

Baby steps to curb population boom

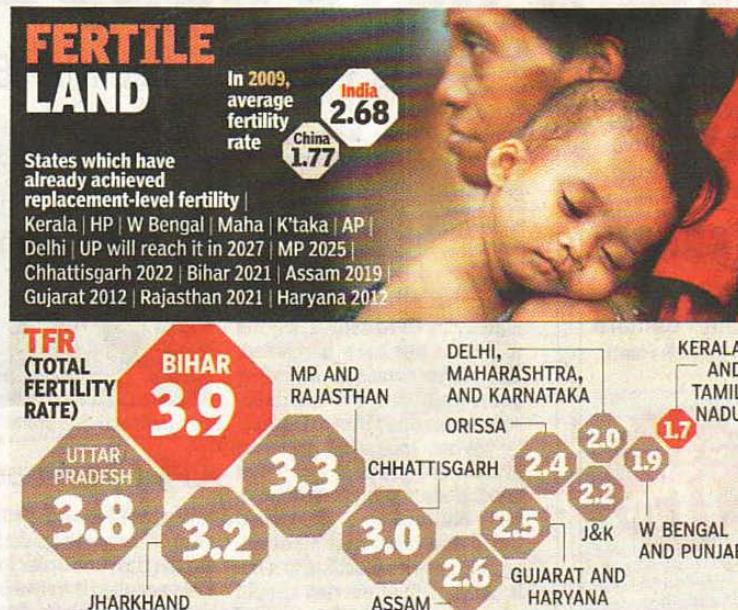
Govt Scheme To Help Women Space Kids, Counsel Them On Reversible Contraceptives

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

New Delhi: With India likely to achieve population stabilization by 2070, instead of 2045 as originally targeted, the Union health ministry has now started to aggressively use long-term reversible contraceptives to help women space children better.

The ministry's family planning division has now started a new programme called the post-partum insertion of intra-uterine contraceptive devices (IUCD). Earlier, women who delivered in institutions under the National Family Health Programme were asked to come back after six weeks of delivery for counselling and insertion of IUCDs like Copper 380 A. As expected, a majority of them never returned.

Now, under the new programme being implemented by 19 states, pregnant women are counselled for use of IUCDs during the antenatal period itself and the IUCD is inserted soon after she delivers the baby, following proper consent. Ministry officials told TOI that over 5,000 women have already received IUCDs under this programme. "In China, IUCD usage is as high as



60% for stabilizing population. In India, it is less than 2%. At present, women have two children in a short gap and then stop. This isn't good for the coun-

try's population boom. So only limiting was happening not proper spacing between two babies," an official said. He added, "IUCDs are completely re-

versible. At present, it is effective for about 10 years. If a woman wants a baby before that, she can get it removed. It, however, does not provide protection against STDs." India will soon introduce CU 375 IUCDs, which will protect women for five years. Copper IUDs prevent fertilization by reducing the number and viability of sperm reaching the egg and by impeding the number and movement of eggs into the uterus. It is believed that the continuous release of copper from the coils and sleeves of the Copper T 380A into the uterine cavity enhances the contraceptive effect of the IUCD.

According to health minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, the TFR for India fell from 3.3 to 2.58 in 2008. The total fertility rate (TFR) of a population is the average number of children that would be born to a woman over her lifetime. Around 14 states have already achieved the replacement level TFR of 2.1. However, nine states still have TFR higher than 3. Azad says unless the rapid growth of population is contained, it will be difficult to ensure quality education, healthcare, food, housing, water, sanitation, hygiene and a healthy environment for all.