



Date – 26 May 2022

75th Conference of the World Health Assembly



- The 75th session of the World Health Assembly is being held in Geneva, the headquarters of the World Health Organization (WHO), from May 22 to 28, 2022.
- The Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare emphasized India's commitment towards building a more resilient global health security framework.
- The theme of the World Health Assembly, 2022 is 'Health for Peace, Peace for Health'.
- Accredited 'Social Health Activists (ASHA)' from India were honored with the Global Health Leaders Award at the 75th World Health Assembly for their "commitment to advancing

global health, leadership and regional health issues". Outstanding contribution to be recognized.

World Health Assembly:

- The World Health Assembly is made up of representatives representing the member states.
- Each nation is represented by a maximum of three representatives, one of whom is designated as the chief representative.
- These representatives are selected from amongst the fittest persons on the basis of their technical ability in the field of health as they preferentially represent the national health administration of the member nation.
- The World Health Assembly meets regularly in annual sessions and sometimes in special sessions.

Functions of the World Health Assembly:

- The World Health Assembly determines the policies of WHO.
- It monitors the financial policies of the organization and reviews and approves the budget.
- It reports to the Economic and Social Council regarding any agreement between the WHO and the United Nations.

Highlights of the address of the Union Ministers in the 75th session:

- There is a need to streamline whose approval process for vaccines and medical legislation for a more flexible global health security architecture. Equal access to vaccines and drugs should be allowed, including intellectual property aspects.
- Cost effective research, technology transfer and regional manufacturing capability should be on the priority list.

- According to WHO, India has recorded 4.7 million deaths (10 times the official figure) due to COVID. Concerns were therefore expressed over the recent practice of the WHO, which has recorded a higher death rate from all causes than from COVID-19.
- India urged the WHO to consider country-specific authentic data published by the Registrar General of India (RGI) through the Citizen Registration System (CRS).
- The use of mathematical models of data prediction should not be relied upon. Consequently, the Central Council for Health and Family Welfare (established under Article 263 of the Constitution) passed a unanimous resolution condemning the WHO's approach in this regard.

Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA):

- ASHA is one of the major components of the National Rural Health Mission (NHRM).
- She is a social health worker in the age group of 25-45 years, who acts as the first point of contact to meet the health needs of disadvantaged sections of the rural population including women and children.
- There is usually one ASHA per 1000 population. However, depending on the workload in tribal, hilly and desert areas, this criterion can be reduced to "one ASHA per settlement".

Responsibilities and Roles:

- To create awareness about health determinants by providing people with information about nutrition, basic hygiene and hygienic practices, healthy living and working conditions etc.
- It also provides information about existing health services and encourages people to make timely use of health and family welfare services.

- Counseling women on preparation for birth, importance of safe delivery, breastfeeding, contraception, immunization, child care and prevention of Reproductive Tract Infections/Sexually Transmitted Infections (RTIs/STIs).
- Facilitate access to antenatal check-up (ANC), post-natal check-up (PNC), immunization, sanitation and other health services at village/sub-centre/primary health centers by mobilizing the community.
- Developing a comprehensive health plan by working in collaboration with the Village Health and Sanitation Committee of the Gram Panchayat.
- To provide first aid care for minor disorders like fever, diarrhea and minor injuries under the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme.
- Arrange maintenance for pregnant women and children who require treatment or need to be admitted to the nearest health care facility.
- Informing the sub-centres/primary health center about births and deaths in your village and any disease outbreaks/unusual health concerns in the community.

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Interstate council



- Recently, the Inter-State Council (ISC) has been reconstituted with the Prime Minister as the President and the Chief Ministers of all the states and six Union Ministers as members.
- Ten Union Ministers will be invited to the Inter-State Council on a permanent basis.
- The government has also reconstituted the Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council with the Union Home Minister as the Chairman.
- The Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh are also members of the Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council.

Interstate Council:

Background:

- The Central Government appointed Justice R.S. to review the working of the existing arrangements between the Center and the States. A commission was constituted in the year 1988 under the chairmanship of Sarkaria.
- The Sarkaria Commission made an important recommendation to establish an Inter-State Council as an independent national forum for consultation in pursuance of

the mandate defined in accordance with Article 263 of the Constitution of India.

Introduction:

- The Inter-State Council is empowered to inquire into and advise on disputes arising between States, to inquire into and discuss matters of common interest to some or all of the States or the Center and one or more States.
- It also makes recommendations for better coordination of policy and action on these subjects, discusses matters of common interest to the States, which may be referred by its President.
- It also considers other matters of general interest to the States, as may be referred by the President of the Council.
- The Council may meet at least three times in a year.
- The Council also has a Standing Committee.

