

## MENSTRUATION AND MENSTRUAL PRACTICES

It is well known to everyone that people are suffering from many diseases mainly due to the unhygienic living atmosphere and living status. So, to reduce the spreading of such diseases among the people the fore most steps should be establishing a clean, hygienic living environment and status. Generally people in cities are suffering from different diseases mostly from unhygienic living atmosphere like-poisonous gaseous atmosphere, dusty or un-cleaned air, improper and un-cleaned drainage system etc. Etc. In urban slum areas the living atmosphere is unhealthy due to the lack of awareness/adequate knowledge's among the people their living statuses have not been seen at all hygienic. It is often found that the people living special lying very backward areas are suffering from different diseases due to their ignorance on self-cleanliness. Another important factor is that the women and girls generally do not maintain cleanliness during menstruation period. As a result they become the host of many infectious diseases. This is due to the lack of awareness among the man deal so due to the economic inability for adopting better precautions like-use of good sanitary napkins during menstruation period. Usually different varieties of sanitary napkins are found available in the market. But there as on is that these napkins are not affordable for poor women and girls of slums. Thus, if the use of hygienic sanitary napkins could be initiated among the women and girls at low cost then growth of different diseases could be arrested or minimize to a large extent among them.

Sahyog care for you targeted different slum areas where the women and girls are mostly found suffering from different diseases than the men. So, the organization desire to work on arresting the growth of different diseases caused from unhygienic menstruation period among girls and women.

The different programmes supported by our different donors reached out to around 30,000 women from the period April 2011-March 2017. The project helped the women to not only upgrade their skills, but also enabled them to move towards economic self reliance, as majority of them have started using the learned skills to earn either by starting self employment or getting wage employment. During the project, they were also oriented about issues of women welfare, rights, health and hygiene thus, the project directed efforts to focus on holistic development of the beneficiaries aiming towards their social as well as economic self reliance.



However, there is still a lot that needs to be accomplished based on the lessons learnt in the **5 year**.



The project promotes around **1, 00,000** women in different jhuggies clusters and rural areas by educating them and bringing awareness amongst them on sanitation and hygiene. This programme is for the female living in below poverty line and EWS in all areas. **Menstruation and menstrual practices** are clouded by taboos and social cultural restrictions for women as well as adolescent girls. For young girls limited access to safe sanitary product and facilities is believed to be one of the main reasons for constrained school attendance, high dropout rates and ill health due to infection.

## **SOLUTION:**

We are procuring **low cost sanitary napkins made by self help groups from cotton waste and rags** in different. For their livelihood, technical support, co-ordinator and instructor would be there for the guidance. These sanitary napkins prepared at low cost would be sold in the same area for **self sustenance** after six months.

The project would operate with an objective of instilling positive aspirations amongst the women and girls and motivate them towards a better future. Besides follow up of the women for successful livelihood after completing courses would be a very vital part of the project. Education of environmental sanitation hygiene would incorporate many aspects in their lives. Total sanitation campaign and awareness had done in jhuggies, rural areas and government schools.

## **OBJECTIVE TO BE ACHIEVED**

- Section of the society to be benefited from the project
- To empower the women and educate them on sanitation hygiene help them and their family.
- To become self-reliant and make women self dependant by making these sanitary napkins.

We aim to make them aware of their health issues. This awareness will install self confidence in them so that they may not be easily be fooled by others and be in pressure of using waste or used cloth. To make masses aware of the benefits of sanitary hygiene and benefits of their health from these napkins and to make them independent for earning.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To popularize and sensitize the use of sanitary napkins among the women and girls of slum areas and there by rescuing them from venereal diseases.
- To establish and start preparation of cost effective/low cost sanitary napkins in scientific way for better health and hygiene among women and girls of slums.
- To engage SHG groups in production and marketing.
- To provide and supplied quality based sanitary napkins to women and girls income operatively low price than the napkins prevalent in the present day markets.

## **NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES**

Our **target group is the 1, 00,000 jhuggies cluster, railway line, slum areas and below poverty line areas and migrated people in every state.** The location of the project is an area where the majority of people are illiterate. Their financial dependence on the men has led to their inability to have said. The area has a very high rate of illiteracy especially amongst its women.



