

Bahini scheme

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In news- State government of Sikkim has launched the Bahini scheme for girls recently.

About the scheme-

- The scheme, “Bahini ”, aims at providing 100 percent access to free and safe sanitary pads to secondary and senior secondary school going girls.
- It aims to curb dropout of girls from schools and raise awareness about menstrual hygiene.
- Under the scheme, the state government would install vending machines to provide free sanitary pads in all its 210 secondary and senior secondary government schools across the state.
- The scheme is based on an experiment the state government initiated in 2018, in collaboration with Sulabh International, where vending machines were installed in some schools.
- This is the first time that a state government has taken a decision to cover all girls studying in Classes 9-12.

Menstrual health in India-

- According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) 2015-16, India has over 355 million menstruating women.
- However, only 36 per cent of women were reported as using sanitary napkins, locally or commercially produced.
- The percentage of women using menstrual products did improve significantly across the country, especially in Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, West Bengal and Bihar, as estimated in the first phase of the recently released NFHS-5.

Menstrual Hygiene Scheme-

- **The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** has introduced this scheme for promotion of menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls in the age group of 10-19 year in rural areas.
- **Major 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 to adolescent girls in rural areas.
 - To ensure safe disposal of Sanitary Napkins in an environmentally friendly manner.
- **The scheme was initially implemented in 2011 in 107 selected districts in 17 States** wherein a pack of six sanitary napkins called “Freedays” was provided to rural adolescent girls for Rs. 6.
- **From 2014 onwards, funds are now being provided to States/UTs under National Health Mission for decentralized procurement of sanitary napkins** packs for provision to rural adolescent girls at a subsidized rate of Rs 6 for a pack of 6 napkins.
- **The ASHA is responsible for distribution**, receiving an incentive @ Rs 1 per pack sold and a free pack of napkins every month for her own personal use.
- She **convenes monthly meetings at the Anganwadi Centers** or other such platforms for adolescent girls to focus on the issue of menstrual hygiene and also serves as a platform to discuss other relevant SRH issues.

Further

reading:

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