

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3030
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.08.2024

SAFE DISPOSAL OF SANITARY PRODUCTS

3030. DR. MOHAMMAD JAWED:

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

- (a) the details of the specific steps, if any, being taken by the Government to improve awareness and education about the safe disposal of sanitary napkins in rural areas;
- (b) whether there are any initiatives to provide affordable and environmental friendly disposal options, such as incinerators, biodegradable napkins, or reusable sanitary pads, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether the Government is considering promotion and distribution of the reusable pads as sustainable alternatives for their economical and environmental benefits?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a): 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 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.

(b) and (c): 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 35.31 lakh and during the year 2022-23, approximately 44.85 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 Janausadhi Pariyojna (PMBJP), which is an important step in ensuring the health security for women. Under the project, over 12600 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 30.06.2024 is 57 crores.
