

WOMEN HYGIENE DRIVE

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Shyam Vihar, Rohini

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Sahyog Foundation with the support of Adharshila foundation organized an awareness session at Chilla Khaddar Village area Machli ka gadda with the community women titled "Be Period Positive". The session was attended by 45 participants along with 2 staff members of Adharshila foundation with a majority of middle aged females (25- 50yrs). All these participants were migrants and were doing farming and fishing for living. Most of the women accompany their husbands in farming and selling and few of them are also working in houses as maids and helpers to support their families financially. They seemingly lacked in health education and basic amenities such as toiletries and drinking water. Today's session was aimed at dissemination of scientific information over the hocused information the participants had regarding the sensitive subject of "Menstrual Hygiene Management".



The session started with the speaker talking about menarche (occurrence of first menstrual period in the female adolescent) and how it is important to impart right information prior to menarche in young females. Speaker also emphasized on the fact that the poor awareness levels and the improper knowledge regarding the physiology of female body and menstruation leads to most commonly believed myths and misconceptions. One of the most prevalent myth women have about periods is that it is something bad and filthy happening to them and that they are contaminated, dirty, and impure. These myths adversely affect the psychological and physiological wellbeing of the individual and also the socio-economic participation of the women and girls in our society. Speaker added that due to illiteracy and lack of proper knowledge and information, lots of myths and misconception related to menstruation are deeply rooted in our society and the shyness to discuss or seek information on this subject is only adding fuel to the spread of misinformation.



This session focused on breaking these illusions and myths by sharing correct scientific information. The speaker also talked about how to maintain proper hygiene during the periods. Speaker shared the concept of 5P with the participants. First P stands for Product, here the speaker talked about the importance of using the safe and comfortable product during the periods, highlighting the use of sanitary pads over the

traditional method of using a cloth to prevent the risk of infections. The second P stands for Palms i.e washing our palms (hands) before and after the use of sanitary pads to maintain a healthy cycle avoiding all risks. The third P stands for Pain, in this the speaker explained the various methods in which the period pain and menstrual cramps can be lessened and handled. Some of these methods were doing yoga asana , list of benefiting food items and other home based remedies. The fourth P stands for Paper, in this the speaker talked about the disposal of these used sanitary pads. Speaker explained them how it is equally important to dispose the sanitary pads for a healthy surrounding. The last P stands for Period between Period, in this the speaker talked about the importance of maintaining good and healthy diet and also to do some exercise or physical activities to remain healthy between and during the periods. After talking about these topics speaker held an open questioning session with participants and cleared their doubts . At the end of the session a quick poll for the usage of pads if made available to them to which a majority of participants responded positively.

Observations-

The participants were very hesitant at the beginning of the session but slowly started to open up and also asked number of questions and were also actively responding throughout the end.

The participants were eager to know more about the topics and were showing positive attitude throughout.

Few participants shared their experiences of using cloth over other options as they find it more comfortable and easily available. They also stated that not having any strong financial condition and unavailability of any pads is one of the reasons why they don't usually use sanitary pads. The participants also shared their disposable methods which were very unhygienic and showed how much they needed information regarding this subject. Young participants also shared that they get sanitary pads from their schools and remedial centre for free but due to lockdown and closed schools they are reluctant to use cloth. Few participants also shared their other problems like unavailability of tuition teacher in the community for past few days.



Seema Khurana

CSR Lead & Activist