

ASHA Workers Role and Functions

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Source: *PIB & National Health Mission*

Who is ASHA?

Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) is a **trained female community health activist**. **Selected from the community itself** and accountable to it, the ASHA will be trained to work as an interface between the community and the public health system

Role of ASHA

ASHA is a health activist in the community who will **create awareness on health and its social determinants and mobilize the community towards local health planning** and increased utilization and accountability of the existing health services. She would be a **promoter of good health practices**. She will also provide a **minimum package of curative care** as appropriate and feasible for that level and make timely referrals. Her roles and responsibilities would be as follows:

- ASHA will take steps to create awareness and **provide information to the community on determinants of health such as nutrition, basic sanitation & hygienic practices, healthy living and working conditions, information on existing health services** and the need for timely utilization of health & family welfare services.
- She would **counsel women on birth preparedness, importance of safe delivery, breastfeeding** and complementary feeding, **immunization, contraception and prevention of common infections including Reproductive Tract Infection/Sexually Transmitted Infection (RTIs/STIs)** and care of the young child.

- ASHA also **mobilize the community and facilitate them in accessing health and health related services available at the village/sub-center/primary health centers**, such as Immunization, Ante Natal Check-up (ANC), Post Natal Check-up (PNC), ICDS, sanitation and other services being provided by the government.
- She also **work with the Village Health & Sanitation Committee of the Gram Panchayat to develop a comprehensive village health plan.**
- She will **arrange escort/accompany pregnant women & children requiring treatment/ admission to the nearest pre-identified health facility** i.e. Primary Health Centre/ Community Health Centre/ First Referral Unit (PHC/CHC /FRU).
- ASHA will **provide primary medical care for minor ailments such as diarrhoea, fevers, and first aid for minor injuries.**
- She is a **provider of Directly Observed Treatment Short-course (DOTS) under Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme.**
- She also **act as a depot holder for essential provisions being made available to every habitation like Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORS), Iron Folic Acid Tablet (IFA), chloroquine, Disposable Delivery Kits (DDK), Oral Pills & Condoms, etc.** A Drug Kit is provided to each ASHA. Contents of the kit will be based on the recommendations of the expert/technical advisory group set up by the Government of India.
- Her role as a provider can be enhanced subsequently. States can explore the possibility of graded training to her for providing newborn care and management of a range of common ailments particularly childhood illnesses.
- She will **inform about the births and deaths in her village and any unusual health problems/disease outbreaks in the community** to the Sub-Centres/Primary Health Centre.
- She will **promote the construction of household toilets**

under the Total Sanitation Campaign.

- Fulfilment of all these roles by ASHA is envisaged through continuous training and up-gradation of her skills, spread over two years or more.



Criteria for Selection of ASHA

- ASHA must be **primarily a woman resident of the village – ‘Married/Widow/Divorced’** and preferably in the **age group of 25 to 45 yrs.**
- ASHA should have effective communication skills, leadership qualities and be able to reach out to the community.
- She should be a **literate woman with formal education up to Eighth Class.** This may be relaxed only if no suitable person with this qualification is available.
- Adequate representation from disadvantaged population groups should be ensured to serve such groups better