

Sahyogi

— Project

2015 - 2016 ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT
A Unicharm India Pvt Ltd CSR Initiative

Sofy Sahyogi is a CSR initiative of Unicharm Corporation, Japanese company, working in India through its registered company Unicharm India Private Limited. The project aims towards addressing the concerns surrounding menstruation. By undertaking series of awareness programs within the female community of Alwar district, Rajasthan the project has been sensitizing women on the relevance and importance of menstrual hygiene and management.

About **Unicharm India Private Limited**

Unicharm India was established in 2008 as an extended arm of the Japanese based Unicharm Corporation that has extended its sale and services through baby and child care products, feminine care products, health care products, cosmetic products, household products, pet care products, industrial materials and food-packaging materials. Unicharm India Limited has launched products primarily in child healthcare with Mamy Poko Pants, Mamy Poko Baby Wipes and in feminine health care through its brand 'Sofy'.

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About **GlobalHunt Foundation (GHF)**

GlobalHunt Foundation (GHF) is primarily a CSR research and consulting organization, it has been established as a section 25 not for profit company registered under the Indian Companies Act, 1956. As a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), GHF serves as a knowledge catalyst and engages its vast corporate clientele with diverse multi-stakeholders to enhance their Corporate Sustainable Responsibility (CSR), GHF provides key services on research, reporting programme designing, advisory, training and due diligence for its pan India clients comprising of leading corporate, civil society organizations, government institutions and academia.

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Disclaimer:

The report is an Outcome Report of the programme "Sahyogi" undertaken by Unicharm India Private Limited as their CSR initiative in Alwar district, Rajasthan. The programme is being implemented by GlobalHunt Foundation. All the findings presented in the report are based on field visits, data analysis and interaction with the community undertaken by the team of both Unicharm India Private Limited and GlobalHunt Foundation. The purpose of the report is to present the outcome of the project within the community.

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Acknowledgment

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At the implementation level we would like to thank **Ms. Anuradha Gummaluri, CSR** and **Ms. Swarcha Devgan, Executive CSR** of **Unicharm India** and from the implementation partner **GlobalHunt Foundation Dr Pradip Sarmah, Advisor, Ms. Mehak Kaushik, Programme Coordinator** and **Ms. Megha Kaushik, Programme Coordinator** for bringing the desired change within the target community.

The factory team of **Unicharm India Pvt Ltd** and the local coordinators of the villages for their overall support to the project

A special mention to the Sahyogi's for their continuous efforts towards outreaching the objectives of the projects to the community, by sensitizing them on varied issues and mobilizing them towards usage of safe sanitary products. Finally, the community members of Neemrana for accepting the project and understanding the importance of safe menstruation management and inculcating the principles of the project within their lives.



message

from the director



Unicharm Group firmly believes in integrating the company's business with the notions of Corporate Social Responsibility. Through our products and services we feel that we can enhance the community status on health particularly, in India where health indicators are disturbing and quite low as compared to global statistics. Our group philosophy of NOLA & DOLA (Necessities of Life with Activities & Dreams of Life with Activities) promotes, beliefs and practices within community so that people can achieve their dreams without any hindrance.

Our range of products is oriented for new born infants, women and elderly who are in some form dependents on their families for social and economic mobility. Hence, our products target them to realize that they have the capacity to achieve their dreams without any restrictions. Our major products in India range from sanitary pads and baby diapers to promote safe and healthy living among Indian women community and children.

In India, like rest of the world menstruation is a taboo but nationally women health is comparatively quite low. Women are not focused on maintaining a healthy lifestyle and their health problems are considered to be low priority as compared to other priorities of the family. Thus, among semi and rural women community menstruation practices are quite unsafe and unhygienic where they are not aware about that harmful practice can lead to grave consequences on their health.

Thus, to enhance the community knowledge on the issue of menstruation and to improve their practices during menstruation *Unicharm India Pvt Ltd* have been working in diverse communities across India to sensitize women and adolescents on the menstruation. 'Sahyogi' Project being implemented in the *Neemrana region, Alwar district of Rajasthan* is one such key initiative which focuses on empowering the village community on menstruation and bringing accessibility to adequate knowledge and products for safe management.

