

WOMEN HYGIENE DRIVE

WHAC/17 /2019-20

JJ Cluster, Noida63

July 24th, 2019



Pooja Kumari, a class VIII student, was at school when she reached menarche. Scared and ashamed of the stain in her uniform, she informed the teacher and ran home. “No one had told me what to do in such a situation. I was scared that the boys would see the stain and laugh at me. I had seen the boys laughing at another girl when she got her period while at school,” she said

A health initiative (Women Hygiene awareness camp-WHAC) by Oxygen & Sahyog Foundation under CSR is creating awareness among adolescent girls in rural & Semi urban villages and slums about reproductive health in general, and about menstruation and menstrual hygiene in particular, so that the girls do not shy away from discussing their problems.

A 45 -year old women Ms. Mollie from Noida Recognized a slum near her society and to help these slum dwellers and started an 'Adolescence Education Program' and pre nursery classes at the Slum, She came to know about Oxygen CSR WHAC and approached us to conduct session with adolescent girls and Women on issues of reproductive health, nutrition and distribute sanitary pads and counsels adolescents on different life skills. Team Happily agreed and as per scheduled plan reached JJ Cluster of Noida 62 at 11 am on July 24,2019.





Ms. Mollie said that she found it difficult to get the adolescent girls to talk about their menstruation-related issues because of cultural factors and the shame associated with menstruation. “Awareness about menstruation among girls in rural schools helps them discuss their problems without inhibitions”

Over the sessions with around 50 Slum women and 25 adolescent girls’s team discussed adolescent and reproductive health with the group through storytelling, experience sharing and interactive games. They discussed about the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence, importance of nutrition, anemia, shame associated with menstruation and early marriage, to name a few. 14-year old Sunita said that she felt better after hearing the story of Meena (a character in the adolescent health module) during the session. Like her, she also got her first period when she was at school. “ I have learnt many things and will now follow them”.

One of the components of this session was training volunteers from the slum .Two girls of around 18-20 years were selected by the Oxigen CSR team, they belong to the community, they were trained in different aspects of health and nutrition, ranging from immunization to adolescent health. They in turn will train their peers, promoting individual and collective action for better health and nutrition. Women & girls learn about the importance of nutrition for better menstrual health “We liked the idea a lot, because the messages on adolescent health and nutrition can reach each household through two routes: through the mother in Mahila mandal meetings, and the daughter through school”

At the heart of such changes at the household level is better awareness, combined with a questioning of the shyness and shame associated with menstruation.

Ms Mollie after the session said that she is very sure that this meeting will help the girls and women open up and feel less scared and ashamed to talk about their periods. “Earlier, some of them wouldn’t even tell their parents about their periods, but now they will talk at least to their mothers,”

After the session few girls came forward to discuss more as they were waiting for the older women's to go back. One of them Neha, told me that "it is important to dry the menstrual cloth in the sun, so that all the germs are killed completely and we don't fall sick. I didn't know this earlier. Now i will start drying our clothes in a sunny part of our backyard."

With this hope that after this awareness session ,adolescent girls as well as the older women will be shedding their fear and shame associated with menstruation, we took leave .

Seema Khurana
CSR Lead & Activist