheme for Promotion of Menstrual Hygiene since 2011 to increase awareness among adolescent girls, to increase access to and use of high quality sanitary napkins to adolescent girls and to ensure safe disposal of Sanitary Napkins in an environmentally friendly manner. Further, teachers and Front line Workers - Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (FLW-ANMs), Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) worker 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 'Misson Shakti' is to generate awareness about menstrual hygiene and use of sanitary napkins.

Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has developed National Guidelines on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) for creating awareness on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in rural areas as part of its overall interventions related to behaviour change on sanitation 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 sanctioned. Ministry of Woman and Child Development implements the Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) under which, one of the component is improving their health and nutritional status and to motivate them to go back to formal schooling.

Further, 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 packs 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 Janausadhi Pariyojna (PMBJP), which is an important step in ensuring the health security for women. Under the project, over 9000 Janaushidhi Kendras have been set up across the country that provide Oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins named 'Suvidha' at Rs. 1/- per pad only.

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 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%.

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