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Free Medicine Scheme of Rajasthan

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The flagship **free medicine scheme** of Rajasthan government has bagged 1st position amongst 16 states, in the monthly rankings issued by the **National Health Mission (NHM)**.

About the Scheme

- **Rajasthan Mukhyamantri Nishulk Dava Yojana** was launched on 2nd October 2011, by the then Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.
- It had 2 components-
 - **Free Medicines:** To provide commonly-used essential *medicines free of cost* to patients visiting government healthcare institutions (introduced on 2nd October 2011), and
 - **Free Tests:** To provide free tests (introduced on 7th April 2013).
- For the successful *implementation* of the same, **Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Limited (RMSCL)** was incorporated as a Public Limited Company.
- Since 2011, it has benefitted around 67 crore patients, and a record number of 712 medicines are covered under it.
- National Health Mission under its ***Free Drug Service Initiative***, started giving rankings to the states, in order to encourage them to provide free drugs to their patients coming to public health facilities.
- The performance of the states was assessed by NHM on the basis of 10 parameters. A few of them are,
 - The stock of drugs,
 - Value of drugs about to expire, and
 - Effective compliance with the *Drugs and Vaccine Distribution Management System (DVDMS)*, etc.
- The main **aim** of this initiative was ***to reduce out of pocket expenditure*** of patients suffering from cancer, heart and kidney-related diseases, and other severe ailments.
- This initiative of NHM is implemented by the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** in order to support the states.

Way Forward

- Rewarding the states will act as a catalyst for ensuring the inclusive accessibility and affordability of health care services to the most downtrodden and the poorest sections of our society.
- This will also promote the spirit of co-operative and competitive federalism, whereby other states can take the lead and follow similar successful initiatives.

Source: IE