

**GLOBAL / INTERNATIONAL MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT (MHM)
DAY**

1	Date	28 th May, 2019			
2	Time	11:00 am – 2:30 pm			
3	Title of the Meeting	International Menstrual Hygiene Day Celebrations			
4	Venue	Hotel Aamantran, Golkonda X Roads, Musheerabad, Hyderabad			
5	Attendance	S: No	Name	Designation	Organisation
		1	Dr. Himabindhu	Pediatrician, HoD, Professor	Niloufur Hospital
		2	Dr. Swetha	Anesthesiologist	Niloufur Hospital
		3	Ms. Japamala Rani	Psychologist (YUVA)	Niloufur Hospital
		4	Ms. Muta Padma Naresh	Corporator	Gandhi Nagar
		5	Mr. Muta Naresh	Divisional Head / President	Gandhi Nagar
		6	Ms. D. Sunanda	Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) (WD & CW)	Musheerabad
		7	Ms. Padmaja Garu	MHM Resource Person	
		8	Ms. P. Aruna sree	Ward member	Gandhi nagar
		9	Ms. Indira	ICDS, Supervisor	Indira nagar
		10	Dr. Y. Hemalatha	AMOH	GHMC
		SaciWATER's Team			
Background:					
<p>Poor menstrual hygiene caused by a lack of education on the issue, persisting taboos and stigma, limited access to hygienic menstrual products and poor sanitation infrastructure undermines the educational opportunities, health and overall social status of women and girls around the world. As a result, millions of women and girls are kept from reaching their full potential. Menstrual Hygiene Day (MH Day) is a global advocacy platform that brings together the voices and actions of non-profits, government agencies, individuals, the private sector and the media to promote good menstrual hygiene management (MHM) for all women and girls. More specifically, MH Day aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break the silence, raise awareness and change the negative social norms around MHM, and • Engage decision-makers to increase the political priority and catalyse action for MHM, at global, national and local levels. 					

To create a world in which every woman and girl is empowered to manage her menstruation safely, hygienically, with confidence and without shame, where no woman or girl is limited by something as natural and normal as her period.

Most women and girls will menstruate every month between menarche and menopause, yet this normal bodily function is still met with silence, taboos, and stigma. Women and girls the world over face numerous challenges in managing their menstruation, which should be a straightforward issue of privacy and health. Pads and other supplies may be unavailable or unaffordable, they may lack access to safe toilet facilities with clean water where they can clean themselves in privacy, and they face discriminatory cultural norms or practices that make it difficult to maintain good menstrual hygiene. Together, these challenges may result in women and girls being denied basic human rights. The practitioner's guide explains how women's and girls' ability to manage their menstruation hygienically, and with normalcy and dignity, enables women and girls to enjoy certain human rights. For example, it addresses the rights to education, health, and water and sanitation, and how they relate to menstrual hygiene management.

For years, human rights organizations have documented how periods, and the poor policy and programmatic support for managing menstruation, have a negative impact on women's and girls' human rights. Decisions about the operation of refugee camps, detention centers, schools, and workplaces that affect the way periods are dealt with directly affect human rights. With too little support to handle their periods, women and girls have reported staying home from school, missing work, banishment by families, and humiliating treatment in their communities. People who work in development and aid organizations may see this bad treatment but lack effective tools to address it.

Human Rights Watch and WASH United recommend that groups that provide services to women evaluate their programs to determine whether a woman or girl has:

- Adequate, acceptable, and affordable menstrual management materials;
- Access to adequate facilities, sanitation, infrastructure, and supplies to enable women and girls to change and dispose of menstrual materials; and
- Knowledge of the process of menstruation and of options available for menstrual hygiene management.

Primary goal of the MHM day event was to explain the:

- Concept of MHM and its Importance
- Issues relating women's personal hygiene and sanitation needs linked to their menstrual cycle.
- Biological understanding of puberty and menstruation
- Safe practices of MHM
- Bring all the Government line departments on to a single platform and identify key advocacy points to support the respective line departments in the implementation of MHM at various settings.



