



सत्यमेव जयते

Government of Maharashtra

Success Stories of Menstrual Hygiene Management in Maharashtra

Celebrating MH Week 2021 with

State Council of Educational Research and Training, Maharashtra

and partners of

Maharashtra Urban WASH-ES Coalition



राज्य शैक्षणिक संशोधन
व प्रशिक्षण परिषद, महाराष्ट्र





Partners

- ✦ *Government of Maharashtra*
- ✦ *UNICEF Maharashtra*
- ✦ *Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies of All India Institute of Local Self Government, Mumbai*
- ✦ *Citizens Association for Child Rights, Mumbai*
- ✦ *Red Is The New Green (RING Sustainable Development Foundation), Mumbai*

As part of

Maharashtra Urban WASH and Environmental Sanitation Coalition–

A joint initiative by UNICEF Maharashtra and RCUES of AILSG Mumbai

Table of Content

- 1) *Breaking the stigma through community participation and access to Menstrual Hygiene facilities.*
District : Sindhudurg
- 2) *Creating a dialogue through strategic planning and participatory approach for MHM.*
District : Ratnagiri
- 3) *Initiative by male teachers to create awareness on menstruation.*
District : Kolhapur
- 4) *Access to sanitation facilities in schools through MHM friendly toilets.*
District : Aurangabad
- 5) *Art and Literature to spread awareness among tribals about MHM.*
District : Dhule
- 6) *Reaching out to flood victims and adolescent girls to create awareness about MHM.*
District : Sangli
- 7) *Red Dot: a two-act play and live session on Facebook to create awareness about MHM.*
District : Sangli
- 8) *Mother – daughter together creating awareness about MHM.*
District : Pune
- 9) *Puppetry for differently abled students & convergence of organizations for MHM awareness.*
District : Amravati
- 10) *MHM sessions in Juvenile home for awareness among detained girls*
District : Ratnagiri
- 11) *Awareness on All India Radio about MHM, belief and disbelief*
District : Dhule
- 12) *Awareness sessions on MHM across Maharashtra*
District : All districts of Maharashtra

Keynote



Menstruation is one of the many changes experienced by adolescent girls during the growth years. But even today, the attitude towards menstruation, superstitions, and misconceptions about it are causing many problems for girls to live a comfortable life.

For a healthy and happy life, it is necessary to guide the girls about menstrual hygiene management so that diet, healthy habits as well as physical and mental needs are taken care of by the family and society. Lack of complete knowledge on this subject is affecting the health of girls, their daily life as well as school attendance. It is very important to create awareness about this issue. For this, training sessions and workshops were conducted in 2019 for all the districts in the state with the help of UNICEF, Maharashtra. Since then, the initiatives taken in several schools, have been remarkable and inspiring.

On the occasion of Menstrual Hygiene week, the ongoing work in the State of Maharashtra is presented through this booklet. It is believed that this book will be inspirational in strengthening menstrual hygiene management in schools and remote areas of Maharashtra. Congratulations to Maharashtra Urban WASH and Environmental Sanitation Coalition (MAHA-UWES-C) at Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies of All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai, UNICEF, Maharashtra, and all master trainers across Maharashtra for the ongoing efforts to bring in behavioural change regarding menstrual hygiene management.

Ms. Vandana Krishna (I.A.S.)

Additional Chief Secretary, School Education and Sports Department under Government of Maharashtra

Preface



Menstruation is a natural process that starts with gradual physical changes in a girl during adolescence. However, there exists a misconception in society about menstruation due to a lack of scientific knowledge as well as hesitation and shame in speaking about this subject openly; leading to far-reaching adverse effects on the future of girls.

Social awareness is one of the key tools to overcome the alarming situation of menstrual hygiene management. The booklet, published jointly by the Department of School Education and Sports, State Council for Educational Research and Training, Maharashtra, with UNICEF, Maharashtra, and other organizations, outlines the ongoing menstrual hygiene management work across the state.

The success stories in this booklet will be an inspiration to all master trainers for taking up innovative initiatives for MHM awareness. Such initiatives will ensure a bright future for the girls. Congratulations to all the contributors who worked for the creation of this booklet.

Mr. Vishal Solanki (I.A.S.)
Commissioner (Education), Pune, Maharashtra

Foreword



Menstruation is one of the important aspect of puberty in girls. The fact that regular menstrual cycles is a sign of healthy women is undermined by the societal myths and taboos. In many parts of Maharashtra menstruators are restricted from entering holy places, school and sometimes house as well. Disbelief and superstitions about menstruation and menstruators, and a lack of awareness about menstrual hygiene management has taken a toll on health of many young adolescent girls of Maharashtra.

The Menstrual Hygiene Day is celebrated worldwide on 28th May every year to break taboos surrounding menstruation and raise awareness about good menstrual hygiene management practices. In the Menstrual Hygiene Week 2021, UNICEF, Maharashtra with Department of Education and Sports under Government of Maharashtra, and its partner organizations had undertaken multiple activities. The week long activities focused on menstruation and eradicating period stigma by creating a dialogue with multiple stakeholders working in urban sector. The activities also covered documenting good practices undertaken in Maharashtra, creating awareness across community members through local level engagement, social media, and print media.

The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Department of Education and Sports, Government of Maharashtra along with UNICEF, Maharashtra have been contributing towards educating men and women across Maharashtra to break the stigma. The main aim of awareness campaigns is to develop scientific understanding and create dialogue in the society about menstruation. In Maharashtra, awareness campaigns are conducted by identified master trainers from schools in each district. The sessions conducted involve discussion and guidance on various aspects of menstruation like physical and mental health during periods, diet for adolescent girls, good habits during menstruation, and menstrual hygiene management.

Through this book I congratulate all master trainers and volunteers that are helping and guiding menstruators to live happy and healthy life. I would also like to acknowledge the team of UNICEF, Maharashtra, Department of Education and Sports under Government of Maharashtra and Maharashtra Urban WASH and Environmental Sanitation Coalition (MAHA-UWES-C) at Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies of All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai, in compilation of this book. Their efforts shall help open up a dialogue and build a healthy atmosphere for menstruators.

Ms. Rajeshwari Chandrasekar

Chief of Field Office, UNICEF, Maharashtra

Message



Good health and education are important aspects of an enduring lifestyle. Changes experienced during the growth years in adolescents have a significant impact on their mental health. Puberty in girls begins earlier than the physical changes are visible. Menstruation is one of the major changes experienced by girls during puberty. Early education through discussions and conversations about puberty can help the girls accept these changes effortlessly.

Academic institutions are of prime importance to bring in this education as well as social awareness. Department of Education and Sports under Government of Maharashtra (GoM) has thus welcomed the celebration of Menstrual Hygiene week thereby initiating a dialogue and acknowledging efforts already undertaken in the state to bring in social change. Awareness campaigns on menstruation and menstrual hygiene management are conducted in primary schools and tribal areas of Maharashtra with the joint effort of Department of Education and Sports under GoM and UNICEF, Maharashtra.

Educating adolescents and their parents about the biological process of menstruation, use of sanitary products, 'Do's and Don'ts' for a healthy life and parent's role in providing healthy living and support to their child has helped improve overall health of women. This book highlights innovative ways adopted by master trainers to overcome hurdles faced in different geographical and social settings of Maharashtra while conducting awareness campaigns.

As an applaud to their contribution in improving menstrual hygiene, Department of Education and Sports under GoM with UNICEF Maharashtra and Maharashtra Urban WASH and Environmental Sanitation Coalition (MAHA-UWES-C) at Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies of All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai have recognized noteworthy success stories in menstrual hygiene management. These success stories shall inspire people to break the stigma and build a better world for menstruators to live in.

Dr. Dinakar Temkar

Director, School Education and Sports Department under Government of Maharashtra

Message



The physical and mental changes experienced by adolescent boys and girls are often discussed, unlike menstruation. The stigma around menstruation has led to unjust practices at school, community places, holy places as well as home. A girl seeks sensible companions to cope up with the emotional turmoil experienced during menstruation. This situation can definitely improve if school girls are equipped with scientific knowledge and appropriate support.

