

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 1702  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 6.8.2024**

**“PROMOTION OF MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AMONG WOMEN IN RURAL  
AREAS”**

**1702. DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL:**

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

- (a) the data on the increase in the rural uptake of sanitary pads over the past five years, including the current penetration rate and year wise growth figures;
- (b) the details on Government initiatives and programs that have contributed to the rise in sanitary pad usage in rural areas;
- (c) the data on total number of women protected from menstrual diseases after sanitary pad campaigns in rural areas; and
- (d) the measures taken by Government to match international standards to maintain menstrual hygiene amongst women?

**ANSWER  
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY  
WELFARE  
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)**

- (a) to (c) As per the latest National Family Health Survey 5 (2019-21) 58.9% of women aged 15-24 years in the rural areas are using Sanitary Napkins as compared to 33.6 % women in NFHS-4 (2015-16). The usage of sanitary napkins between NFHS 4 & 5 has increased by 25.3 percentage points with a growth rate of 75.30%. The findings of the 6th round of NFHS is yet to be released.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare implements the ‘Scheme for Promotion of Menstrual Hygiene’ under Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) to reach out all adolescents girls in the age group of 10-19 years, rural and urban, married and unmarried, in and out-of-school. The objectives of the scheme are to increase awareness among adolescent girls on menstrual hygiene, to increase access to and use of high quality sanitary napkins by adolescent girls and to ensure safe disposal of sanitary napkins in an environmentally friendly manner.

In addition, vide a joint letter dated 08.03.2022 of Secretary, DoSEL and Secretary, Ministry of Jal Shakti, the states have been advised to utilize funds earmarked for; (1) Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) and Management of menstrual waste under

Swachhh Bharat Mission (Gramin) Phase-II at village level. (2) For installation or maintenance of incinerators in schools having girls from classes VI to XII and (3) For creating awareness on MHM among adolescent girls and in the society in general. Under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), Government has launched Jan Aushadhi Suvidha Sanitary Napkins at Rs. 1/- per pad for women to ensure easy availability of the menstrual health services at affordable prices.

(d) There is no International Standard (ISO) on sanitary pad. However, the standardization in the field of Menstrual Products (sanitary pad) has been undertaken by Technical Textiles for Medtech Applications, Sectional Committee, TXD 36 under Textiles Division Council of Bureau of Indian Standards. These standards are developed by relevant specialized technical committees comprising of representatives of various stakeholder interests such as industry, consumer, technologists, scientists, professionals, academicians, government policy makers, regulators etc. BIS has published the following Indian standards on sanitary napkins:

- 1) IS 5405:2019 Sanitary napkins – Specification (second revision)
- 2) IS 17514:2021 Reusable sanitary pad/ sanitary napkin/ period panties– Specification.

To ensure safety of products, the Indian standards include

- The requirement of hygiene testing which includes testing of Bacterial and Fungal Bioburden and test for common skin pathogen — Staphylococcus Aureus.
- Phthalate testing in sanitary pads which ensures the elimination of harmful chemicals that can cause health issues, such as endocrine disruption and reproductive problems.
- The Biocompatibility Evaluation covering Cytotoxicity, Irritation and Skin Sensitization tests to ensure that raw material used for manufacturing the final product are safe for user based on its known toxicological characteristics at intended use

The Indian standards on sanitary pad are regularly reviewed by technical committee TXD 36 based on the comments/feedback/study report received from stakeholders.

Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India has notified Quality Control Order (QCO) under Section 16 of the BIS Act, 2016 for making compliance to IS 5405 : 2019 and IS 17514 : 2021 mandatory from 01 October, 2024. As per the QCO, read with Section 17 of the BIS Act, 2016: No person shall manufacture, import, distribute, sell, hire, lease, store or exhibit for sale any of these products without the BIS Standard Mark after the date of implementation of the QCO.

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