

WOMEN HYGIENE DRIVE

WHAC/34/2018-19

Bhondsi , Gurugram

December 11, 2018



Oxygen & Sahyog Foundation with an aim to create awareness about **menstrual health** and provide access to affordable sanitary pads to girls & women from villages and underprivileged communities organized its next camp at Govt Girls Hr. Sec School, Bhondsi on December 11th, 2018. The CSR team with school authorities support tried to create a behavioral change from a biological, sociological, gender-related, and rights perspective. After a quick ice-breaking session, team asked the girls gathered about their experiences of having periods. Many said periods had become

a part of their lives so they just dealt with them, but one said that she could not wait for old age to get rid of them. Following this, the girls were given all the appropriate information about periods and the transformation of a woman's body during puberty. The focus was on menstrual management, puberty and associated physical, emotional and behavioral changes. Notions and fallacies surrounding the discharge of blood were clarified. It was explained to the girls that the blood gets passed out of the body when the egg isn't fertilized in the uterus. Close to 80 percent of girls were using old rags instead of proper menstrual products, leaving them prone to infections. Team realized that majority of the women living in impoverished areas have little to no knowledge about menstrual hygiene owing to lack of access to facilities. Even the privileged shy away from a discussion on menstrual health, therefore it is important to educate all girls about their periods so that they can manage them better. During the session a packet of Sanitary pads was provided to these girls to give them practice of a product that they may not be aware of, hence opening more options for them. A free monthly supply of pads is not sustainable but education on the matter



definitely is. In addition, lack of knowledge, myths and rituals around menstrual health, and improper disposal of sanitary pads are adding to the issue observed by the team. Knowing that many girls use cloth rather than sanitary towels due to cost, we didn't discourage the practice. We advised the girls to wash the cloth they use properly, dry it under direct sunlight and iron it before the next use to make sure that it doesn't breed any infections. During our sessions, we teach healthy management of period blood and remove the aspect of shame from the natural phenomenon," This enables girls and women to feel more confident about their bodies during menstruation and reduces

the chances of missing out on school days and work. Of course, there are other reasons as well. Lack of clean water and proper washrooms in schools also become one of the major reasons why girls miss school during their period. Oxigen & Sahyog Foundation team has reached many and is trying to reach many more women & girls in the rural & Semi urban areas and hope to target the entire country to let all women know that periods are natural and women can be empowered if they are given information about the autonomy of their body.

Seema Khurana
Lead & CSR Activist