In 2019, the Equity Department under the State Council for Educational Research and Training in collaboration with UNICEF, Maharashtra undertook training sessions for 5 teachers from each district on menstrual hygiene management. This program was further extended to all other teachers and girls in the district. Awareness sessions were conducted remotely even during COVID – 19 pandemic. The cooperation of the principals of all the District Institutes for Education and Training (DIET) in this work is particularly noteworthy.

The success stories of contributions by teachers in the state regarding menstrual hygiene management are compiled in this book. Inspired by these stories, the main objective is to make efforts at all levels of society to effectively spread the subject to all girls. We are delighted to bring this book to you in collaboration with UNICEF, Maharashtra and other organizations.

Dr. Kamaladevi Awate,
*Deputy Director, Department of Equity,
at State Council for Educational Research and
Training, Pune, Maharashtra*

Dr. Vilas Patil,
*Joint Director,
State Council for Educational Research
and Training, Pune, Maharashtra*

Acknowledgement



Menstruation is a natural biological function experienced by half of the population, yet it is still often stigmatized in our society today. Lack of importance towards menstrual hygiene not only affects the physical health of menstruators but also has grave impact on their mental health. Lack of awareness and facilities has also accelerated school dropout rates of girls reaching puberty, undermining their ability to grow as individuals.

Schools are crucial and play a key role in social awareness and behavioral change. Over the past decade, various efforts have been undertaken in menstrual hygiene management in Maharashtra through State Departments and valuable contribution of non-profit organizations led by UNICEF, Maharashtra. These systematic and persistent efforts in bringing in awareness through various platforms and strategically designed programs has helped broaden the horizon for menstrual hygiene and related topics in the state.

As a part of World Menstrual Hygiene Day celebrated on 28th May every year, Maharashtra Urban WASH and Environmental Sanitation Coalition (MAHA-UWES-C) at Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies of All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai with support from Department of Education and Sports, Government of Maharashtra have developed this book on success stories on menstrual hygiene management in Maharashtra. We would like to acknowledge and appreciate the contribution of all the teachers, students and other stakeholders who have shared their efforts in spreading awareness and developing good practices on ground.

I would like to thank State Council of Educational Research and Training, Maharashtra, Department of Education and Sports, Government of Maharashtra, UNICEF, Maharashtra Red is the New Green (RING), Mumbai and Citizens Association for Child Rights (CACR), Mumbai, for their support in celebration of Menstrual Hygiene Week, 2021. I would also like to thank the team at Secretariat Maharashtra Urban WASH and Environmental Sanitation Coalition (MAHA-UWES-C) at Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies of All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai who have enthusiastically worked towards the compilation of this book. I hope these success stories will be helpful and motivational to changemakers on ground in adopting appropriate menstrual hygiene practices and establishing important dialogue between men and women, which will further be the cause of women's health and well-being.

Ms. Utkarsha Kavadi

*Director, Secretariat, Maharashtra Urban WASH and Environmental Sanitation Coalition
at RCUES of AILSG Mumbai*

About the book



Menstruation is a natural biological function in the life of every woman. Girls in the age group of 10yrs to 16yrs undergo many physical and emotional changes which need to be handled in a sensitive manner. This important phase in the life of every girl and woman is many times stigmatized. Menstruation and menstrual hygiene are often flanked by superstitious belief.

Efforts are being made at national and state level to eradicate the myths and provide safe access to toilets and menstrual hygiene facilities through programs like National Health mission and Swachh Bharat Mission. Joint action of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, State Government of Maharashtra and non-government organizations (NGOs) is instrumental in achieving people's participation in awareness campaigns especially in vulnerable areas to improve menstrual hygiene management in Maharashtra.

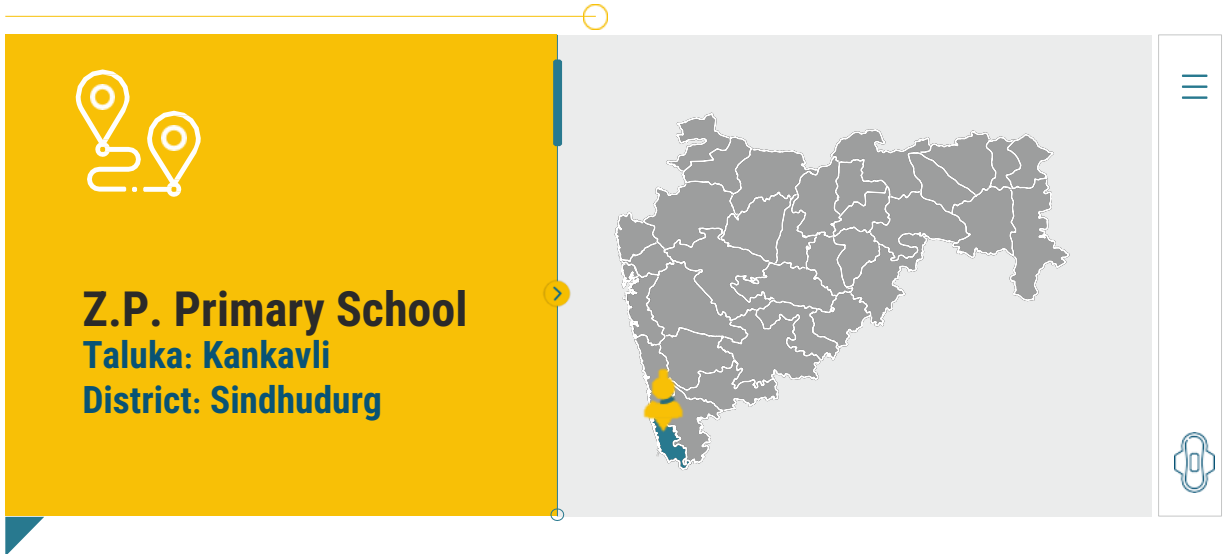
The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Department of Education and Sports, Government of Maharashtra along with UNICEF Maharashtra and other partner organizations are making an effort to improve the condition of menstruating women in urban and rural Maharashtra. Menstrual Hygiene Management trainers across Maharashtra have undertaken numerous efforts in menstrual hygiene management and have made paramount contribution in changing number of fatalities and decrease the rate of school dropouts of adolescent girls due to menstruation.

In light of the World Menstrual Hygiene Day celebrated on 28th May of every year, Maharashtra Urban WASH and Environmental Sanitation Coalition (MAHA-UWES-C) at Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies of All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai with support from UNICEF, Maharashtra and Department of Education and Sports under Government of Maharashtra and partner organizations Citizens Association for Child Rights (CACR), Mumbai and Red is the New Green (RING), Mumbai have recognized noteworthy success stories of master trainers across Maharashtra.



Breaking the stigma

through community participation and access to MH facilities



The Initiative

The menstrual hygiene management trainers in Nandgav village of Kankavli adopted an innovative way of celebrating birthdays of adolescent girls in school by gifting sanitary napkins to break the social stigma about menstruation and improve access to menstrual hygiene products. Along with this an initiative to develop changing room was undertaken to improve access to sanitation facilities.



What was achieved?

Campaigns conducted in schools has helped spread social awareness among people about menstrual hygiene which has led to behavioral change among adolescent girls. Girls have become more confident and reluctance to attend school during menstruation has reduced. Access to good hygiene facilities have helped improve physical as well as mental health. Sindhudurg district has more than 100 changing rooms formed and maintained through public participation.



Who contributed?

All changing rooms are developed with the help of the principal, teachers and students from 5th-12th standards. Other than that, District Coordinator (girl education) and gram panchayat members have contributed.

Who were impacted?

Around 2000 adolescent girls from 5th-12th standards are using these facilities.



A stigma around "menses" among the municipal school students and teachers lingered in Nandgav village of Sindhudurg district. They used to shy away from readily talking about menstruation. But the training sessions on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) for teachers encouraged them to speak about the topic candidly without any fear or humiliation. This awareness was to be brought among girls and their parents as well. Along with ignorance about MHM, lack of facilities and menstrual hygiene products were the major barriers to practice what was preached by the MHM trainers of Nandgav village.