Organization:

- **President-** Prime Minister
- **Member-** Chief Ministers of all states
- Chief Ministers of Union Territories with Legislative Assembly and Administrators of Union Territories not having Legislative Assembly and Governors of States under President's Rule (Governor's Rule in the case of Jammu and Kashmir) Members.
- Six cabinet rank ministers in the Union Council of Ministers nominated by the Prime Minister.

Functions of the Inter-State Council:

- To create a strong institutional framework to promote and support cooperative federalism in the country and to energize

the Council and Regional Councils by holding regular meetings.

- Facilitates the consideration of all pending and emerging issues of Centre-State and Inter-State relations by the Regional Councils and the Inter-State Council.
- To develop a system to monitor the implementation of the recommendations submitted by them.

Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council:

- It was established in the year 1996 for continuous consultation and processing of matters for consideration of the Council.

It consists of the following members:

- (i) Union Home Minister as Chairman
 - (ii) Five Union Cabinet Ministers
 - (iii) A council of nine Chief Ministers to assist the Inter-State Council Secretariat.
- This Secretariat was established in the year 1991 and is headed by a Secretary to the Government of India. Since the year 2011, it is also functioning as the Secretariat of the Zonal Councils.

Work:

- The Standing Committee will have continuous consultation and procedural matters for the consideration of the Council, processing all matters relating to Centre-State relations before consideration in the Inter-State Council.
- The Standing Committee also oversees the implementation of the decisions taken on the recommendations of the Council

and considers any other matter referred to it by the Chairman or the Council.

Other bodies promoting interstate relations:

Regional Council:

- Regional councils are statutory (not constitutional) bodies. These are established by an Act of Parliament, i.e. States Reorganization Act 1956.
- This act divided the country into five regions- northern, central, eastern, western and southern and provided a regional council for each region.
- A number of factors have been taken into account when creating these regions, including: the natural division of the country, river systems and means of communication, cultural and linguistic ties, and the need for economic development, security and law and order.
- North-Eastern Council: The North-Eastern States of (i) Assam, (ii) Arunachal Pradesh, (iii) Manipur, (iv) Tripura, (v) Mizoram, (vi) Meghalaya and (vii) Nagaland, are included in the Zonal Councils and their specific problems are handled by the North-Eastern Council, which was established under the North-Eastern Council Act, 1972.

Inter-State Trade and Commerce:

- Part XIII of the Constitution, Articles 301 to 307 deal with trade, commerce and interaction within the territory of India.

Interstate Water Disputes:

- Article 262 of the Constitution provides for adjudication of inter-state water disputes.

It makes two provisions:

- Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint relating to the use, distribution and control of the waters of any inter-state river and river basin.
- Parliament may also provide that no other court, including the Supreme Court, shall have jurisdiction over any such dispute or complaint.

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WHO Awarded ASHA workers



- Recently, during the event of the 75th 'World Health Assembly', India's 'ASHA' activists ie 'Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA)' 'Global Health Leaders Award'-2022 (Global Health Leaders Award -2022) has been provided.
- Eight volunteer polio activists are also among the recipients of this award. These volunteer polio activists were shot dead by

armed gunmen in Afghanistan's Takhar and Kunduz provinces in February this year.

About ASHA Workers (Accredited Social Health Activists):

- ASHA workers are volunteers working within the community, who are trained to provide information and help people to avail benefits of various health schemes of the government.
- They act as a bridge connecting marginalized communities with facilities such as primary health centres, sub-centres and district hospitals.
- The role of these 'Community Health Volunteers' was first established in the year 2005 under the 'National Rural Health Mission' (NRHM).

Eligibility:

- Volunteers should have good manners, communication and leadership skills to work as ASHA workers; In addition, the program guidelines require the workers to have formal education up to class 8.

ASHA workers in the country:

- At present, there are about 10.4 lakh ASHA workers working across the country.
- The highest number of ASHA workers are in the high population states – Uttar Pradesh (63 lakh), Bihar (89,437), and Madhya Pradesh (77,531).
- Goa is the only state in the country where there are no ASHA workers.

ASHA Worker – Roles and Functions:

- To create awareness about basic nutrition, hygiene practices and health services available from door to door in their designated areas.
- Ensuring women undergo antenatal check-ups, nutritious diet during pregnancy, delivery in health facilities, and training obstetricians for post-birth breastfeeding and supplemental nutrition for children.
- Counseling women about contraceptives and sexually transmitted infections.
- Ensuring vaccination of children.
- To provide daily medicines to TB patients under the direct supervision of National Programme.

How much are ASHA workers paid?

- Since they are considered “volunteers”, governments are not obliged to pay them salaries. And, most of the states do not pay any salary for these.
- Their income depends on the incentives given under various schemes. These incentives are provided to ‘ASHA workers’ for tasks like ensuring an institutional delivery or getting the child vaccinated. For all these works, they get only Rs 6,000 to Rs 8,000 per month.

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