

Govt plans lower I-T slab, free health check-ups for women

Nat'l Policy Also Moots Aid For Violence Victims

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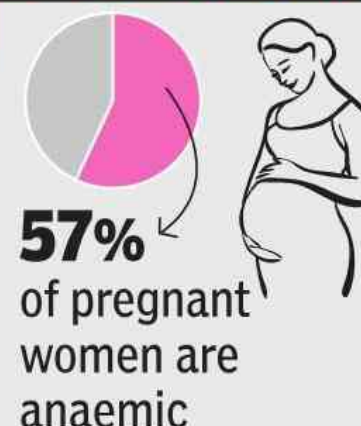
New Delhi: Acknowledging that women are a disadvantaged section despite comprising nearly half of India's population, the Centre is considering lowering income tax for single women, introducing Aadhaar-linked health cards that will provide free basic health check-ups for women and cashless medical service for those who are pregnant.

A national policy for women, framed by a group of ministers headed by external af-

AIMING TO BRIDGE GENDER GAP

WHAT IS PROPOSED

- Free health check-ups for women with **Aadhaar-linked health cards**
- **Cashless medical service** for pregnant women
- **More public toilets;** tax exemption on sanitary napkins
- **Free medical and legal support** for survivors of gender-based violence



26% Workforce participation rate vs 53% for men

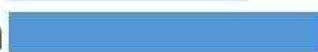
Source: Draft National Women Policy

HERE IS A REALITY CHECK

- India ranks 130/188 in Gender Inequality Index of UNDP's Human Development Report 2015

Average wage for urban

Women  ₹609/day

Men  ₹805/day

- Gender gap in education high: 65% of women are literate against 82% of men
- Women have rights over only 12.7% of operational land holdings

fairs minister Sushma Swaraj, is expected to be unveiled soon. It proposes a lower rate of income tax for single women as it takes note of a growing segment of the population: there has been a 39% increase in this category between 2001 and 2011.

Tax exemption on all menstrual hygiene products has also been proposed to ensure easy and affordable accessibility of these products. Building more public toilets for women have been mooted. Survivors of gender-based violence will be provided free

medical and legal support, counselling and shelter.

Government-assisted living facilities for elderly women, especially widows, will also be a priority once the Cabinet approves the policy.

► **Health card, P 13**

Govt proposes health card for cancer treatment

► **Continued from P 1**

Noting the gender bias that often results in less attention being paid to the welfare of women, the policy proposes a health card that takes care of check-ups for anaemia and cancers; a cashless service for pregnant women and a comprehensive health insurance for critical ailments. These steps are marked for “urgent action”.

A separate section outlines the “areas for immediate action” on suggestions of the GoM. The policy also looks at increasing women in the workforce by 50% by 2030, with measures such as a complete registration fee waiver for girls appearing in competitive or entrance exams conducted by government agencies, free coaching and more hostels in cities and towns for working women.

The policy also highlights the role and issues related to NRI women and their role in the cultural sphere. It notes the role of women in protection, preservation and propagation of India’s diverse culture. The document promises to take up issues such as NRI women affected by matrimony related disputes such as bigamous marriage, desertion, domestic violence and forceful retention of children’s custody.