To break the barrier among male and female members, teachers decided to celebrate birthdays of adolescent girls by gifting them sanitary napkins distinctly by the male teachers and male members of family. Even the male village committee members actively participated in the activity. Looking at the positive support, initiative to improve sanitation facilities in school was undertaken.

To improve sanitation facilities in school, idea of changing room was proposed. Initially, it seemed too ambitious to propose this in front of the school committee. However, to everyone's utter surprise, support from the higher officials was extended and a letter of invitation was sent to the parents of these students and series of parent teacher meetings were conducted. The concept of changing room in schools was thus developed and implemented through student teacher and parent participation.

A changing room was made out of an empty abandoned room or a new room whichever was easily available in school. It necessarily had a functional toilet with running water, a washbasin with handwash, a stock of sanitary pads, drinking water, a bed with bedsheet, a mirror, towel and detergent powder too. Also, the rooms are filled with posters, slogans and images giving messages about the menstrual hygiene management practices.

This in turn has developed confidence among the girls. Innovative way of celebrating birthday has helped sensitize male members of society and break the stigma. Due to regular guidance and preaching about Menstrual Hygiene Management from the master trainers, the school drop out rate of the adolescent girls has reduced remarkably. These rooms have allowed girls to attend school regularly and access better services in schools.

Smt. Smita Prakash Nalawade

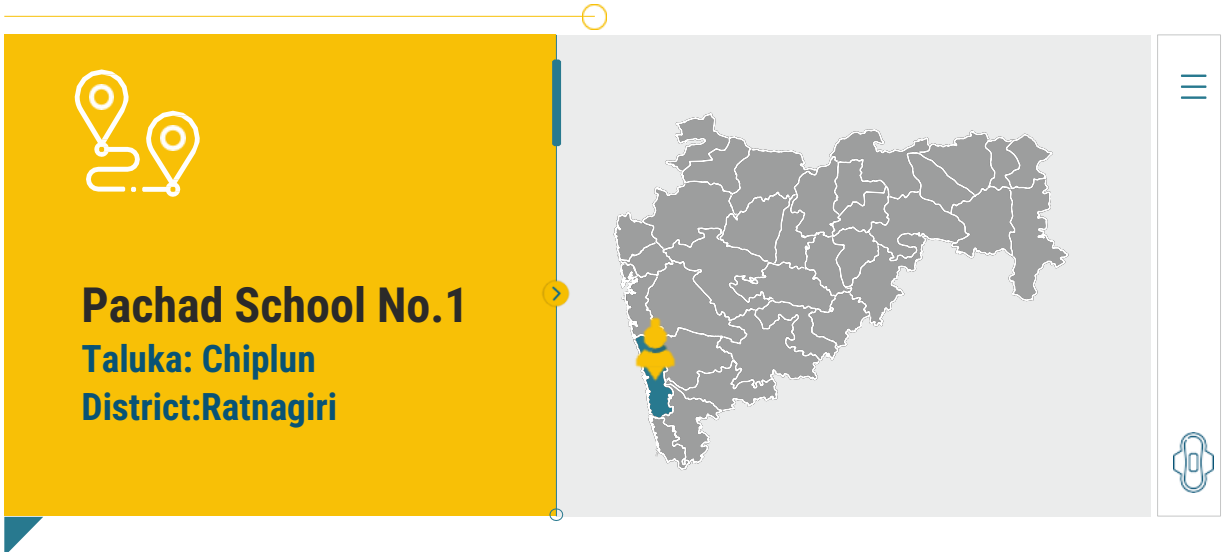
Assistant Program Officer, Samagraha Shiksha Z.P. school, Sindhudurg





Creating a dialogue

through strategic planning and participatory approach for MHM



The Initiative

MHM trainers of Pachad village realized that the communication on menstruation and menstrual hygiene management is often one way (only through volunteers). To initiate discussions and break the stigma, an action plan for activities was prepared which involved interactive awareness sessions and activities to ensure active participation from parents as well as students.



What was achieved?

The initiative has helped create a dialogue among young girls about menstrual hygiene. Commendable behavioral changes can be observed among girls and their parents. Early education to school girls has helped overcome their fear for first period.



Who contributed?

All teachers from Pachad School No. 1 were the major contributors in conducting awareness sessions and activities among students. Support from principal of Pachad School No. 1 and gram panchayat members was noteworthy. Other than this, active participation of girls from class 5th to 10th and their parents helped implement the program successfully.

Who were impacted?

The programs have helped reach adolescent school girls in Pachad and their mothers.

“

School is the primary institution which can be harnessed to spread social awareness. Department of Education and Sports, Government of Maharashtra has been conducting awareness programs on issues stigmatized by the society. One such topic is menstruation. MHM trainers from Pachad School number 1 have been actively conducting awareness sessions in school to educate girls and their parents about menstrual hygiene management.

MHM trainers from this school worked out an action plan to conduct a series of sessions and activities through out the year to initiate important discussions. It aimed at involving parents and adolescent girls to create a dialogue among them about menstrual hygiene.

Sessions in the first half of the year were dedicated to educating girls and parents about various aspects of menstruation while other sessions were conducted through active participation of girls through activities like slogan making and play for parents and male members in school.

First session was conducted on 'Parents role in providing healthy living to their girl child'. In this session biological information on menstruation and physical changes experienced during puberty were conveyed. In the following session parents and girls were informed about Do's and Don'ts during menstruation, use of sanitary products and diet for good health.

Looking at the popularity of 90s cartoon character Meena and Raju, stories for menstrual hygiene management were conceptualized. Since then these stories have been used to educate 10 - 14 age group girls and their mothers about good practices in menstruation for healthy life. Meena - Raju characters helped build and spread social message among the youth.

In the interactive sessions parents and students shared their experiences and discussed problems faced during menstruation. This helped create dialogue between students and parents. Last three sessions comprised of information, education and communication (IEC) activities through girls like poster making, slogan preparation and street play. In the final session, an act was performed using these slogans and posters by girls to spread awareness among parents and other village members.

These activities have inculcated awareness among girls like maintaining good hygiene during menstruation, recording menstrual cycle and having a healthy diet.

Smt. Sampada Kanekar

Primary School Teacher, Pachad school no. 1, Ratnagiri



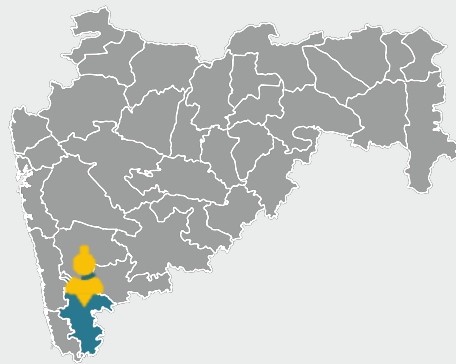


Initiative by male teachers

to create awareness on menstruation



**Anuskura and
Karanjaphen**
Taluka: Shahuwadi
District: Kolhapur



The Initiative

Schools in Anuskura and Karanjaphen villages of Shahuwadi taluka had no female teachers, which had become a major barrier for menstrual hygiene management awareness programs in tribal villages. Hence, MHM trainers (male teachers) in this village set up a platform in the form of 'Mazhi Didi' helpline number, to discuss issues related to menstrual hygiene.



What was achieved?

Helpline number has become a popular medium for expressing emotional distress and spread awareness among younger girls. Awareness campaigns have helped reduce rate of infections and fatalities due to unhygienic conditions during menstruation among menstruators. Overall it is helping girls to maintain good physical as well as mental health.



Who contributed?

Along with primary school teachers of all schools in Shahuwadi taluka, contribution of female volunteers from colleges and NGOs was of prime importance. Support from Panchayat samiti of Shahuwadi and Principal of District Education and Skill Development Institute was noteworthy.

Who were impacted?

The programs has helped reach adolescent girls and tribal women in Shahuwadi taluka.

“

Adolescence is a very important stage in the growth and development of children. At this stage boys as well as girls undergo physical and mental changes. During this age, providing health education helps in overall development of students; menstrual hygiene management being one of it. Children of these taluka were unaware and lacked scientific knowledge about biological changes experienced by girls during their puberty.

