

## India to promote homeopathy for mother, child health

India will promote homeopathy for bettering mother and child health in areas like anaemia, asthma and diarrhoea, a senior health ministry official said Tuesday.

'Homeopathy is used by many people in India but the usage is very patchy. Through a concerted campaign, we are going to promote homeopathy across the country, especially for mother and child health promotion,' joint secretary health V. Samuels said.

Under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), the government has decided to promote this form of medicine at the national, state and district level.

'All the hospitals and homeopathy practitioners will be brought under a network to facilitate the success of the programme,' Samuels said at a function.

Giving details about the initiative, Chaturbhuja Nayak, director of the Central Council for Research in Homeopathy (CCRH), said the effort would address the 'unsatisfactory health status of women and children in the country and also the high morbidity and mortality of infants and young children'.

Currently, the infant mortality rate is 58 for every 1,000 childbirths, while maternal mortality is 301 for every 100,000 deliveries.

He said problems like anaemia, deficient secretion of milk, urinary tract infections, skin disorders, asthma, diarrhoea, chikungunya, respiratory problems, sleep disorder and many such health problems could be addressed effectively through homeopathy and with less expenditure.

'We have over 3,000 hospitals catering to the traditional system of medicine. These hospitals along with smaller hospitals affiliated to the primary healthcare centres and district hospitals will be roped in to provide an option to people in general and rural folks in particular,' Nayak told IANS.

'Our focus is on preventive cure rather than hospitalisation of patients,' he said.

Nayak said a national campaign would kick start from Delhi Nov 5 to propagate this initiative and go to all states subsequently.

'There is a need for this campaign as currently we have limited awareness about the efficacy of the traditional system of medicine both among policy makers and people. The non-achievement of the World Health Organisation (WHO) goal of health for all by 2000 also is one of the reasons why we are going for this,' he said.

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