

ASHA Workers

September 23, 2020

Under the NRHM (National Rural Health Mission) which was **launched in 2005**, the government of India recruited accredited social health activists (ASHA) workers to **connect the marginalised communities to health care**. Approximately 9,00,000 ASHA workers in India act as the bridge between the government and people due to a human resource shortage in the health system.

Functions of ASHA Workers

- ASHA must **primarily be a woman resident of the village** married/ widowed/ divorced, **preferably in the age group of 25 to 45 years**.
- She should be a **literate woman** with due preference in selection to those who are qualified up to 10 standard wherever they are interested and available in good numbers. This may be relaxed only if no suitable person with this qualification is available.
- Her job responsibilities are three-fold:
 - . **link-worker** (facilitating access to healthcare facilities and accompanying women and children)
 - . **community health worker** (depot-holder for selected essential medicines and responsible for treatment of minor ailments)
 - . **health activist** (creating health awareness and mobilizing the community for change in health status)
- ASHA will be chosen through a rigorous process of selection involving various community groups, self-help groups, anganwadi institutions, the block nodal officer, district nodal officer, the village health committee and the gram sabha.
- The ASHAs will receive **performance based incentives** for

promoting universal immunization, referral and escort services for Reproductive & Child Health (RCH) and other healthcare programmes, and construction of household toilets.

- She will **counsel women** on birth preparedness, importance of safe delivery, breast-feeding and complementary feeding, immunization, contraception and prevention of common infections including reproductive tract infection/ sexually transmitted infections (RTIs/ STIs) and care of the young child.
- She will **act as a depot older for essential provisions** being made available to all habitations like oral rehydration therapy (ORS), iron folic acid tablet (IFA), chloroquine, disposable delivery kits (DDK), oral pills & condoms.