



WOMEN HYGIENE DRIVE

WHAC/10 /2019-20

V.P Singh Camp, Badarpur

June 6th, 2019

In the run-up to the World Menstrual Health and Hygiene Day on May 28, Oxigen & Sahyog Foundation, in collaboration with the local Ngos working at slums of Delhi organizes awareness meetings in places where women and Adolescent girls are more in number.

On Thursday June 6th, 2019 an awareness session was organized at V.P Singh Camp in Badarpur 31 women and 79 adolescent girls attended the session which was meant to educate them about the need to maintain menstrual hygiene.



Ms. Seema Khurana CSR Lead & Activist said women were known to neglect their health. "It is imperative to observe extreme hygienic conditions during menstruation,"

Interaction Session showed, majority of girls have no knowledge of menstruation before their first period, and 3 out of every 4 of girls think that menstruation is a disease!



When we began working within urban slums, understanding the hardships faced by the innocent girls during their periods. "It is the fundamental human right of every adolescent girl to have access to products that ensure proper menstrual hygiene irrespective of the social structure she comes from. We need to ensure that all girls get their 'menstruation rights' and live their life freely without any stigma associated with it."- said

Ms. Sudesh, Centre head Nipun. Menstruation is a natural process and let us make sure that it is considered one, and not treat it like a calamity.



During the session we observed Women themselves would call them “difficult days”, “tough days”, “those days” instead of saying the word ‘periods’. This has led to knowledge gaps among adolescent girls as well as boys. Young girls have a lack of knowledge about something that will be a part of their lives for almost another four decades. ‘Why?’. Because most women feel that it is embarrassing to talk about menstruation

with their daughters. When there is a lack of knowledge among girls and shame among women themselves, how will boys be engaged in a conversation to learn about menstruation and MHM?

Curriculum that Oxigen & Sahyog foundation openly discusses in its workshops on Menstrual Hygiene Management on that day is

- 1) Address knowledge gaps on MHM – including myths/misconceptions BOTH with girls and boys
- 2) Hygienic management of menstruation and disposal
- 3) Access to menstrual materials and the available choice of menstrual absorbents

Provision of appropriate WASH amenities with privacy

- 4) Minimizing menstrual discomfort and pain
- 5) MHM is Menstrual Hygiene Management, which basically, is the way a woman should manage her menstrual hygiene.
- 6) Need to exercise care while using and discarding sanitary pads.

The session further discussed that this process is not limited to these girls alone. The process involves all of us, and we need to be a part of it in one way or the other. Menstrual Hygiene Management involves taking care of the frequency of changing the products that you are using, better washing facilities and curbing of menstrual pain if it arises. Poor menstrual hygiene makes girls more prone to diseases, and the odour of the menstrual flow is quite often known to get women stigmatised in classrooms and community gatherings. The best way to have proper management in place for menstrual hygiene is to provide better facilities for washing, easy accessibility of menstrual products and availability as well as affordability of medicines to curb the pain.

Few Concerns raised at the session were

- 1) Since disposable hygiene products are a month-to-month expense that many females just cannot afford.
- 2) Though government schools in Delhi, have now stepped up their sanitary supplies, menstrual education to debunk myths and useless social norms, at the level of senior secondary schools is still a far cry.
- 3) Availability of menstrual products is one thing, knowledge about body positivity and period

positivity, another was found that mothers are the main source of #menstrual hygiene information and only about 10% get information from teachers. Are teachers uncomfortable? Do they lack good tools? And are students uncomfortable to approach their teachers? These are questions that need deep sustainable solutions.

Consequences of ignoring the issue

Using code words is just not going to cut it. There is a need to talk about this issue openly, and it should be done right now.



At Oxigen it is our aim to work towards awareness about Menstrual Hygiene forms a crucial link to not have girls grow and imbibe the culture of shame around periods. We want to educate millions of girls who do not have as much resources and use 'World Menstrual Hygiene Day' as a platform to further the grassroots work for more and more girls regarding menstruation, the importance of menstrual hygiene and how to manage themselves during the periods.

Seema Khurana
CSR Lead & Activist