We would like to thank our project partner *GlobalHunt Foundation* which is associated with us to implement the project in the community and outreaching the objectives of the project to the community. A special mention and sincere accolades to my CSR Team **Ms. Anuradha Gummaluri**, CSR *Unicharm* and **Ms. Swarcha Devgan**, Executive CSR, *Unicharm* who are working closely with GlobalHunt Foundation and the rural women to create a meaning full impact in the community through the project. To conclude, I would like to thank all our stakeholders for supporting *Unicharm India* seamlessly and making us go strong with every year.

Mr. Vijay Choudhary

Sr. Director- Finance, HR & Exports
Unicharm India Pvt. Ltd.

Executive summary



Sahayogi Project has been close to our hearts as it has given us the opportunity to reach women who are barely connected with anyone outside their village premises. For them, their social life starts and ends within their family and village boundaries. Hence, initiating a discussion on menstruation was something which they hadn't even discussed with their mothers and other close female kins. Discussing menstruation and their hygienic practices during menstruation was like an open canvass for them where they shared all their experiences, shyness, beliefs and restrictions on the issue.

Most of the community for the first time gained knowledge on the issue through our capacity building sessions and were eager to share their own thoughts on the issue. The project modality was planned in such a manner where the project teams initially conversed with the local authorities such as the village *Sarpanch* and *Anganwadi* workers to understand the health situation and mind set of the community on the issue.

Our next level of penetration was at the household level where we individually meet village women and tried to understand their notions about women's health and especially about menstruation. Our field interactions highlighted that although the villages belonged to high landowning class but women were bound with certain restrictions and had never taken any regular health check-ups. Similarly only during the cases of pregnancy they had opted for health services such as ultra sound and hospital delivery. In cases where women were witnessing high bleeding during menstruation they preferred home based solutions. Thus, many of them at young age after only one child had to undergo uterus removal surgery. Our field interactions outcomes and statistics were aligning with our project objectives to initiate capacity building sessions on the issue and overall women health. Hence, regular capacity building session was initiated with community at regular intervals to bridge this gap of understanding and to provide them adequate knowledge on menstruation.

Also, availability of sanitary pads within the villages was a huge concern were women were dependents on their male counterparts for purchase of pads from local market which was usually 5 kms from the main village. Hence, the usage of safe menstruation products was quite irregular among the community. To address the issue the project created Sahyogi women entrepreneurs who are providing Unicharm India sanitary products to the community in order to make the community accessible to safe menstruation products. Also, the role of Sahayogi's is to continuously sensitize the women on the issue.

In the year long project we have achieved certain benchmarks and have realized that more such intervention can be implemented in the community to evolve their understanding on menstruation and on women health. Thus, in the outcome report we have shared the project modality, the capacity building session module and the project outcomes. We are pleased to share our experience on the issue and hope that the same is resourceful for other stakeholders who are working on the similar mandates.

Ms. Anuradha Gummulari,
CSR Unicharm India Pvt. Ltd.



about the Project & Project model

Sahayogi Project is the community led project designed by the *Unicharm India Pvt Ltd* and *GlobalHunt Foundation* to sensitize the women community on the issue of menstruation. Women over the years have developed negligence over menstrual hygiene and sanitation. This coupled with lack of basic water and sanitation amenities both at the individual and at the community level, non-availability of the sanitary products, dependency on male counterparts for the purchase of products (especially in semi-urban and rural geographies due to restricted mobility) and hesitation towards discussing menstruation in public domain have resulted towards a lack of formulation of objective regulatory policies and practices at social level. Also, among families, distribution of income on the purchase of sanitary products especially for women is seen as a special benefit than as a special need. Therefore, women developed their own practices in respect of usage and disposal which poses threats to their own health.

Therefore, to address the serious issue of menstrual hygiene Unicharm India initiated a first-of-its-kind “**Sahyogi**” project in *Neemrana, Alwar district*. The **Unicharm India Pvt Ltd** has its manufacturing factory in Neemrana which is operational since 2008.