SaciWATERS team gave a brief introduction on the objectives of the project. Taking forward the discussions, the team members briefed the participants on the role played by awareness creation in managing safe and hygienic menstruation. This meeting was exclusively targeted for parents of girls, on the occasion of Menstrual Hygiene Day (MHM Day). Doctors at Niloufer Hospital, Dr Japamala and Dr Padmaja, Gandhinagar Corporator Muta Padma Naresh, AMOH Dr Hemalatha and others participated in the meeting as guests. Explaining the importance of the day, which was started in Germany in 2014, from then on its graduation to create awareness globally on this day i.e on May 28 every year. As part of the programme, awareness sessions were conducted to raise awareness to girls and their parents on good menstrual management practices.

Most of the speakers mentioned that there is a need to raise awareness among parents of girls on the physiological changes and growth during teenage years. Similarly, awareness programs are being conducted in government schools and efforts are being made to raise awareness among girls innovatively through games, such as snakes & ladders, Flip books, Aprons. The games teach them how to manage their 'mature time' and periods. Many girls are facing issues, such as PCOD and PCOS, due to lack of proper diet and sleep. The doctors advised parents to discuss freely with children on menstrual issues and to raise their awareness on the subject. To raise awareness and skills on Menstrual Hygiene Management specifically amongst adolescent girls in schools

To come up with an action plan for education on safe usage and disposal of sanitary pads that is culturally bound and tradition specific. Core agenda is that the messaging needs to be clear. Need to be streamlined in medical sector and connection needs to be established as to where the women / girls can change their pads in a safe/secure place (especially while using public toilets). Equity issues from pricing point of view also needs to be explored.



Trainer Ms. A. Padmaja have briefed the participants on the importance of Menstrual Hygiene maintenance and gave in depth clarifications with facts on the myths associated with the menstruation. Delving on the brief introduction on what is meant by periods, how to differentiate between a good / bad body touch, a pre test questionnaire was distributed to all the participants to gauge the knowledge on the MHM. Trainer explained on detail about the changes that occur naturally to a women’s body as and how the stage of menstruation occurs. Most of the taboos and the myths associated with the menstruation were cleared to the participants with concrete and suitable examples. Participants were shown a video created by Mentrupedia.org in which it is discussed through comic illustrations as to how to take good care during periods along with food and hygiene practices as well.

Trainer have explained in great length to the students on the disposal techniques to be followed for safe disposal of the sanitary pads along with the personal hygiene practices to be followed during periods. Also briefed on the type of food (foods rich in iron and vitamin c) intake to be followed during periods.

Participants were also motivated to celebrate Menstrual Hygiene Day on May 28 every year (Which is an annual awareness day on Menstruation) to help break the silence and build awareness about the

fundamental role that good menstrual hygiene management (MHM) plays in enabling women and girls to reach their full potential. Media is very shy to speak about and report on this. Looking out for the better understanding of the cross learning's – use of safe material for preparation of disposable sanitary napkins and disposal mechanisms.

Participants were requested to chalk out their MHM action plan as to how and by when they intend to reach to the entire adolescent girls in their respective areas. The participants of all age groups have participated in this programme with great enthusiasm and interest. The programme was a huge success given the role played by the participants in creating a world in which every woman and girl can manage her menstruation in a hygienic way – wherever she is – in privacy, safety and with dignity!

In lead up to Menstrual Hygiene Management, SaciWaters and Wateraid (India), through various qualitative and quantitative analysis, guidance to practitioners, technical support to governments, and partnerships with other organizations, is working to ensure that women and girls are not limited by something as natural as their periods. Engaging in a dialogue with Women / Girls who belong to the most marginalised sections of the society leading to meaningful conclusions paves a better path in MHM.

Finally the meeting came up with certain functionalities to the Practitioners engaged in programming or advocacy related to menstrual management should also:

- Have an awareness of stigma and harmful practices related to menstruation in the specific cultural context where they are working;
- Support efforts to change harmful cultural norms and practices that stigmatize menstruation and menstruating women and girls;
- Address discrimination that affects the ability to deal with menstruation, including for women and girls with disabilities, LGBTI and gender non-conforming people, and other at-risk populations; and
- Be aware of and incorporate human rights principles in their programming and advocacy, including the right to participate in decision-making and to get information.