

## WOMEN HYGIENE DRIVE

**WHAC/23/2019-20**

**Asagarpur Village, Noida**

**September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019**



Menstrual hygiene is still a taboo subject to discuss and talk about in Indian society. Oxigen & Sahyog foundation has been actively working in this area through different initiatives linked with women-empowerment and awareness about their rights. It is in this context awareness sessions are organized on regular basis with a key aim to spread the word about the unit in different areas and to make people aware how a cheaper solution can protect women from several diseases and infections. One such awareness session was conducted on September 5th, 2019 in village Asagarpur, Noida, where a girl child education project and a vocational training center of Pure India trust is located.

The session emphasized on the importance of following personal hygiene practices especially during the menstrual periods. More than 70 women participated in the session. Team tried to convince the Village about MHM and said that, “unhygienic practices in personal hygiene especially during menstrual periods can result into severe health problems ranging from internal allergies and infections to infertility and cervical cancer in extreme cases”.

There were talks on how and why the females menstruate. Women shared the kind of problems they face during periods and also the kind of myths and practices that are prevalent in their communities. There are beliefs like menstruating women should not get involved in 'Puja' or related activities and should not go to temple otherwise they will be cursed. They shared that the elder women in the family do not allow them to work in the kitchen, some said they are not supposed to touch pickles, water pitcher etc. Some even have the practice of abstaining from bathing and will have proper bath including washing of their hair after third day of the periods are over. They also told that in their villages the women have to stay in a separate room during that period.

Although we cannot totally reject the practices these families are following for last so many generations, still we tried to discuss few facts to make them understand that most of these were either followed out of ignorance or in some cases it was a way to provide rest to women for a few days from their routine of household chores. Another telling fact that came forward was the crude ways of managing menstrual blood flow.

They were told about the importance of using undergarments made of cotton fabric, drying them in sunlight and changing sanitary napkins regularly during periods. Some of the myths like not eating rice, milk etc. during the periods were also discussed.

During the session we also tried to make teenagers understand about the female reproductive organs through model. And their queries ranging from irregularity of periods to hormonal changes were addressed.

Some of the girls complained of severe back and stomach pain. At times, the pain is so severe that they abstain from attending school. They were advised not to self medicate themselves in such cases as medicines like Aspirin might be very harmful as they accelerate blood loss. They should also maintain their regular physical routine as unnecessary resting is generally not helpful in pain management.

Most of the participants found the session very informative and useful. The women and girls were introduced to Sanitary Napkins. Everyone was informed how these napkins are being manufactured without using any chemical and are one of the best that are available in the market.

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