The project has been designed in such a manner that it addresses three most crucial issues i.e. awareness, accessibility and lastly availability. The prime purpose of Unicharm India and GlobalHunt Foundation was to penetrate in those sectors of communities where menstruation and issues related to its hygiene remain unaddressed. In the first phase, project covered four villages of Neemrana and the project components are as follow:

Baseline Study

To map the existing knowledge and behavioral practices of the target community towards the issue a baseline study was conducted. The key findings of the study are as follow:

- Menstruation is an issue of secrecy and embarrassment.
- Mostly the knowledge on the issue is usually gained through female family members and friends.
- Lack of primary healthcare facilities together with lack of education at the school and family level has added to no or little knowledge on menstruation.
- Most of them were not aware about the product Sofy however they had knowledge about Unicharm Company.
- Women of the community prefer usage of both cloth and sanitary pad.
- It is mostly the male members of the family who buys sanitary pad for the women.
- The sanitary pads are usually available in medical dispensaries and general stores which are 3-5 kms away for the main village.

Awareness Session

On the basis of the baseline study, awareness and sensitization session was planned for the community where the following issues were discussed:

- What is menstruation?
- The biological process of menstruation
- What is the health problems related with menstruation?
- Why some women bleed more?
- Why should pads be used?
- Why should pads be preferred over cloth?
- What are the benefits of using sanitary napkins?
- Nutrition's intakes during menstruation



Sahyogi

Through our interactions with the community we realized that availability of sanitary pad at reasonable price is a huge issue in the community. Women are subjected to depend on their male counterparts for purchase of pads as they were only available in main markets which are 3-5 kms away from the village. Also, as most of the shops are run by male members the female members of the community felt ashamed and embarrassed to ask for sanitary pads.

Thus, to address the issue, the project team identified Sahyogis from the community who have acted as an change agents for the community.

Through Sofy Sahyogi the community will gain accessibility to sanitary pads at reasonable price whenever required and with time will almost cease their dependency on the male members. Also, from time to time Sofy Sahyogi can sensitize women about the issue and can provide knowledge on the menstrual hygiene management

Project Model

Phase-One

- Connection with local factory nodal
- Communicating the Project Objectives
- Preliminary Field Visit to the Villages with local nodal person
- Meeting with Villages Sarpanch
- Explaining the Project Modality

Phase-Three

- Meeting with Anganwadi Workers
- Planning community sessions

Phase-Five

- Monthly Project Reporting

Phase-Two

- Field Visit to Villages
- Review of Village with Village Local Nodal
- Household Level Interaction with Villagers
- Baseline Survey

Phase-Four

- Identification of Sahyogi's
- Taking product requirements of Sahyogi's
- Forwarding the same to Unicharm CSR Team
- Further sharing of product requirements with factory
- Facilitation of Products

Project Impact

Sahyogi project is first of its kind CSR programme conducted for the local community of *Neemrana, Alwar district, Rajasthan* which is meant to sensitize the community at large on a issue which holds cultural restrictions and taboos. Never before any of the company located in Japanese Zone had implemented a CSR project in the community nor has build any social relation with the community apart from hiring the local youth.

Hence, the Sahyogi project has been able to break the gap of community interaction and has created two way communication between Unicharm India and local community. Before the programme intervention, although the target community were aware about *Unicharm India Pvt Ltd* as a company *but were not aware about their products and services range*. Thus, through the programme the company products have been able to penetrate in the community. Earlier, *there was zero penetration of Unicharm products and other brands were known and sold at the shops*. But through the project, the project team has been able to gather information about such local shops and women within villages which can also be the key stakeholders to target for further dissemination of company's products.

- **Capacity Building & Awareness Sessions.**
- **4 villages** covered.
- **5 Sahyogies** created.
- **3-4 shopkeepers** identified.
- **Almost 2000 females** and adolescents girls sensitized on the issue.
- **Almost 10 capacity building sessions** conducted.
- **20-22 household** level community interaction.
- **Awareness** about the products in the community.

In terms of Sales:

• Sahyogi's

Background			Purchasing trend						
Name	Age	Occupational Status	Product	Time	Qty.	Time	Qty.	Time	Qty.
Shakuntala	45	Women Beauty Shop	BodyFit	Sep-Nov	36	Nov-Jan	48	Feb-Apr	48
Rekha	30	Women Beauty Shop (Earlier she was not working but after the project intervention she has opened her own shop)	BodyFit	Sep-Nov	20	Nov-Jan	25	Feb-Apr	48
			Mamkypoko	Sep-Nov	12	Nov-Jan	12	Feb-Apr	15-20
Rinki	28	School Teacher & Beautician	BodyFit	Sep-Nov	24	Nov-Jan	20	Feb-Apr	20
Babli	35	Anganwadi Worker	BodyFit			Feb-Mar	30	Mar-Apr	48