The southern part of Shahuwadi taluka in Kolhapur district is rural. Also there are no female teachers in any primary schools of Anuskura and Karanjaphen to guide and help adolescent girls during their first period or discuss concerns related to menstruation. Girls are also quite reluctant to discuss concerns regarding menstruation with male teachers in the school.

To address this issue MHM trainers (male) in primary schools of Anuskura and Karanjaphen started an awareness campaign named 'Kali Khulatana' in schools and tribal areas of these villages. Through this program, women are educated about the importance of menstrual hygiene, use of sanitary products and Dos and Don'ts during periods. Earlier, menstruation was considered as 'problem' as myths and unhygienic practices during menstruation led to severe infections among girls. Eradicating myths surrounding menstruation was one of the key objective of this program.

Since there are no female teachers in any primary school in these villages, a helpline number was set up with the help of NGOs and volunteers from colleges. 'Mazhi Didi' helpline number helped adolescent girls discuss concerns during their first periods and related health issues. Female volunteers from colleges addressed these calls. 'Mazhi Didi' helpline number has become a strong medium for expression during menstruation. The helpline number serves as an important platform to help girls improve mental as well as physical health and eradicate myths about menstruation.

Shri. Anil Pandurang Kamble

Teacher, Vidya Mandir Kante, Shahuwadi, Kolhapur



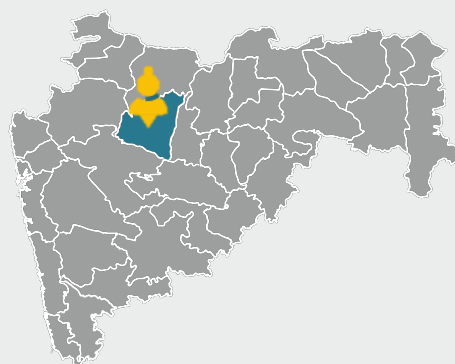


Access to sanitation

facilities in schools through MHM friendly toilets



Z. P. School
Taluka: Ladsavangi
District: Aurangabad



The Initiative

School drop outs and low attendance in classes has been a major concern for girl students in Z. P. School, Ladsavangi. Taking this into consideration, efforts were undertaken by teachers in developing MHM friendly toilets and educating girls about menstrual hygiene management.



What was achieved?

Changing rooms are helping menstruators maintain hygiene and take short breaks from long school hours instead of taking a leave. Vending machines provide access to sanitary pads at minimal rate. Students have made red dot paper hanger and red dot dustbin for disposal of sanitary napkins. Awareness sessions by gynecologists have created an impact on girls. Due to this girls have become diligent towards recording menstrual cycle, hand washing and proper disposal of used sanitary pads.



Who contributed?

Awareness and changing room initiative involved participation from students, teachers, headmaster, parents and villagers. Gram panchayat provided financial support and manpower for developing changing room and facilities there in. The vending machines and napkins are financed by the Loopin Foundation.

Who were impacted?

The initiative has helped around 200 girls in Zilla Parishad School of Ladsavangi.

“

Taboo around menstruation hampers initiation of a critical dialogue. It thus prevents development of essential infrastructure necessary for young girls to have a hygienic period. A small impetus on building menstruation friendly facilities allows girls learn healthy practices around menstruation.

School drop outs and low attendance in classes has been a major concern for girl students in Z. P. School, Ladsavangi. They lacked access to safe menstruation facilities like toilets, sanitary napkins and other hygiene products. Taking this into consideration, efforts were undertaken by teachers in developing menstruation friendly toilets and educating girls about menstrual hygiene.

Realizing the need for menstrual hygiene management facilities to improve attendance of girls, teachers have undertaken the initiative to create changing rooms which were equipped with functional toilets, running water, a washbasin with handwash and a stock of sanitary napkins. The rooms also have drinking water, a bed, a mirror, towel and detergent powder. This has helped girls sustain the long school hours during periods and improved their attendance.

Along with provision of facilities, educating girls and addressing the curiosities of both boys and girls about menstruation was thought to be necessary. For this awareness sessions under the guidance of subject experts and gynecologists are conducted.

Surveys were also conducted among students during these awareness sessions which showed that most girls were unaware about puberty, the biological reasons for menses. They lacked knowledge on use of sanitary napkins, disposal techniques and use of incinerators.

Understanding the problem of sanitary waste disposal in rural areas and methods of sanitary waste management were also discussed. Covers for soiled sanitary pads with red dot, separate dustbins and incinerators are installed to facilitate onsite disposal of menstrual waste.

Smt. Sarika Jain

Secondary School Teacher, Z. P. School Ladsavangi, Aurangabad





Art and Literature

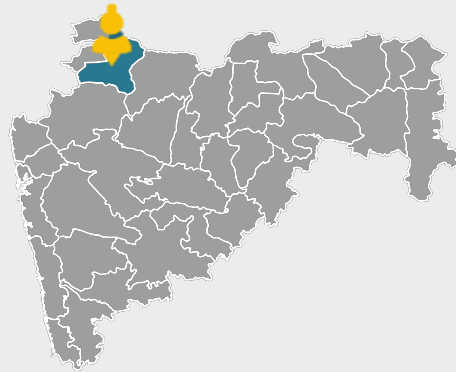
to spread awareness among tribals about MHM



Bhoicha Pada

Taluka: Sakri

District: Dhule



The Initiative

Bhoicha Pada is a tribal village in Sakri taluka. Lack of education and illiteracy created a communication gap between the Z.P. teachers of Sakri taluka and villagers. The gap was bridged through poems and rangoli exhibitions that depicted biological process of menstruation and menstrual hygiene management practices. A compilation of these poems was published through 'Udita'.



What was achieved?

Poems and art works helped in delivering the message to uneducated tribal women and girls. 'Udita' served as a platform for the MHM trainers to express and spread awareness about menstrual hygiene in an innovative way. Rangolis served as best visual medium to communicate with the tribal women. Decrease in cases of infection and health issues due to unhygienic conditions among menstruators are recorded. Art and literature helped create a dialogue among tribals about menstruation.



Who contributed?

To complete the book and conduct rangoli exhibition, teachers from Z.P. schools in Sakri Dr.Shobha Khandare, Dr.Prabhakar Kshirsagar were instrumental. Smt. Aparna Kulkarni-Gowande from UNICEF, Maharashtra encouraged throughout. Support from the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) organization and female teachers of Dhule was noteworthy.

Who were impacted?

Villagers and school going adolescent girls in Sakri taluka are benefited from this initiative.

“

Our ancestors strongly believed that during menstruation a woman endeavors immense alterations in mental, physical and emotional health. In following years this believe was encompassed by myths and superstitions. Prevailing illiteracy tabooed menstruation and menstruators and termed impure.

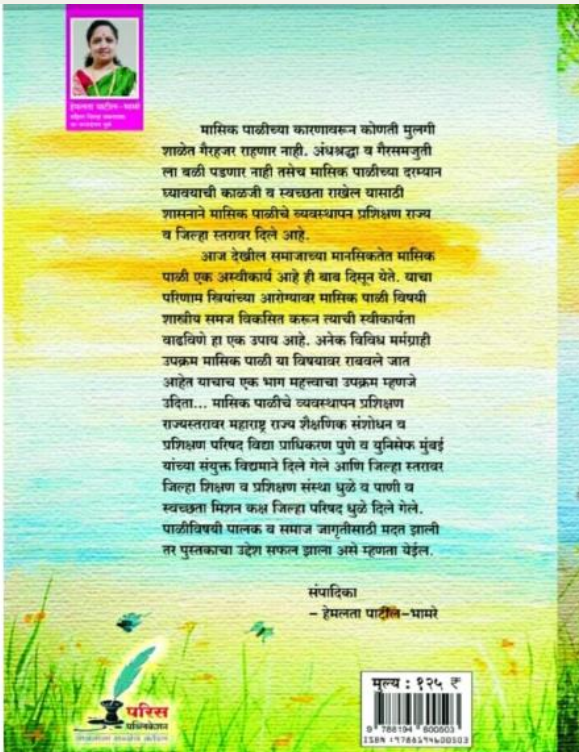
Similar situation was experienced in Bhoicha Pada village of Sakri taluka in Dhule district. Disbelief and superstitions about menstruation and menstruators in the society was taking toll on health of the menstruators.

