

Brief Report of the Webinar on 28.05.2020

Inauguration of Centre for Menstrual Hygiene Management and discussion about building partnerships around menstrual hygiene

The Centre for menstrual hygiene management has been inaugurated by Dr. S. Sudalaimuthu Vice Chancellor of Karpagam Academy of Higher Education in their campus to break the silence around Menstrual Hygiene and provide a legitimate space for discussions, interactions and technologies that will support this cause. This has been formed with ideation by Karupa Institute of Development Initiatives who have conceptualized and designed this along with support from the Government of Tamil Nadu and UNICEF to encourage people to think innovatively on how to address this particular need. This will also be part of our continuing efforts in creating a platform for Universities Speak SDGs. In this information era, the centre would aim to fill the knowledge gap, leverage new ideas and innovations, create a socio, economic and technical hub creating a knowledge ecosystem to support Menstrual Hygiene Management in a continuous and sustained manner. The theme for the Menstrual Hygiene Day was Periods during Pandemic. Ms. Shantha Sheela Nair I.A. S (R) spoke about how Tamil Nadu Played a pioneering role in Menstrual Hygiene with bureaucrats like Ms. Nirmala and Ms. Amudha playing a crucial part and placing it as part of the international agenda and also highlighted the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships including bringing the men as partners in understanding. Mr. Sugato Roy – UNICEF discussed the role of MHM and the UNICEF partnership with the Government of Tamil Nadu and the various pioneering initiatives of the State while Ms. Jennifer Selvaraj consultant UNICEF discussed the best practices of the different states. Mr. Sugato mentioned that he would be willing to partner with the centre for menstrual hygiene management. Dr. Seetha spoke about information sharing networks and how medical professionals can be updated regarding various products of sanitary protection and their availability. She also spoke about improving access to the differently abled persons.

Ms. K.M. Sarayu, I.A.S, Project Officer, Hill Area Development spoke about Psycho-social support and need for Emotional understanding during periods and more so during the post-partum period after delivery. She expressed the need for males

and young boys to understand the mood swings of the people at home like mothers, sisters and wives and support them. Mr. V.Ganapathy spoke about the importance of the disposal of sanitary napkins and how during the COVID period, waste segregation itself was a great issue along with non-availability of personal protective equipment. Dr. R. Rajkumar, spoke about the need for using ICT for awareness creation on Menstrual Hygiene Management and how counseling, helplines are useful in reaching out to the adolescent girls. Ms. V.Maheshwari of the Tamil Nadu Sanitary Napkin Producer Federation spoke about how there were difficulties in purchase of raw materials and also marketing. She sang an inspiring song on how women should rise above the difficulties and express their potential. Ms. Vidhyashankari spoke about biodegradable pads and green pads and how there was requirement of funds for financial support for doing research to find new products that are biodegradable.

Mr. Suresh Babu, Regional Manager of HLL a public sector company said there is need for partnerships and they would be happy to support the SHG production units with technology, raw materials and he stressed the need for building a partnership based on Trust and teamwork. Ms. Mrunalini from the Disability network raised questions on raising awareness for menstrual hygiene and it was said that with due discussions with the groups, a clear set of IEC materials have to be evolved. Ms. Godhanavalli wanted to understand what can be done to improve the support given to school and college girls during menstruation and how disposal facilities can be made available. Ms. Sarayu suggested that teachers and also some part time faculty can be made to discuss about menstruation and allay their fears and doubts. She mentioned that in Nilgiris there was a demand for community Hut for menstruating women and how it was necessary that women need support during that time and isolation is not always a good idea. Lt.Dr.K.P. Sridhar said that the Centre would serve as a focal point for creating a platform for Menstrual Hygiene management and would forge new partnerships.

In the Covid scenario and Post covid period, it was concluded that efforts would be taken improve and meet often and communicate to strengthen the partnerships that have emerged. Programme was signed off by thanking everyone for their

contributions to the thought process on building a partnership around menstrual hygiene.