In terms of Sales:

• Shop Keepers

Background			Purchasing trend					
Name	Occupational Status	Product	Time	Qty.	Time	Qty.	Time	Qty.
Gaurav Yadav	General Store	BodyFit	Sep-Nov	12	Nov-Jan	25	Feb-Apr	48
		Anti-Bacteria	Sep-Nov	2 cartoons	Nov-Jan	25	Feb-Apr	48
Santosh Lakeha	Cosmetic Shop	BodyFit	Sep-Nov	12	Nov-Jan	48	Feb-Apr	48
		Anti-Bacteria	Sep-Nov	12	Nov-Jan	10	Feb-Apr	48
Vijender Yadav	Chemist	BodyFit	Sep-Nov	6	Nov-Jan	48	Feb-Apr	48
		Anti-Bacteria	Sep-Nov	Not Available	Nov-Jan	48	Feb-Apr	Not Available
Chandu Lal	Chemist	BodyFit	Sep-Nov	48	Nov-Jan	48	Feb-Apr	Not Available

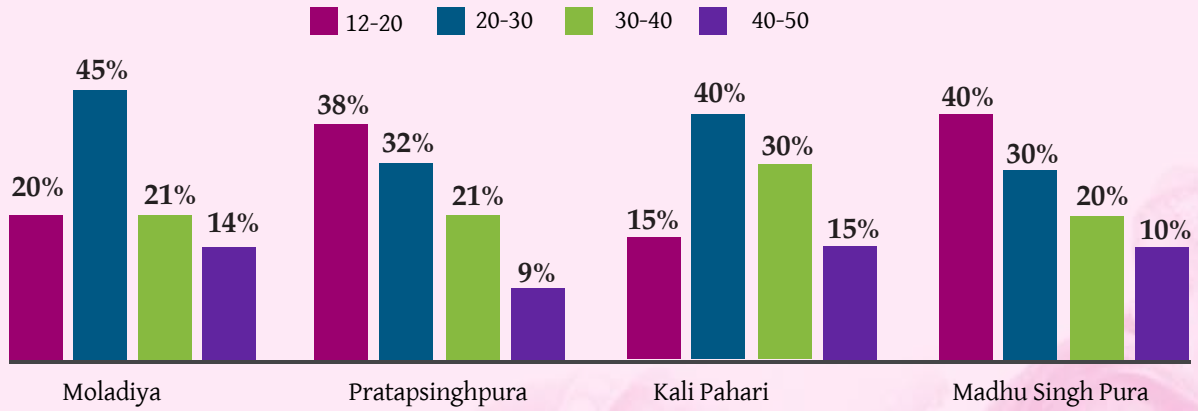




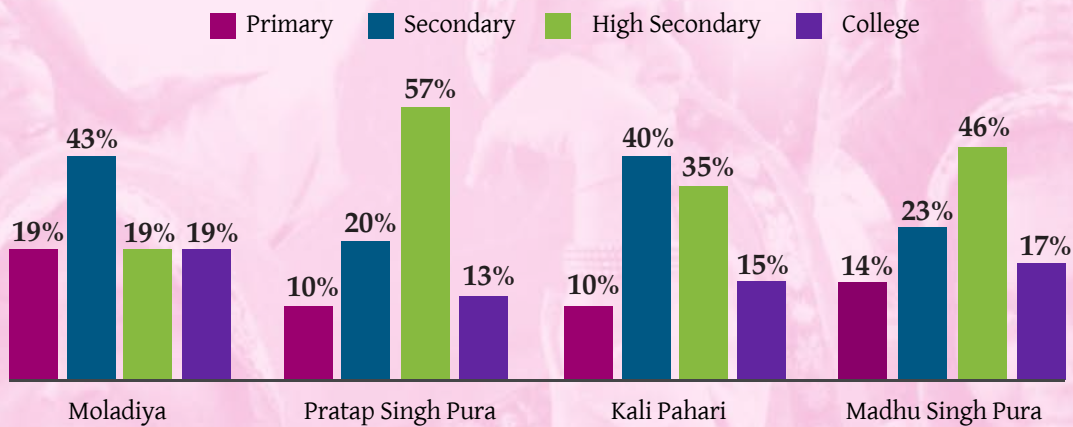
Demographic Profile of the Villages

Moladiya Village	Pratap Singh Pura	Kali Pahadi	Madhusinghpura
<p><i>Demographic Profile</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The village is a hindu community. Most of the village women are housewives and mostly stay at home. The village has almost 500 couples which are mostly of Yadav community. The community is a landowning Gujar community. The community does not have primary health centre in nearby vicinity. Also, it has a small school which only tills primary level. Women of the village still lack access to basic health facilities such as regular health check-ups etc. <p><i>Community Knowledge on Menstruation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the women are well aware and are using sanitary napkins during their menstruation. However are not aware of 'Sofy' brand. The target community was between the age of 18-35 years. They had no idea about menstruation before their 1st menarche It is usually their husbands who purchase sanitary pads for them from Neemrana market. 	<p><i>Demographic Profile</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The village has around 400 couples and there is 1 school in the vicinity of the village which caters to around 70 girl students. Most of the male community of the village is engaged in farming or as commercial drivers. The villagers have close network with Delhi City as they travel to the city on monthly basis. Most of the female community are housewives or assist their husbands in farming. On every 4th Monday of the month a health camp is organized by the government for the villagers. <p><i>Community Knowledge on Menstruation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The female community of the village are unaware about products of Unicharm India. They mostly use cloth or sanitary pad. It is their male counterparts who purchases pads for them from the Neemrana market. Anganwadi centers and Neemrana market is usually a place from where they purchase the pads. Most of the target community has regular periods and barely have visited gynecologist for regular check-ups. The pads are usually disposed off by either throwing them in open landfills, burying them underground or are burnt off. 	