

Given the oxytocin's performance in both humans and animals, the Government of India has banned its sale. Critically analyse.

Oxytocin, commonly called as the love hormone, is an important secretion of pituitary glands in mammals during social bonding, childbirth and lactation.

Uses of oxytocin

- 1) To induce contraction in uterus during childbirth
- 2) induce delivery
- 3) promote release of breast milk
- 4) arrest post partum hemorrhage.

Government had recently announced the commercial sale, production, distribution of oxytocin except for one public sector entity - Karnataka Antibiotics and Pharmaceutical Limited (KAPL).

Reasons for the ban

1) Misuse in milch cattle and its effects.

Oxytocin is administered to cattle orally or injection to

- (i) increase milk production (ii) improve fertility at young age.

Excessive usage has led to

- mastitis - inflammation of udder
- infertility among cattle
- loss of cattle life, overall decline in younger ones.

2) Misuse in human beings:

→ Studies have revealed, consumption of oxytocin induced milk production from cattle affect human beings internal functions

→ Rampant misuse among human traffickers has been recorded by Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) survey on 'abduction of girl children'

This is used for faster puberty inducement and sex trafficking.

But, such a blanket ban on curbs of oxytocin usage is termed by Indian Medical Association (IMA) as "throwing baby out with bathwater"

Hasty decision of banning

1) Importance in child birth:-

Oxytocin is essential for controlling hemorrhage which is 99% cause for maternal deaths. The ban increase MMR due to unavailability of such drugs at healthcare centres

2) Already under stricter regulation:-

- When Oxytocin is already under National List of Essential Medicine and restricting usage at Jan Aushadhi Kendras and AMRIT centres does not make a difference
- According to Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940, Oxytocin placed under schedule H1 drugs can be sold by retailers registered and monitoring must.

3) Shortage of supply and cost:-

- Under the ban only registered hospitals can seek access. This restriction affect rural supply, where majority child births occur in primitive centres.
- The cost of production by KAPL is higher, adding financial constraint to the state.
- It ~~was~~ has been estimated that, it would take longer time of production for meeting demands.

4) KAPL and infrastructure issues:-

- KAPL has limited capacity of production. Absence of proper cold storage facility exacerbates this problem
- Experience of KAPL is hardly 4 year

Thus, a simple demand-supply mismatch can have larger repercussions than misuse. The government can use existing mechanism to implement DTAB order of 1940 of regulation, import ban for cattle misuse or take up alternative supplements Carbetacin to check rampant usage.