

WOMEN HYGIENE DRIVE

WHAC/44/2019-2020

Haiderpur Slum

February 20th, 2020

Improving Menstrual Health and Hygiene

Oxygen & Sahyog foundation with its commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged adolescent girls and Women in India organized an awareness session at Haiderpur MCD Primary school with 75 women participants from Haiderpur slum & resettlement colony with a believe that educating adolescent girls & Women from poor communities allows them to thrive, to have greater choice in their life and a louder voice in their community. This leads to healthier, more prosperous and more stable families, communities and nations.



The Session was organized with the help of Volunteers from NIPUN NGO, As the Oxygen CSR reach the classroom all the participants welcomed them with the bright eyes and hoping to learn more about a women anatomy as the same was told to them while inviting them to the session. CSR Activist from Oxygen after greeting them to the session defined MHM and briefed them with the challenges of period as 70% of mothers consider menstruation 'dirty', perpetuating a culture of shame and ignorance still many of menstruating women in India use home-grown alternatives like old fabric, rags, and plastic. 63 million adolescent girls live in homes without toilet facilities Girls are typically absent from the school due to menstruation, which is the second major reason, after household work, for girls to miss school 70% increase in incidence of reproductive tract infections owing to poor



menstrual hygiene. Following this the Three key dimensions contribute to the issue: **Lack of awareness** The culture of silence around menstruation in India compounded by taboos that often restrict them from touching food, or even bathing during their period. Their mothers, who can ideally guide them, are typically ignorant of hygienic practices themselves or cannot recognize the signs of menstruation related illnesses such as anemia.

Lack of material Most girls and women use home-based or other readily available and often unsanitary materials to manage menstruation. **Lack of facilities** Two out of five schools do not have separate toilets for girls. Limited access to safe, functional toilets at home forces girls to manage

their periods in ways that compromise their safety and health. Very often with no toilets in school, they simply do not attend school.

Session further discussed with the participants another important angle of MHM , While the issue may seem complex and multi-faceted, evidence suggests that the responses are fundamentally simple and if implemented well will result in lasting change. Team proposes that the following four areas be prioritized: Offer alternatives to sanitary napkins Promote health-seeking behavior A well-informed mother is better equipped to teach her daughter hygienic menstrual practices, provide her with adequate nutrition, and prioritize menstrual support in the household budget. Training teachers to discuss menstruation, providing functional toilets, and creating platforms for peer support is critical to reducing menstruation related fear and absenteeism amongst adolescent girls post-puberty; this also enables girls to demand sanitation at home. Cotton cloth, hygienically used, has been declared as an acceptable sanitary material by leading international agencies such as UNICEF. To give all the Participants a positivity to the topic ,we shared with them that over 90% of menstrual problems are preventable if treated at an early stage. Educating girls on what constitutes a normal or abnormal period and when they should seek medical help while simultaneously training medical staff to provide relevant support will ensure improved health outcomes.



The Session came to an end with the words that “Most of the health problems caused by poor MHM are preventable. However, owing to their widespread and frequent occurrence, young girls and women perceive menstrual problems as a regular part of the menstruation process. They often overlook symptoms of major infections which left unaddressed could significantly affect their reproductive health, pregnancy and even the health of their children”. **So be careful!! Take care and Stay healthy!!**

Seema Khurana
CSR Lead & Activist