

## Hysterectomy

### Why in news?

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare urged State Governments to audit hysterectomy trends in public and private hospitals.

### What is Hysterectomy?

- **Hysterectomy** - It is a surgery to remove a woman's uterus or womb, which results in no menstrual periods and no pregnancy in operated women.
- In medical terms, it is also known as **surgical menopause**.
- Hysterectomy adversely impacts the woman's health as it could lead to hormonal imbalance, calcium deficiency and constant body aches, among other things.
- Hysterectomies are presented to women as a permanent solution for health issues, even when other low-invasive treatments could work.

### What are the international conventions associated with hysterectomies?

- Unnecessary hysterectomies **violate international conventions** to which India is a signatory.
- The international conventions include:
  - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - It recognizes people's right to control their health and body including reproductive and sexual freedom
    - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
    - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

*The average age at which hysterectomies are conducted among Indian women is 34 per community-based studies.*

### What are the measures taken so far?

- **Health Ministry** - In 2022 issued guidelines to prevent unnecessary hysterectomies.
- The guidelines listing possible indications of when hysterectomy may be required and alternative clinical treatments for gynecological issues.
- **Supreme Court order** - States and Union Territories are expected to conduct audits of hysterectomy trends and furnish a report, as per the Supreme Court order.
- **Grievance portal** - Proposed by government to be monitored by the National Hysterectomy Monitoring Committee, for hysterectomy beneficiaries.
- **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana** - Provides health insurance

provides health cover of Rs5 lakhs for 1,949 procedures including hysterectomies.

- **Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act 2010** - It blacklists the hospitals and healthcare facilities which coerces women into hysterectomies without informed consent.
- **11 States** - Including Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand and Karnataka, have adopted Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act 2010.

*Draft National Policy for Women which recognizes gaps in healthcare for menopausal women, there is little focus on women in their procreating ages or when they cross 45.*

### **What is the need of the hour?**

- Increase awareness of the risks and benefits of hysterectomies among women and healthcare providers.
- Ensure that women are given informed consent before undergoing a hysterectomy.
- Crack down on unethical practices by healthcare providers, such as performing unnecessary hysterectomies for financial gain.
- Provide more access to quality healthcare, so that women have more options for treating their medical conditions.

*Chief Justice of India suggested that hysterectomies for those under 40 should be conducted on approval by two certified doctors.*

### **Reference**

1. [The Hindu | Hysterectomy](#)

