



WOMEN HYGIENE DRIVE

WHAC/40/2019-2020

Budh Vihar Resettlement Colony

January 22nd, 2020

Menstruation is a natural, normal biological process experienced by all adolescent girls and women, yet it is not spoken about openly causing unnecessary embarrassment and shame. India's 113 million adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable at the onset of menarche. At this time they need a safe environment that offers protection and guidance to ensure their basic health, well-being and educational opportunity is realized. Lack of a separate and usable girl's toilet in schools and a toilet at home leaves adolescent girls and women to face the indignity of open defecation. However, safe and effective menstrual hygiene management, or 'MHM' is a trigger for better and stronger development for adolescent girls and women.

It is important for everyone to understand what menstruation is, and how simple management interventions along with positive attitudes can make a lasting difference to the lives of every adolescent girl and woman. To equip the girls & women with the adequate knowledge about the subject, Oxigen and Sahyog Foundation organized a workshop at Budh Vihar slum on January 22nd, 2020. The session made 90 participants understand that Adolescence describes the transitional period between childhood and adulthood. Girls aged 10 to 19 are adolescents. And menstruation is a biological process in a woman where each month blood and other material is discharged from the lining of the uterus. Menstruation occurs from the onset of puberty until the menopause, except during pregnancy followed by MHM that is (i) articulation, awareness, information and confidence to manage menstruation with safety and dignity using safe hygienic materials together with ii) adequate water and agents and spaces for washing and bathing with soap and iii) disposal of used menstrual absorbents with privacy and dignity

We also discussed that while only adolescent girls and women menstruate, everyone in society needs to have a basic understanding of it. Especially 1) Head teachers, teachers and school staff because they have a vital role in sensitizing boys and girls, inculcating skills and ensuring they have access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. An early and appropriate intervention by a teacher can make the difference between an adolescent girl staying in school or dropping out at the onset of menarche 2) Girls and women because they spend on average 3000 days of their lives menstruating.3) Men and boys because they need to positively support their sisters, daughters, wives, aunts and mothers.4)Community leaders, civil society and self-help groups because they act as role models and help society to challenge prejudice and discrimination towards menstruating adolescent girls and women. We further highlighted that Managing menstruation in a hygienic way involves not only access to basic sanitation facilities, soap and water but also to so-called menstrual absorbents. Every adolescent girl and woman should use menstrual absorbents based on informed choice. Indian adolescent girls and women use different

menstrual absorbents, not all of which are 'hygienic', however no girl should face ridicule or shame in this situation. Rather efforts should be made to increase access to hygienic options.

All the Participants very interestingly attended the session and in between the session keep raising their hands to ask questions and clear their doubts. Before we wind up the session we discussed another important point related to Menstruations and that is Safe disposal of used sanitary napkin or Cloth, **Safe disposal** means ensuring that the process of destruction of used and soiled materials is done without human contact and with minimal environmental pollution. **Unsafe disposal**-throwing used cloth into ponds, rivers, or in the fields exposes others in the area to decaying material and should be avoided. **Offsite disposal** can be organized with the communal or town solid waste collection and management system. If a hospital with a safe and treatment unit for hazardous waste is nearby, this might be a best solution to explore. However, this is unfortunately not a viable option for many rural schools, and transport will be a logistical and financial challenge. **An option for on-site disposal includes** disposal deep burial, composting, pit burning and incineration. **Burning in open heap should be totally avoided. If burning is the only option, a deep pit should be used.**

The session came to an end with a Thanks Note from the Project head of NGO Dhuri, where she not only appalled the efforts of Oxigen Management and the team working on ground to this possible , she also added that Printed and verbal information about menstruation and menstrual hygiene management is crucial for girls Without it the majority face adolescence with no prior knowledge of



what is happening to their bodies and why. Working with girls will assist them to feel more confident about managing their menstruation privately and effectively in school and at home Teachers should take in to account the learning needs of different girls and treat the needs of each sensitively. While working with girls it will be important to understand the number of menstruating girls and the number of girls It is also advised to build a trust and rapport over time and to repeat sessions

regularly so that girls feel comfortable to talk about menstruation.

Seema Khurana
CSR Lead & Activist