Due to inadequate exposure to education facility among the tribals of Bhoicha Pada village, the approach towards spreading awareness in terms of menstruation had to be different. The communication gap was bridged by using art and literature for awareness. With the help of teachers and principals of schools, an anthology of poems and verses was published. Using these verses and poems, awareness campaigns were conducted to burst the myths and taboos related to menstrual hygiene and menstruation. Poems and verses were compiled in a book 'Udita'. It serves as a medium to educate girls in schools of Sakri taluka and platform to the changemakers and menstruators.

To burst the myths and taboos surrounding menstrual hygiene, Rangoli exhibitions on menstrual hygiene at social gathering places were organized to spread awareness among tribals. Rangolis acted as an visual aid to the tribals to understand importance of menstruation and sensitize about the topic. Rangolis depicted biological changes that a girl undergoes during this phase, use of sanitary products and precautions to be taken to maintain good hygiene and avoid infection.

Smt. Hemlata Yashwant Patil - Bhamare

Primary School Teacher, Z.P. School Sakri, Dhule



मासिक पाळीच्या कारणगारुन कोणती मुलगी शाळेत मेरुनर राहणार नाही. अंधश्रद्धा व मेरुसमजुती ला बळी पडणार नाही तसेच मासिक पाळीच्या दरम्यान घ्यावयाची काळजी व स्वच्छता राखेल यासाठी शासनाने मासिक पाळीचे व्यवस्थापन प्रशिक्षण राज्य व जिल्हा स्तरावर दिले आहे.

आज देखील समाजाच्या मानसिकतेत मासिक पाळी एक अस्वीकार्य आहे ही बाब दिसून येते. याचा परिणाम विवाहांच्या आरोग्यावर मासिक पाळी विषयी शास्त्रीय समज विकसित करून त्याची स्वीकार्यता वाढविणे हा एक उपाय आहे. अनेक विविध मार्गांनी उपक्रम मासिक पाळी या विषयावर राववले जात आहेत याचाच एक भाग महत्वाचा उपक्रम म्हणजे उदिता... मासिक पाळीचे व्यवस्थापन प्रशिक्षण राज्यस्तरावर महाराष्ट्र राज्य शैक्षणिक संशोधन व प्रशिक्षण परिषद विद्या प्राधिकरण पुणे व पुनिसेक मुंबई यांच्या संयुक्त विद्यमाने दिले गेले आणि जिल्हा स्तरावर जिल्हा शिक्षण व प्रशिक्षण संस्था धुळे व पाणी व स्वच्छता मिशन कल जिल्हा परिषद धुळे दिले गेले. पाळीविषयी पालक व समाज जागृतीसाठी मदत झाली तर पुस्तकाचा उद्देश सफल झाला असे म्हणता येईल.

संपादिका
- हेमलता पाटील-भामरे

मूल्य : ९२५ ₹

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Reaching out to flood victims

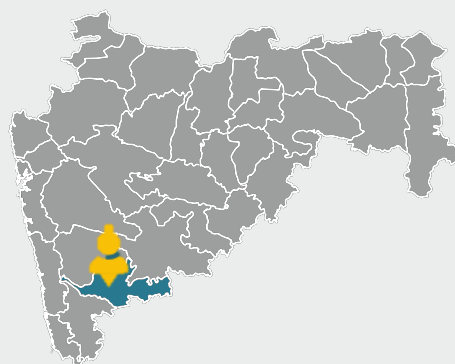
and adolescent girls to create awareness about MHM



Damani High School

Taluka: Sangli

District :Sangli



The Initiative

Due to extreme floods in Sangli district in 2019, flood victims were provided temporary shelter in Damani High School. These temporary shelter lacked facilities for menstruating women. The Menstrual Hygiene Management Master trainers reached out to the flood victims to spread awareness among them. Thereafter they conducted menstrual hygiene management sessions for students of municipal schools across the district.



What was achieved?

It is indisputable that the campaigns conducted by the master trainers are not only successful in creating awareness among the adolescent girls and school officials but is creating a positive impact on the women of the society. In addition to this, the trainers also received numerous calls from these women narrating about their health. The trainers were successfully able to create a wave of awareness among these women even in difficult times.



Who contributed?

There was active participation from district municipal school teachers, students, parents and community members.

Who were impacted?

50 flood victim women of the Sangli district and 65 adolescent girls from the municipal school were present for the awareness session and were directly benefitted from the initiatives the school had taken in response to the training sessions of the Menstrual Hygiene Management.



The first menstrual hygiene management training was given in August 2017 all over Maharashtra. Smt. Aparna Kulkarni-Gowande, State Communication Consultant for Water, Sanitation and Menstrual Hygiene, UNICEF, Maharashtra imparted scientific knowledge about menstrual cycle. After these training sessions, Sangli district experienced heavy flooding in 2020. Many families along the river took shelter in different schools. Most of these women lived in Damani High School where food and shelter was provided. Smt. Sudha Patil- Menstrual Hygiene Management master trainer reached out to approximately 150 women and imparted awareness about menstrual hygiene management.

When the flood water receded and the women went to their respective houses, menstrual hygiene management trainers started receiving calls from these flood victimized women about health and menstruation. In fact, at that time, even when their lives were not completely stable as the villages did not have continuous electricity and water supply women wanted to know how to take care of their health and follow safe hygiene practices during menstruation. There was contentment among the trainers to witness the awareness about the menstrual health among those women and left no stone unturned in guiding them.

Trainings were further conducted at the district and the taluka level. Post these trainings, again menstrual hygiene management sessions started in schools. It was evident that the work of awareness about menstrual hygiene management was bringing about a positive impact. Many initiatives about MHM were undertaken due to the awareness brought in by the trainings such as pad banks came into schools, separate 'changing rooms' were arranged, the vending machines were installed and girls began to openly discuss about menstruation. Predominantly, school dropouts had reduced. Overall, there was acceptance from school and society.

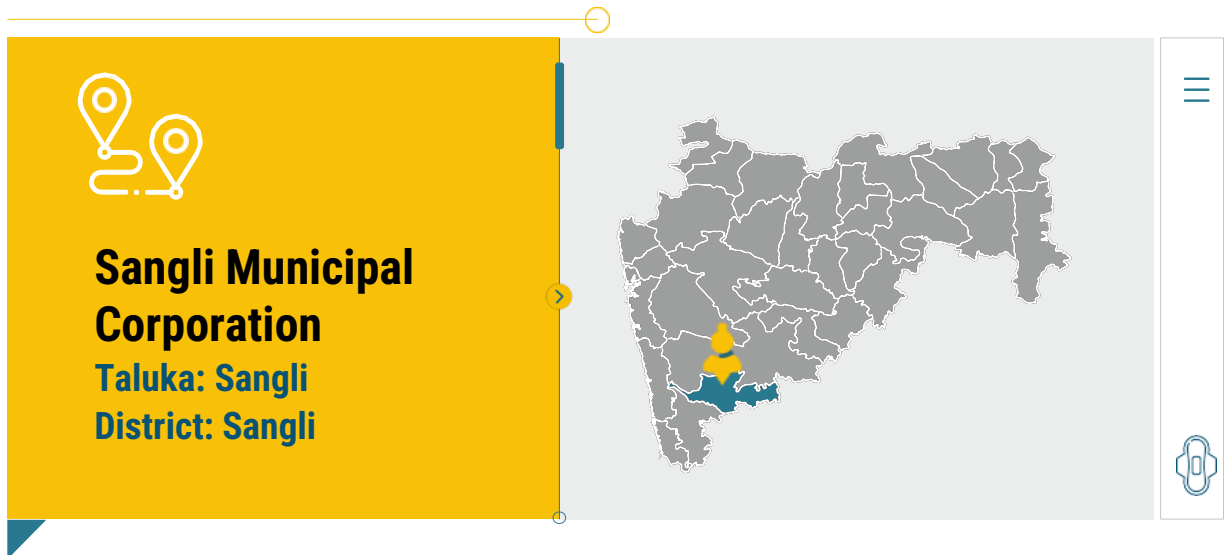
Smt. Shanta Tamma Vader
Assistant Teacher, Patwardhan High School Sangli





Red dot - a two act play

and live session on Facebook to create awareness about MHM



The Initiative

A two act play on menstrual hygiene management was scripted by one of the MHM master trainer. Various topics like why and how does menstruation occur, importance of cleanliness during menstruation, diet, beliefs and superstitions are all painted in the story in such a way that it is easy to understand and leave an impact on the spectator. Further a Facebook live session "Lockdown and women's menstrual cycle" was conducted by the master trainer to reach out to a larger population.



