

## WOMEN HYGIENE DRIVE

WHAC/31/2020-2021

Bhaktavarpur village, G. Noida

February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021



On February 19, 2021 afternoon as I walked into the Jahangir Puri slum with the young girl from slum who came to escort me to the location in between I saw a female asking her young daughter around 7 years to go and bring a bucket full of water from the community tap as they do not have a water connection at individual house. As the girl went towards the tap, I heard the mother saying “ Beti kis liye paida ki hi , kuch kam tu karenge .” I was shocked and asked the young girl escorting me about the mother daughter relation in the community. She told me that discussion in between a mother

and daughter regarding menstruation do not usually happen. This limits the understanding of young women about something they have to live with. “When a mother learns that her daughter is having her first menstrual cycle, she gives her a cloth to manage it on her own,”.

Oxygen Sahyog Foundation CSR speaker through their session, initiate and guide such conversations. During the awareness session at slum with more than 70 girls & women participants( 13-45 years) we covered a wide range of topics, from puberty and the biology of menstruation to nutrition, the use of absorbents, hygienic behavior, myths and misconceptions and the need to be open about what is and always has been a natural body function for women.

‘Counselling session’ in MHM was an eye-opener for many of the girl’s participants at the session as they understood the process of menstruation and the trouble including the reason they goes through when it hits. “It is now my mission to educate other females in my community,” say Sonia a young motivator from the community.



Providing access to clean absorbents for safe and hygienic menstrual management is a further component in the MHM program. This was done by setting up supply chains through local entrepreneur identification. Then there was a skills training for women to stitch menstrual pads using safe, sustainable and easily available material. These reusable cloth pads can be prepared and sold by women entrepreneurs and retail outlets.

“With livelihood skills training that ties in with the program’s objectives, we are able to help women become change agents,”

added by me. While considerable ground has been covered, a lot more needs to be done to alter the thinking around menstruation in households across India.

No one asked any questions during the gathering but as we all dispersed so many girls came to have a one to one discussion with doubts and experiences.

“I have benefitted hugely by understanding the highs and lows of our reproductive cycles,” she says. “Now I know that periods are not a curse of God.” Said Ankita a 16 years girl from the community.



**Seema Khurana**  
**CSR Lead & Activist**