## **HEALTH AND SANITATION:**

Throughout history, directly or indirectly, women have been told that having periods is shameful and burden for them. Even today most of the societies carry this understanding of menstrual cycle and accordingly they practice certain activities, which are not acceptable in so called civilised world. For instance, women do not enter temples or carry out auspicious activities during their menstrual periods. Since menstruation is looked down upon, women also tend to neglect the importance of proper menstrual management. In studies it has been found that only 12% of India's 355 million menstruating women use sanitary napkins and rest i.e. 88% women follow unhealthy practices.

A closer look at the traditional practices adopted by women and girls in India throws light on a shocking scenario. Women commonly use all kinds of clothes (rags, rejected cloth) as a sanitary napkin in rural & slums in India and this figure is sometimes over 88%. This is due to unawareness of menstrual management and costly available options in the market (70% Indian families cannot afford costly napkin pads). Often women in slums dry their napkins behind the doors and remove it (even if it is wet) before the male members come and use it again with dirt & moisture, that leads to vaginal infections, skin irritations and other sexual diseases.

In case of adolescent girls the situation is worst in backward areas. In studies it has been also found that 70% women are more prone to reproductive tract infection (RTI) among the 88% who practice traditional methods of menstrual management. The government of India (GOI) has taken an initiative in the year 2010 to provide sanitary napkins to disadvantaged communities at cheaper rates with budgetary allocation of INR 150 crore, the scheme envisages supplying a pack of six sanitary napkins (SNS) to below poverty line (BPL) adolescent girls at a nominal cost of INR. 1 per pack. Girls in the above poverty line (APL) category will be charged INR. 5 per pack of sanitary napkins. However, this project is limited to certain districts in certain parts of the country.

Therefore, there is immediate need to provide sanitary napkin pads to the other parts of the country too through innovative models & also linking Govt. schemes to benefit women in remote areas.

## **VOCATIONAL AND INCOME GENERATION ACTIVITY:**

This project is a unique combination of education and awareness building coupled with providing heap choices and options to adolescent girls. The project believes that when health education is combined with the availability of an option or product, it will ensure greater behaviour change and actual utilization of a clean, safe product (in this case sanitary napkin).

Education and awareness is necessary but not sufficient and simply selling sanitary napkins is also not enough.

Thus, a combination of behaviour change education along with the promotion of a cheap, safe product is a combination approach that will work best. Therefore this project has two objectives:





One is to make adolescent girls aware and educated about the importance of menstrual hygiene and management in certain selected districts of area chosen, Two is to ensure that a program to build and operate ‘sanitary napkin making machines’ in the same districts as above is also put in place.

The sanitary Napkin making machines will be operated through women self-help groups in the region. This will provide ample opportunity for the local women to generate income by making sanitary napkins. Thus, this program not only educates women about the importance of menstrual and reproductive health but also provides a platform to generate employment.

This project is innovative in its approach because it looks at technological innovation as a development process. Here a technology is available for the need of poor women. This not only materialises the cause of income generation, but also look in to the health and sanitation issues of larger masses.

This project will have 2 key stakeholders; funding agency (Corporate PSU), & Sahyog (Local women group/ SHGs). Here funding agency would support the project financially, and Sahyog will support all other SHGs, contribution for the machineries & will ensure mobilisation of SHG members & SAHYOG Innovations would be technological/operational/marketing backbone for the units and SHG would be the manage the unit after a certain period for its self-sustainability.



Sahyog care will be working for overall management of the product and provide end to end solutions.

SHG will look after day to day operations & local sales. SAHYOG will continuously motivate SHG members, and create an enabling environment in the community& facilitate local sales. In future Sahyog will facilitate the other SHGs in setting up unit; procuring machine & raw materials; training workforce & sales force, on-going project management and facilitate marketing activities & bulk sales.

### **SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT:**

After setting up of the unit the production will continue. In the first year the produces will be marketed through Sahyog’s SHG groups in different slums areas of all 5 States. Whatever return comes in term of money will again be utilized in production purposes and management of the projects in the second year. Gradually after these continued year when the production will increase and popularity, demand of the products could be established among the people then more returns will come and project will start running on self-effort.