What was achieved?

The play stood as an effective medium to spread awareness among the students. Social media served as an important platform in spreading awareness across a huge number of women with different backgrounds across different regions.



Who contributed?

The play had 9 teachers from government and private schools, 5 school students and 3 college students who performed at different locations with support of the district organizing team.

Who were impacted?

Nearly 1000 spectators were present to watch this play. It has reached out to 1500 viewers on Facebook and many others through YouTube too.

“

In the story of the two act play "Red Dot", Doctor Divya, who has worked with UNICEF, Maharashtra is raising awareness in her village. She is opposed by her mother-in-law to work in this awareness program. But other members in the house support her to carry out her duties. She is assisted in this task by the village promoter and the village sarpanch. This play is based on an original story. It is a journey from the awakening of a family to the awakening of a village. Red Dot, a two-act play, was performed at Bhave Natyagriha Sangli.

On 4th December 2019, all the teachers and actors performed in the State level Drama Competition. The practice of the play began about five months earlier. It had a total of seventeen artists. The play received overwhelming positive response from the viewers. After facing many problems like getting actors for the play, financial planning, space for rehearsals, the play "Red Dot" was presented in the state drama competition.

The play was well-received as an important subject. Nearly 1000 spectators were present to watch this play. It is also available on the YouTube channel garnering positive responses.

Another Facebook live program "Lockdown and women's menstrual cycle" was conducted through the Facebook group Apala Manasashastra during the pandemic lockdown period. This also received a good response with 1500 viewers. The session was later uploaded on YouTube and thus reached out to the viewers who missed out on the live session.

Smt. Sudha Rajendra Patil

Subject Assistant - English, DIET Sangli



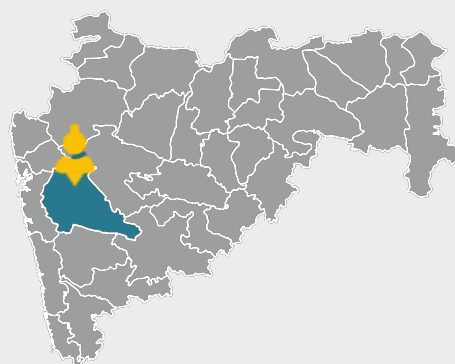


Mother-daughter

together creating awareness about MHM



Daund urban & rural
Taluka: Daund
District: Pune



The Initiative

A series of seminars and webinars were conducted for masses by the MHM master trainer with assistance of her daughter. The awareness sessions on menstrual hygiene management aimed to curb the disbelief around menstruation and social practices like isolating during menstruation due to which girls have to miss many days of school or even drop out from school.



What was achieved?

The students confidently talk about menstruation and receive support from school management committee with respect to this topic. The most effective thing is that in this training, a new cadre of young students are getting ready to spread awareness about menstrual hygiene management.



Who contributed?

There was immense support from all the officials of the DIET Department. Further, guidance from Smt. Aparna Kulkarni-Gowande from UNICEF, Maharashtra gave a direction to the master trainer to create awareness about MHM on a large scale.

Who were impacted?

Approximately 20,000 students from rural and urban areas of Maharashtra and around 10,000 labour, parents and Asha workers from remote areas were impacted.



Girls coming from far away places would remain absent due to menstruation. Also, when their mothers would menstruate, daughters would have to cook and thus would come late to school. In 2014, after discussing with the girls, it was seen that women and girls were living separately outside the barn during the menstrual period. In discussion with mothers about stopping this ritual, they feared God's wrath upon them, the fear that something bad would happen in our house and many other superstitions.

Department of Education and Sports under Government of Maharashtra and UNICEF, Maharashtra conducted training for menstrual hygiene management in 2019, which built confidence to advocate strongly for menstrual hygiene and bursting myths & disbelief. School sessions on MHM were carried out in all schools of Daund block. After lockdown, offline sessions were discontinued. There was an invitation to lecture for an online MHM session due to the pandemic. It was then noticed that four hundred students and teachers are sitting in their classrooms and training properly through laptops and speakers. The success of this program gave inspiration to the mother and the daughter who was helping her in managing technicalities of online platform.

After this Ms. Sakshi Katam, daughter of Smt. Sunita Katam accompanied her mother to impart information about Menstrual Hygiene Management through the school program. The importance of this work was realized once again by the MHM master trainer- Ms Sunita Katam and she decided to undertake their work on creating awareness on menstruation by conducting online trainings for the school students of the taluka.

With the support from various NGOs, clubs, SHGs and other frontline workers, they reached out to the talukas. Here, Ms. Sakshi Katam assisted in training program by handling technical matters. Creating a link, sending it to the teacher, taking the program on time, soliciting children's feedback, and many other things were handled by her, while her mother was undertaking awareness sessions. They successfully completed the online training of a thousand students. Based on the feedback from previous trainings they planned the next trainings. For this they collected feedbacks on Google form from the participants after every training. This activity started from 5th September 2014 and is ongoing now too.

Smt. Sunita Vijay Katam
Post Graduate Teacher, Yavat, Pune





Puppetry

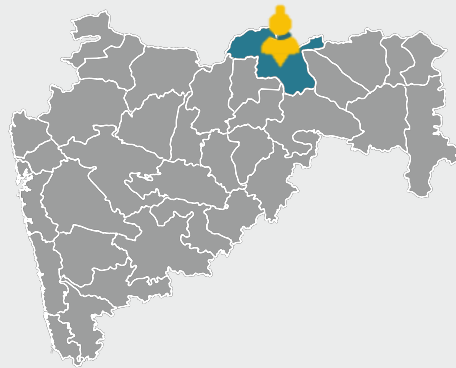
for differently abled students and convergence of organisations for MHM awareness



DIET Amravati

Taluka: Amravati

District: Amravati



The Initiative

Creating awareness about menstrual hygiene management amongst the differently abled students in an effective and friendly way is crucial. Hence 'puppetry' was used as a medium to create awareness. Also, with the increase in the number of dropouts of the adolescent girls from school, there was a need to address the misconceptions related to menstruation management.



What was achieved?

Menstruation is no more a topic to be stigmatized, rather it has become a topic of discussion in Amravati. Media coverage for the menstrual hygiene management has helped in reaching out to a larger population. Women officials like the doctors, police, media, govt. servants like railway officials etc. participated enthusiastically which marked a new beginning. .



Who contributed?

There was immense cooperation from diverse organizations like the District Education and Training Institute, JCI Amravati Golden, JCIRAT WING, Kaivalya Foundation, Sir Foundation Amravati, District Gynecology and Obstetrics Association Amravati and UNICEF, Maharashtra.

Who were impacted?

Awareness about Menstrual Hygiene Management was spread among 95,641 students and parents at district level

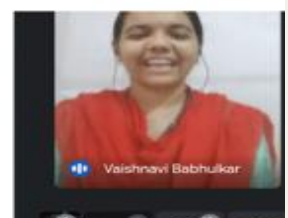
“

It was realized by the MHM master trainer through her numerous field visits that there was a need to create awareness among the differently abled girls. Thus, on the World Puppetry Day - 21st March, puppetry was used as a medium by the trainer to guide differently abled students about menstrual hygiene management. Through the puppet show named "Chinki's world" they took up a sensitive subject of Menstrual Hygiene and created awareness among masses. More than 375 students were present for the event. The session was followed by healthy discussions among the teachers, students and parents. The event received appreciation from district level officials.

To create an impact on a larger population, the Menstrual Hygiene Management trainers of Amravati district came together and undertook the responsibility of imparting menstrual hygiene management training to 95,641 students at the district level. This was carried out with the convergence of various organizations which have jointly arranged several workshops on menstrual hygiene management. Various experts too guided the audience on the topic of diet and hygiene during menstruation. Respected women from all fields came up to join hands in creating awareness among the community.

