

## UPSC Civil Services Examination

### UPSC Notes [GS-II]

#### Topic: Vatsalya Maatri Amrit Kosh

'Vatsalya Maatri Amrit Kosh'- a National Human Milk Bank and Lactation Counselling Centre was inaugurated at Lady Hardinge Medical College (LHMC), Delhi by the Secretary for Health and Family Welfare. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with the Norwegian government, Norway India Partnership Initiative (NIPI) and Oslo University has set up the centre. It is an initiative of LHMC and is the largest lactation counselling centre and human milk bank in Northern India.

#### Objectives of Vatsalya Maatri Amrit Kosh

Vatsalya Maatri Amrit Kosh was launched as a national human milk bank and lactation counselling centre at Lady Hardinge Medical College. It was launched under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with the Norwegian government, Oslo University and Norway India Partnership Initiative (NIPI) with the following objectives:

- To collect, pasteurise and test the milk donated by the lactating mothers and safely storing it for the infants in need.
- The Vatsalya Maatri Amrit Kosh also aims in protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding by providing lactation support to the mothers through dedicated lactation counsellors.
- Vatsalya Maatri Amrit Kosh is an initiative under the Ministry Of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. It was not only launched as a dedicated centre for supporting breastfeeding and improving the infant survival but this project also serves as a teaching, training and demonstration site for several other milk banks.

#### Mothers Absolute Affection (MAA) Programme

Mothers Absolute Affection (MAA) programme was launched as a flagship programme by the government to generate awareness among the masses about the importance of breastfeeding. It is a nationwide programme aimed at bringing focus on providing counselling for promoting breastfeeding through health systems in order to enhance the child's immunity. For effective implementation, MAA secretariat and a steering committee will be created in all states and at the district level. It will be monitored by UNICEF and other partners.

#### Benefits of MAA Programme

One out of three children in India are killed because of malnutrition. Out of these deaths, 66% is caused during the first year of the infant's life, mostly due to improper feeding practices. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), every child has to be breastfed compulsorily for the first 6 months and this must continue up to two years alongside regular food. But in India, though the institutional deliveries have shot up

to 78.9%, early commencement of breastfeeding is only 40%. Some of the benefits of the MAA Programme are mentioned below:

- Breastfeeding benefits both, the mother and the child. The mother has lower chances of having breast, endometrial and cervical cancers. The risks of anaemia are also reduced. Besides, breast milk is a complete nutritional package to the infant.
- Life-threatening diseases like diarrhoea, respiratory disorders, kidney diseases and pneumonia can be avoided by breastfeeding. It is also essential for the enhancement of bone formation, hence is crucial for the development of the child.
- The protein-rich human breast milk contains vitamin A, sodium chloride, antibodies which develop passive immunity and provide protection against pathogens. Lakhs of lives can be saved just by the promotion of breastfeeding through awareness. It is the sole effectual nutritional intervention for saving lives.

Vatsalya Maatri Amrit Kosh will act as a centre exclusively devoted to supporting and promoting breastfeeding. It will act as a demonstration, teaching and training site for other milk banks to be established under the ministry. While MAA programme will not only provide lactation counselling and generate awareness about the importance of breastfeeding but it will also be involved in making available, the milk donated by lactating mothers to the infants in need.