

Menstrual Hygiene Management in Schools

Training ANMs in Medak, Telangana



Document of the Earth Institute, Columbia University's Model Districts Health Project (MDHP) undertaken in collaboration with, and for the, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, and select State Governments and funded by the IKEA Foundation.

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Introduction:

As per Census 2011, adolescents contribute to 1/5 of India's population (236.5 million). The large proportion of adolescents' cohort can be harnessed to greater development for the country if the government provides and strongly focuses on a policy framework and direction to ensure the health and well-being of this group. A strong focus on adolescents' health and development will also have an eventual impact on adult health as many preventive steps begin in early childhood and adolescents. Recognizing the critical health concerns faced by adolescents, the Government of India (GoI) has designed a National Adolescent Health Strategy in January 2014. The strategy is a paradigm shift from providing clinic-based services to promoting health and prevention. It reaches adolescents in schools and communities, with the help of peer educators, counselors, parents and the community.

The policy outlines several programmes such as

- Adolescent and Reproductive Sexual Health Services (ARSH) through Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHS)
- **Menstrual Hygiene Scheme**
- Weekly Iron Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS)
- Rashtriya Kishora Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK)

Convergence and Collaboration:

In Medak the Model Districts Health Project by Earth Institute, Columbia University and the District National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) Unit identified the lack of awareness of menstrual hygiene among young girls. A district specific culturally sensitive intervention was launched collaboratively by the following district partners:

1. Model Districts Health Project by Earth Institute, Columbia University
2. National Health Mission- Jawahar Bala Aarogya Raksha (NHM-JBAR),
3. Telangana Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan) (TSSA)
4. Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)

Objectives of the Menstrual Hygiene Management Intervention:

Capacity-building of school ANMs followed by a phase-wise launch on menstrual hygiene education in schools.

- A. To orient school ANMs on health issues related to adolescent girls, particularly menstrual hygiene
- B. To train the school ANMs to develop and strengthen ARSH counseling services in schools



Workshop and Curriculum on Menstrual Hygiene Management:

Participants: 52 - ANMs who service Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalya (KGBV) schools and science resource teachers from Telangana State residential schools

Curriculum: The 2 day workshop content was co-designed by MDHP, ICDS, and Rajiv Vidya Mission (RVM). Specific inputs on the curriculum were incorporated based on discussions with teachers, ANMS and students at the KGBV schools.

Evaluation: Knowledge Pre-evaluation and post-evaluation

Module I

- Basic Anatomy and Physiology of female reproductive system
- Importance of Adolescent phase in life cycle.
- Puberty age and Menarche
- Menstruation and experiences among girl children

Module II

- Healthy Menstrual Hygienic practices during free days
- Measures to be taken during Menstruation
- Education on Myths, beliefs and social norms on Menstruation
- Menstrual disorders, Reproductive tract infections and PMS issues among girls
- Sanitary napkin importance in MH and

Module III

- Anemia and its adverse effects on girl's life cycle.
- Symptoms and identification of anemia In girl child
- Best ways to overcome anemia in adolescent girls
- Importance of nutrition during adolescent phase
- Nutritional disorders among adolescents
- Counselling on balanced diet and healthy food practices

Module IV

- Hand washing technique and frequency
- Importance of Hand washing during day to day activities
- Hand washing benefits.
- Good hygiene practices-Oral , nail, clothing and skin
- Role of exercise and sports activities in gaining good health
- Awareness on sexual health and various touches
- Behavioral issues in girl child
- Awareness on the good touch and bad touch
- Child marriage and its effects on life

Success:

Post training a circular was issued and all the trained personnel conduct health and hygiene classes once or twice a week or science teachers include the relevant material during class.

Challenges:

1. Inadequate infrastructure at schools for clinical assessment of adolescent girls
2. Unavailability of sanitary napkins in school premises
3. Poor supportive supervision and monitoring support to ANMs.
4. Non availability of screening and personal counselling for adolescent issues at schools due to lack of coordination and budgetary issues.

Action Plan 2014-2015

Based on the success of the MHM workshop, the District authorities intend to take up the following steps in the coming year

1. Organizing awareness campaigns on menstrual hygiene for school children.
2. Ensuring the availability of sanitary napkins at girls residential schools
3. Trained KGBVs ANMs can be used as an advocacy group for organizing adolescent advocacy activities.

Potential for Scale Up

Based on the success and learnings of the Menstrual Hygiene Management, and importance of its role in adolescent health and school life, this simple cost-effective initiative is replicable to be scaled up to other schools and districts, provided the different departments converge and collaborate.