Smt. Dipali Dilip Bhabulkar

Subject Assistant - Marathi, DIET Amravati





MHM sessions in Juvenile home

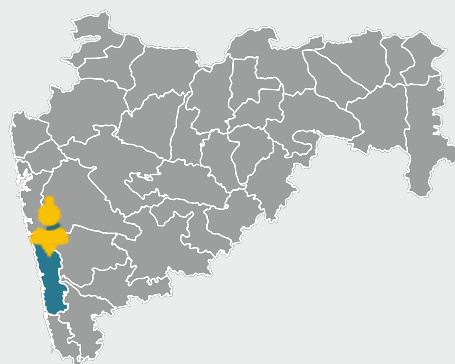
For awareness among detained girls



Ratnagiri Municipal Corporation

Taluka: Ratnagiri

District: Ratnagiri



The Initiative

Among many facilities that are provided to the youth at detention centers, education is seen as a cornerstone for youth rehabilitation. A large percentage of incarcerated juveniles are identified as children with special needs. The Equity Department under SCERT, Pune had organized a 7-day educational session, during which a series of MHM awareness sessions were conducted for the girls in all the juvenile correctional facilities across the Ratnagiri district.



What was achieved?

The victimized girls hesitated to express themselves due to their past events. MHM sessions helped girls to open up and share their experiences of menstruation. They have started discussing concerns among themselves and in turn feel empowered. This has led to overall positive behavioral change among the girls



Who contributed?

The sessions were organized by the Equity Department of State Council and Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Pune. It was implemented by resource person Ms. Ashwini Kane under the guidance of officers and Principal of DIET, Ratnagiri.

Who were impacted?

Sessions of MHM awareness were conducted for the girls in all the juvenile centers, across the district Ratnagiri.

“

A letter was issued by the Equity Department of SCERT, Pune to conduct a special 7-day session for the girls in the juvenile detention centers. This was arranged so that they were not deprived of mainstream education. The sessions included life skills development, career guidance, scholarship exam guidance, various online learning streams, and most importantly, the MHM awareness sessions. This initiative was implemented in all the juvenile centers across the district Ratnagiri. The implementation was carried out by resource persons, under the guidance of Dr. Patil and all the officers from DIET, Ratnagiri. The zero-tolerance policies seemed to be more strict in juvenile centers than any other traditional schools.

Since juvenile detention centers operate on the foundation of rehabilitating the youths, different mental health programs were provided for their help. Life skills lessons were first imparted to the trainers as these girls required special counseling to live a healthy and self-reliant life. A background study was done with the help of their caretaker before they commenced the sessions. There was a long-standing connection found between girls who committed crimes and their mental health concerns. There were some homeless girls, many were victims while some were criminals. Therefore, it was very difficult for them to grasp life skills. In the training sessions, special emphasis was given on MHM, motherhood, pregnancy, mental changes, attraction, good touch and, bad touch, etc.

A film by UNICEF, on “Your body is your right” was shown to them which too was very insightful. There was a visible positive change observed by the caretaker for MHM among these girls. One of the elder girls took the responsibility of Peer leader for help related to MHM. These sessions are necessary and should be continued regularly.

Smt. Ashwini Kane

Subject Assistant - Marathi, DIET Ratnagiri





Awareness on All India Radio

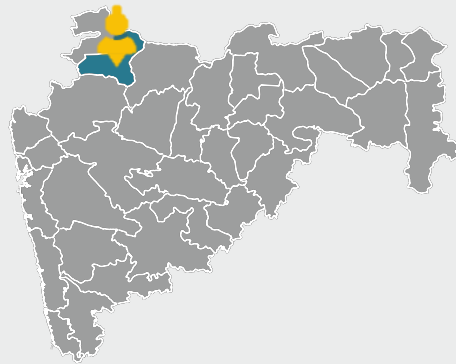
about MHM, belief and disbelief



Dhule Municipal Corporation

Taluka: Dhule

District: Dhule



The Initiative

Many religions have menstruation-related traditions. It was seen in Dhule that menstruating women are traditionally considered impure to carry out rituals and have a set of rules to follow. Also, there was a stigma about menses among teenage girls. Thus, to reach men and women of different age groups, the MHM trainer planned an interview in MHM awareness on the All India Radio.



What was achieved?

Through the MHM awareness session conducted, the master trainer was successfully able to reach out to a major population to curb the disbelief among them. In return, the trainer received calls from friends and relatives who thanked her for resolving many of the misconceptions and superstitions around menstruation they had throughout these years. They also said that as a big platform like radio was chosen, menstruation was no more stigmatized like before in Dhule.



Who contributed?

The team from All India Radio was very cooperative in conducting the interview on MHM. There was constant support and guidance from Ms. Smita Saraf (teacher) who boosted the MHM master trainer's confidence to speak confidently on the topic.

Who were impacted?

All the listeners of the All India Radio, who tuned in the channel on that day at the given time in Dhule were benefitted from this awareness session.

“

During the field visits in Dhule, it was observed by the MHM trainer that there were a lot of traditions and taboos related to menstruation among the community members. Women were isolated during menstruation as they were seen as unclean, dangerous, or bringing bad luck to those who encountered them. They would have to refrain from any religious activities and household chores during this period. Thus these women would opt for the hormonal pills to prepone or postpone menses according to the upcoming festivals and family functions. This was very hazardous for their health yet was masked due to widespread ignorance. The MHM master trainer took up an initiative with the guidance of Ms. Smita Saraf (teacher) to reach out to men and women of all age groups. They planned an awareness session on the All India Radio.

A positive response was received from the All India Radio team. The MHM master trainer was initially nervous as she had never entered a radio station before. Yet she was strongly determined about the task to be performed. There was a lot of cooperation from the radio team. She gathered all the necessary information and gave an interview on All India Radio which was aired at 6 pm in Dhule. Various topics were covered like the mental and physical changes in boys and girls when they hit puberty, the use, and disposal of various menstrual hygiene products. The scientific reasons behind certain traditions practiced were explained and ways to curb the misconceptions were discussed. Overall the session was very impactful as per the feedback received from the listeners.

Smt. Vaishali Prakash Patil
Subject Resource Person, DIET Dhule







Awareness sessions on MHM across Maharashtra

Menstruation and menstrual hygiene practices surrounded by taboos and socio-cultural restrictions resulted in women remaining ignorant of the scientific facts and hygiene practices, which in turn led to adverse health outcomes. School dropout rates had increased due to the lack of MHM facilities in schools. Also, the lack of awareness in remote parts of Maharashtra was taking a heavy toll on the health of girls and women. Over the years the menstruation and menstruators have been shadowed by superstitions and misconceptions. The only way out was to break the silence by educating both men and women about the physical changes experienced by women during the growth years.

The Department of Education and Sports under the Government of Maharashtra along with UNICEF, Maharashtra identified menstrual hygiene management trainers to create awareness about MHM from the Z.P. schools in all districts across Maharashtra. Awareness sessions were conducted by MHM trainers in schools and public gatherings in urban and rural areas. Through these sessions need for improving MHM facilities was identified through discussions with parents, teachers, and community members. Initiatives like developing changing rooms, setting up of pad bank in schools, installing vending machines and incinerators were undertaken by school teachers, MHM master trainers, officials, and local leaders. Innovative ways to create awareness like street plays, Meena-Raju Stories, puppetry, essay writing, slogans/jingle making, and elocution competitions were undertaken. This helped ensure the participation of men and women from all age groups.

Even during the pandemic, the awareness sessions continued through online platforms, webinars, Facebook lives and YouTube lives. Online sessions received enthusiastic participation from government departments, the private sector, and subject experts like doctors and councilors. The feedback received has encouraged trainers to continue their work with the same zeal even during the pandemic.



