

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2345  
ANSWERED ON:23.08.2013  
STUDY ON HEALTHCARE  
Karunakaran Shri P.

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

- (a) whether the Government has seen a recent joint study by the University of Edinburgh and World Health Organisation (WHO) on healthcare in India which revealed that boys receive better medical care than girls;
- (b) if so, the details of the study and reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government plans to introduce new measures or strengthen existing norms to ensure equitable healthcare for both boys and girls, especially at the primary healthcare level; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABIAZAD)

(a) & (b): An Article titled 'Global and regional burden of hospital admissions for severe acute lower respiratory infections in young children in 2010: a systematic analysis' by Dr. Harish Nair, Centre for Population Health Sciences, University of Edinburgh and several others, and based on funding support from the WHO has been published in the Lancet of 20th April, 2013. This reviews the findings from a number of global studies and concludes that incidence of hospital admissions for acute lower respiratory infections is higher in boys than girls, the sex disparity being greatest in South Asia. These findings are based on 89 studies including 28 unpublished studies from the region. The article is not specifically on healthcare in India. The Government is aware that there are gender based differences in health seeking behavior due to socio-cultural and economic factors that often undermine the social status of girls and women. However, Government provides equitable access to healthcare services, irrespective of gender, and across all age groups in the country.

(c) & (d): The Government has taken following steps to ensure equitable health care for boys and girls, especially at the primary healthcare level.

# Introduction of Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram under which there is provision of free of cost healthcare at all levels of Government health facilities to pregnant women and children up to one year of age, including boys and girls. This eliminates out-of-pocket expenditure related to healthcare which is a major barrier in seeking health care for the female children.

# Universal Immunisation Programme makes provision for vaccination against 7 childhood vaccine preventable diseases free of cost for all children, irrespective of gender.

# Home visitation by ASHA worker to all newborns irrespective of gender of the child has been initiated for improving the childcare practices and to identify and refer sick newborns to health facilities.

# Recently the Government has launched the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) as an initiative to improve child survival and development in the country. It is a systematic approach for early identification of defects at birth, diseases, deficiencies and developmental delays including disabilities in children from 0 to 18 years of age.