

Centre takes multiple initiatives to improve Health, Hygiene and Well-being of Women

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The Government of India has taken several initiatives for improving the health, hygiene and well-being of women and for enhancing their status in the country. Schemes like Ujjwala Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan have helped reduce drudgery and time poverty of women and improved health outcomes. Under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, over 11.8 crore individual household latrines (IHHLs) have been constructed in the country. Similarly, the Jal Jeevan Mission has successfully provided tap water connections to around 15.6 crores households.

To ensure easy access to sanitary napkins and good quality medicines at affordable price, Department of Pharmaceuticals under Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers implements the Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojna (PMBJP), an important step in ensuring the health security for women. Under the project, over 16000 Janaushidhi Kendras have been set up across the country, which besides affordable medicines, provide Oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins named Suvidha at Rs. 1/- per pad only.

The Government also implements the 'Scheme for Promotion of Menstrual Hygiene' among adolescent girls in the age group of 10-19 years. The Scheme is supported by National Health Mission through State Programme Implementation Plan (PIP) route based on the proposals received from the States/ UTs. One of the major objectives of the scheme is to increase awareness among adolescent girls on Menstrual Hygiene. Under the scheme, sanitary napkin packs are provided to adolescent girls by the Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) at subsidized rates. Government also provides budget to the States/ UTs for Orientation of field level health workers and IEC activities for menstrual hygiene. In addition, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation under 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' has developed National Guidelines on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) for creating awareness on it in rural areas as part of its overall interventions related to behaviour change on sanitation and hygiene aspects.

To further support working women and girls students, the Ministry of Women and Child Development implements the Sakhi Niwas Scheme (Working Women Hostel) under the overarching Mission Shakti. It is a demand driven Centrally Sponsored Scheme, under which funds are released to the States and UTs for implementation of the scheme. The scheme aims to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women and other women pursuing higher education or training in urban, semi-urban and also in rural areas where employment opportunity for women exists. Under the Scheme, financial assistance is provided for running of Sakhi Niwas in rented premises for working women and for those women who are under training for job. Provision of Day Care Centre for children of the residents of the Sakhi Niwas is an important aspect of the scheme.

In addition, Ministry of Finance (MoF), Department of Expenditure (DoE) has allocated Rs.5,000/- crores to 28 States for construction of new Working Women Hostels under Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) Scheme. DoE has approved construction of 254 working women hostels with a total capacity of 52991 beds in 28 States at a total approved cost of Rs.4,826.31 crore. Out of this, 1st instalment of Rs.3,147.66 crore has already been released to the States during 2024-25. These initiatives align with the larger goal of ensuring safety, dignity, and opportunity for women across India and are major steps towards realising the idea of 'Women led Development'.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Women and Child Development Smt. Savitri Thakur in Rajya Sabha in reply to a question today.

SS/MS

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