

WOMEN HYGIENE DRIVE

WHAC/22/2019-20

Fena Tigri Slum, Delhi

August 21st, 2019

New Delhi: “It is shock, shame and lack of awareness that leads to one fourth of girls in India to quit schools when they start menstruating. It is sheer humiliation that the world’s largest democracy that is moving towards modernity is facing such primitive and trivial social issues which are still unattended.

A 2014 report titled ‘Spot On!’ by a non-governmental organization, noted that almost 23 million girls in India drop out of school annually, because of lack of menstrual hygiene management facilities and awareness about periods.

The report further suggests that the girls, who don’t drop out, usually miss up to 5 days of school every month. Oxigen & Sahyog foundation wants to change this. Normalizing periods among young girls and fighting social taboos and breaking through stigmas – they’re doing this by simply organizing awareness sessions in Schools, vocational institution and rural /urban communities talking about menstruation – the topic our society hesitates to bring up.



Realizing that lack of knowledge leads girls to believe in the century old dos and don’ts and poor menstrual hygiene management resulting in serious health issues in some cases Oxigen & Sahyog foundation CSR team organized a session at Fena Vocational training center at a Tigri village, Delhi on August 21,2019. Team opened the session with a statement

“If you don’t bleed, you don’t breed:” followed by science behind menstruation and do’s and don’ts to take care off.

Adding to this we discussed that People think there's only one thing to know about period – it starts bleeding so use a pad. But there are so many more things attached with it, they should know how much bleeding is normal or abnormal, how many days bleeding or how to count the cycles. Boys should also know why a girl may not be feeling her best or if a skirt is stained, it's not a funny thing to make jokes about. The girls were explained that menstruation is not a disease and they need not be ashamed of it



By focusing on menstrual health education, Team tried to enable women and girls to take control of their bodies in safe, healthy and effective ways as every woman deserves the right to manage their bodies hygienically and with dignity. Menstruation is a natural occurrence that ought never to cause shame or hinder opportunity, she says.

Girls shared that they face a lot of discrimination at home as compared to their brothers. Just like many other girls growing up in a conservative household in India, they never dared to ask their family, teachers and siblings about the reason for this discrimination.

I feel so overwhelmed by the positive reactions I received specially from young girls. We expect girls to positively expect and respect periods but what is their source of information? No one teaches them about periods not their moms or sisters. If they're taught properly, they'll be more sensitive towards it. While closing the session project coordinator from Fena urged the girls to be positive and said that "The work done by Oxigen CSR team is indeed outstanding. There was a need at this level to sensitize young girls and boys. Safety of girls is the foremost need of the hour and our girls needed a platform for sharing their experiences and queries, which has been fulfilled by the team. Hopefully, some taboos were also removed for good during this interaction".

Seema Khurana
CSR Lead & Activist