

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:155

ANSWERED ON:03.08.2005

JANANI SURAKSHA YOJANA

Sidhu Shri Navjot Singh;Singh Kunwar Rewati Raman

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

(a) whether the Government is aware of the various loopholes in Janani Suraksha Yojana, a scheme launched under the National Rural Health Mission as reported in the `Times of India` dated May 25, 2005;

(b) if so, the details of the facts reported therein;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to plug the alleged loopholes for effective implementation of the said Yojana?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS)

(a)to(d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 155 FOR 3RD AUGUST, 2005

The Janani Suraksha Yojana has been launched under the overall umbrella of the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) by modifying the existing National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) to promote institutional deliveries and to reduce maternal mortality in the country. Under the Yojana, the benefits are available to pregnant women from the Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, who are of the age of 19 years or above up to two live births. The benefits under the scheme would be extended to women from BPL families of 10 low performing States (Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Assam and Jammu & Kashmir) even after the third live birth if the mother, of her own accord chooses to undergo sterilization in the health facility immediately after the delivery.

The report in Times of India dated 25.5.2005 questions the rationale of extending the benefit to the pregnant women of age 19 or above whereas the mean age of girls in 50% of all marriages in India is below 18. The Child Marriage Restraint Act - 1929 as amended from time to time has prescribed the minimum age at marriage for girls as 18 years. The limitation of the benefits to pregnant women who are of the age of 19 or above has been kept in view of this legislation passed by the Parliament. The age limit was kept at 19 in the NMBS also which has been modified as the Janani Suraksha Yojana.

The report in Times of India also states that the extension of benefit to those undergoing sterilization after the third live birth goes against the National Population Policy which promotes voluntary choice and informed counseling. The extension of the benefit under the Janani Suraksha Yojana even after the birth of the third child has been made to provide facility of a hospital based care to BPL women in case the beneficiary on her own choice comes forward to limit her family.

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