

L-G VK Saxena grants sanction for procurement of 3 lakh biodegradable sanitary pads from women SHGs under Ladakh Rural Livelihood Mission

Says move to promote women's health, rural livelihoods and environmental sustainability

Leh, May 19: In a significant step towards promoting girls' health and strengthening women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Ladakh, the Lieutenant Governor of UT Ladakh, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, has accorded approval for procurement of 3 lakh biodegradable sanitary napkins, meant for school girls, from Sakhi Zamo Village Organisation, which is supported by the Indian Army and registered under the Ladakh Rural Livelihood Mission (LRLM).

The approval, which was pending for some time owing to an increase in cost, has been accorded following the intervention of LG, Shri Saxena, who noted that the procurement of sanitary pads from the local manufacturing units would strengthen the rural livelihoods in Ladakh. Notably, 13 Lakh sanitary pads (8 per pack) are distributed to adolescent girls between 13-18 years, every month. While approval has been given for the procurement of 3 lakh sanitary napkins from the Sakhi Zamo Village Organisation, the remaining 10 lakh will be procured through open tender.

The Lieutenant Governor, while approving the procurement at increased rates, also noted the village organisation's contribution towards women empowerment, local employment generation and production of biodegradable sanitary products. The sanitary napkins produced by the organisation are eco-friendly, biodegradable, and environmentally sustainable, which, when disposed of, leave no toxic residue in the fragile environment of Ladakh.

"The proposal regarding procurement of biodegradable sanitary pads had been pending for some time and has now been approved, keeping in view the larger interests of women's health and empowering women-led SHGs. Women's health and hygiene remain a priority for the UT Administration, and environmental preservation must go hand in hand with development initiatives in Ladakh. Supporting women-led SHGs is essential for creating sustainable rural livelihoods," said LG, Shri VK Saxena.

The procurement, approved under the National Health Mission (NHM), will be done at a cost of ₹15 lakh, with each biodegradable sanitary pad costing ₹5 per piece. The total consignment will be supplied over a period of ten months at the rate of 30,000 sanitary pads per month.

The Sakhi Ama Tsogspa BIONAP sanitary napkin production facility at Martselang village in Leh is a successful model of Army-civil synergy under Operation Sadbhavana, under the aegis of the Fire and Fury Corps of the Indian Army. It is a sustainable centre for women's empowerment, livelihood generation, and community development in Ladakh. The initiative has provided direct employment to 26 women from Martselang and adjoining villages, including eight wives of serving and retired Army personnel.

The Sakhi Zamo Village Organisation consists of three Self Help Groups (SHGs) comprising local women, who are actively engaged in livelihood generation activities to support their families and strengthen rural economic self-reliance.

The procurement of biodegradable sanitary pads is aligned with the broader vision of ensuring accessible and hygienic menstrual health products to school girls while also promoting the use of eco-friendly alternatives in Ladakh.