



Ritu-Sathi: A Menstrual Hygiene Initiative

Saltora Netaji centenary College

Objective:

The main objectives of this 'best practice' are to:

- Spread awareness and break myths and taboo about the absolutely natural healthy process of menstruation of adolescent girls and women.
- Provide sanitary napkin free of cost.
- strengthen Menstrual healthcare System in tribal areas
- Make a stronger institute-community relationship.
- Address the issues of improper disposal of sanitary pads.

The Context:

Menstrual hygiene is not simply a women's concern; it is also a problem for the health of girls and children, education, healthier and more successful business practices, income production, growth, and sustainability. Menstruation is viewed as "dirty" by 70% of moms, which contributes to a culture of ignorance and shame. Homegrown substitutes like as old cloth, rags, sand, ash, wood shavings, newspapers, dried leaves, hay, and plastic are used by 88% of menstruation women in India. 63 million teenage females reside in households without running water or electricity. Menstruation is the second most common reason for girls to leave school, after home chores, accounting for 20% of the school year's absences. Due to inadequate menstrual hygiene, there has been a 70% rise in the frequency of reproductive tract infections.

The majority of us are unaware of the crisis of poor menstrual health and cleanliness. When a female reaches puberty, she gets her first period, begins to use sanitary napkins, and sometimes gets cramps. Adolescent girls and women undergo menstruation as a natural, normal biological process that lasts from menarche to menopause; the total amount of time these days of menstruation take up equals around seven years of their life. Approximately 800 million women worldwide, aged 15 to 49, are menstruation on any given day. Menstruation, regardless of its magnitude, continues to be a taboo topic, veiled in secret, and repressed by shame and silence. This results in a dearth of conversation and discussion on the topic at all levels, including individual.

According to a South Asian survey, 33% of schoolgirls had never heard of menstruation before reaching menarche, and 98% of them had no idea that the uterus was the source of menstrual blood. Research indicates that girls are not well-informed about menstruation, even in industrialized nations like the US, and that menstrual education persists in sending contradictory messages to girls, such as the idea that menstruation is a normal, natural process that should be concealed.

A regular and healthy period and safe menstrual hygiene habits are unknown to over 200 million women in India. As a result, poor menstruation practices have a major negative impact on girls' and women's health and educational outcomes.

Three key dimensions contribute to the issue:

- Lack of awareness
- Lack of material
- Lack of facilities

Our institution has taken steps to confront these serious bottlenecks.

The Practice:

- a. Sanitary pad were distributed on a regular basis in the adopted villages i.e. Saltora College Para, Bamnishala, Natundihi
- b. Streetplays, Poster making competitions, Jingles etc. were prepared by the students to help break the cultural taboos.
- c. Data was collected through interviews and surveys gauging the knowledge of girls and women with regards to menstrual health and hygiene practices.

(For more information email: sncc214@gmail.com)