

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

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 180
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 06TH DECEMBER, 2024**

CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAMMES

***180. SHRI GURJEET SINGH AUJLA:**

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

- (a) whether the Government has felt the urgent need for enhanced awareness and preventive measures against cervical cancer in the State of Punjab, particularly in underserved areas like Amritsar and rural regions and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has any plans for funding and expanding cervical cancer screening programs and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination drives, with a focus on affordability and accessibility in rural areas across the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to launch a national public health campaign to educate women about early detection, symptoms and preventive measures, involving community and women's organizations to maximize outreach and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government also proposes to allocate a specific budget to make the HPV vaccine widely available, affordable, or free for girls and young women, to reduce the incidence of cervical cancer across the country, State/UT-wise including Punjab and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether such measures are likely to support the health and well-being of women in the region and align with national health priorities and if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA)**

- (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 180 FOR 06TH DECEMBER, 2024**

(a) to (e) The Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, provides technical and financial support to the States and Union Territories including Punjab under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD) as part of National Health Mission (NHM). The programme focusses on strengthening infrastructure, human resource development, early diagnosis, referral to an appropriate level of healthcare facility for treatment and management and health promotion and awareness generation for prevention, of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) including cervical cancer.

ASHA administers Community Based Assessment Checklist (CBAC) for all individuals of 30 years and above age group in the population. Risk assessment for NCDs including cervical cancer is done through CBAC and all the high risk individuals of age 30 years and above are referred for screening of common NCDs.

A population-based initiative for screening, management and prevention of common NCDs including cervical cancer has been rolled out as a part of comprehensive Primary Health Care in the country under NHM.

Prevention, control & screening services are being provided through trained frontline workers [Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) & Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife (ANM)], and the referral support and continuity of care is ensured through Community Health Centres, District Hospitals and other tertiary care institutions. Population Based Screening can help in better management of diseases by the way of early stage of detection, follow up and treatment adherence. Training Modules on screening, management and awareness generation for NCDs have been developed for training of various categories of health staff viz. Nurses, ANMs, ASHAs and Medical Officers.

National NCD Portal has been rolled out by the Government of India in 2018 under NP-NCD for NCD screening and management and ensuring continuum of care for five common NCDs including cervical cancer of population of 30 years and above.

In the community, ASHAs play a pivotal role in spreading awareness about Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) including cervical cancer. ASHAs educate individuals and families on the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles, including nutritious diets, regular physical activity, and avoidance of tobacco and alcohol. ASHAs emphasize the significance of early detection through regular health check-ups and screenings, enabling timely intervention through home visits, group meetings, and participation in health campaigns.

Community level forum like Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee (VHSNC)/ Mahila Aarogya Samiti (MAS), Jan Aarogya Samiti (JAS), Self Help Groups (SHG) and local bodies serve as a platform for community awareness and promotive and preventive care activities.

Under the Anganwadi services scheme, pregnant women and lactating mothers are provided health education and the importance of taking nutritious diets.

Further initiatives for increasing public awareness about NCDs including cervical cancer and for promotion of healthy lifestyle include observation of National Cancer Awareness day, use of print, electronic and social media for continued community awareness. In addition, NP-NCD gives financial support of ₹3 -5 lakhs at District level and ₹50-70 lakhs at State level under NHM for awareness generation activities for NCDs to be undertaken by the States and Union Territories as per their Programme Implementation Plans (PIPs).

As per the National NCD Portal, as of 2nd December 2024, a total of 3.99 lakh females aged 30 years and above have been screened for cervical cancer in Punjab.

The State Government of Punjab has informed that it has undertaken mass awareness campaign for early signs and symptoms of common cancers including cervical cancer among general population, including Amritsar and rural regions across the State of Punjab. There are screening camps at all public health facilities across the State. The National cancer awareness day is celebrated every year in all 23 districts at all health facilities. Other initiatives for mass awareness include Cycle rallies, Frequency Modulation (FM) radio messages and Short Message Service (SMS). The cervical cancer elimination day was observed by the State Government of Punjab on 17th November, 2024 and screening activities were conducted at all District hospitals. Further, poster making activities with prize distribution for school girls, printing and distribution of various Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material like Pamphlets, Posters for creating awareness for early screening of common cancers were done.

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine is not a part of the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP).