Mumbai



Thane



Sangli



Aurangabad



शिक्षण अधिकारी प्राथमिक, जालना
सर्फे आयोजित
५ दिवसीय MHM योग शिबीर

०१ जुल ते ०५ जुल २०२१, रोज सकाळी ६ वाजता.
अधिक माहितीसाठी - www.ipaindia.in/yoga

श्रीम.अनिता सुलकर्णी
श्रीम.पल्लवी तमाडकर

श्रीम.पाटील श्रीम. निरया वडजे

मासिक पाली स्वच्छता व व्यवस्थापन सप्ताह

डॉ. प्राजक्ता दोभराव

श्रीम. सविता शारदाफ

श्रीम.सविता बरंडवाल

Jalna



Kolhapur



Jalgaon



Gondia



Sindhudurg



Satara



Ratnagiri

Dhule



Testimonials

““

Kum. Drishti Dattaraya Verde
(Student, Patwardhan High School,
Sangli)

Madam has given us all the necessary information about MHM. My mother had told me that I have grown up, when I got my periods. She would not allow me to use sanitary pads nor go out to play. After the awareness program conducted, I am allowed to go to school everyday. We have pad banks in schools and so we don't need to miss school during the periods.

““

Smt. Jyoti Raut
(Subject Resource Person, Dhamangaon
Railway)

A large number of students, teachers and parents of the district who participated got scientific, accurate information about menstruation. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, an excellent online program was organized under the Amravati District Institute of Education and Training (DIET). Thank you very much for organizing such a commendable event under the Amravati DIET.

““

Smt. Sunita Katam
(Post Graduate Teacher, Yavat)

After this awareness session, the feedback of the parents of the students were received through WhatsApp messages and letters. This further gave us the encouragement to continue with our journey of creating awareness about Menstrual Hygiene Management.

““

Kum. Monica Kachkure
(Student, Z. P. School, Ladsavangi)

I avoided coming to school during periods but because of changing room and access to toilets. We can also get napkins in school which is of huge help during menstruation as we do not have to rush home if required. With this facilities I can attend school everyday.

Recognitions received

पंचायत समिती दोंड,
जा.क्र.शिक्षण/सशि/२०/२०२१
दोंड, दि.१८/०२/२०२१

प्रति,

- १) सौ. सुनिता विजय काटम, मुख्याध्यापक
जिल्हा परिषद, प्राथ.शाळा, वडगाव बांडे,
- २) सौ. पुजा जाधव, पदवीधर शिक्षक
जिल्हा परिषद, प्राथ.शाळा गिरिम,
ता. दोंड, जि.पुणे

विषय :- दोंड तालुक्यातील इयत्ता ५ वी ते १० वी च्या विद्यार्थ्यांना ऑनलाईन मासिक पाळी व्यवस्थापन प्रशिक्षण पुर्ण केलेबाबत.

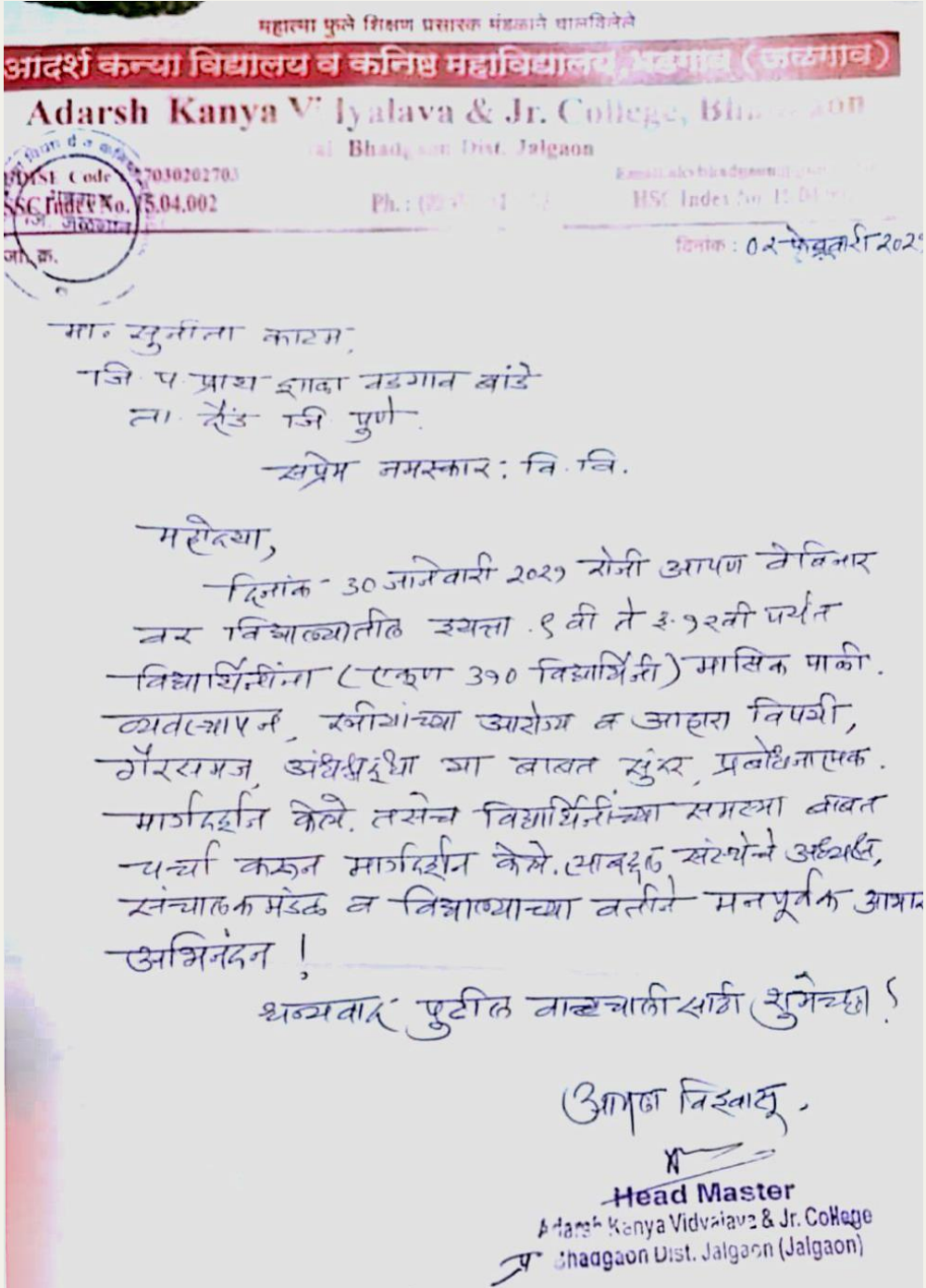
संदर्भ :- आपले पत्र दि.२१/०१/२०२१ रोजीचे या कार्यालयाकडे सादर केलेले पत्र.

उपरोक्त विषयास अनुसरून आपणास कळविण्यात येते की, संदर्भिय पत्राप्रमाणे आपण दोंड तालुक्यातील इयत्ता ५ वी ते ८ वी च्या विद्यार्थ्यांना मासिक पाळी व्यवस्थापन प्रशिक्षण ऑनलाईन देण्याकरिता परवानगी मागीतली होती.

तरी या कार्यालयाकडून दि.२५/०१/२०२१ रोजी आपणास परवानगी देण्यात आलेली होती. दरम्यान आपण केंद्रनिहाय घेतलेल्या ऑनलाईन प्रशिक्षणाचा लाभ दोंड तालुक्यातील १८१ शाळांनी घेतला आहे त्यामध्ये सुमारे १२००० विद्यार्थी व वर्गशिक्षक सहभागी होते. तरी आपण घेतलेल्या उपक्रमाबद्दल आपले या कार्यालयाच्यावतीने अभिनंदन.

(एन. डी. वणवे)
गटशिक्षणाधिकारी
पंचायत समिती दोंड

Recognitions received



The Changemakers

**Smita
Prakash
Nalawade**

Sindhudurg



**Anil
Kamble**

Kolhapur



**Hemalata
Yashwant
Patil**

Dhule



**Sarika
Jain**

Aurangabad



**Sudha
Rajendra
Patil**

Sangli



**Dipali
Dilip
Bhabulkar**

Amravati



**Vaishali
Prakash
Patil**

Dhule



**Shanta
Tamma
Vader**

Sangli



**Sunita
Vijay
Katam**

Pune



**Ashwini
Kane**

Ratnagiri



#Period

a blessing not a problem