<p><i>Demographic Profile</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The village is a small village with only 40 families. Mostly Gujar landowning community is prevalent in the village. The community land has been bought for government for setting up of Japanese zone. Thus, most of the villagers have bought their land in the nearby villages. The village has only one school which is a primary school. A small Anganwadi Centre exists within the primary school run by two anganwadi workers. The village has no Health Centre nearby its vicinity. Most of the village women were housewives and mostly stay at home. However, they go to fields during the season for cutting of agricultural produce. <p><i>Community Knowledge on Menstruation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The women community of the village are unaware about Unicharm's product and services. The old and the middle age generation of the village are prone to use cloth. While the young girls of the village use sanitary pads. The women are unaware about the issue of menstruation. Although the young girls are aware as they have been taught about it in schools. 	<p><i>Demographic Profile</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Situated near to Hero factory. Around 2000 population Majority a village of land owners. One secondary school situated within the premises. For higher education children travel to Pratapsinghpura. One aganwadi centre. No medical or general store available. Well established packka houses with modern amenities. <p><i>Community Knowledge on Menstruation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 2 shops that keep women sanitary products. The shops are selling local brand. Although women are aware about other brands as well buit they prefer using local brand as it is cheap in comparison to others. Female community are not aware about Unicharm products. Young girls are aware about the biological process of menstruation. Women have the habit of using sanitary pad. Girls are specifically using sanitary napkins while middle aged group are using both cloth and pads. For disposal the community is using dustbin.

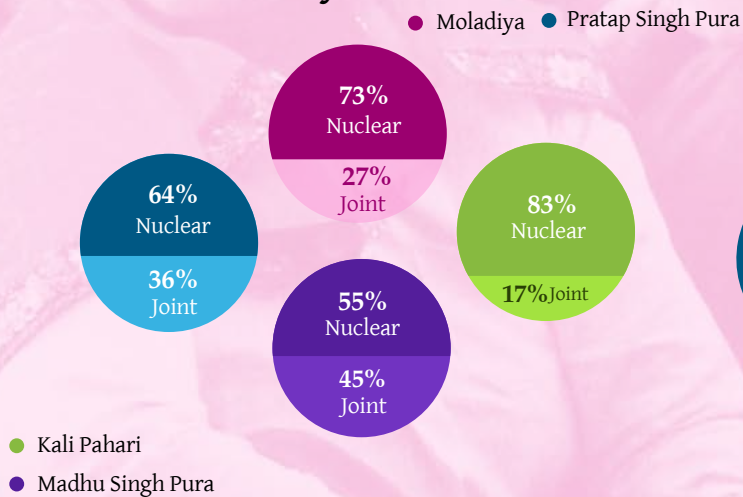
Age Distribution



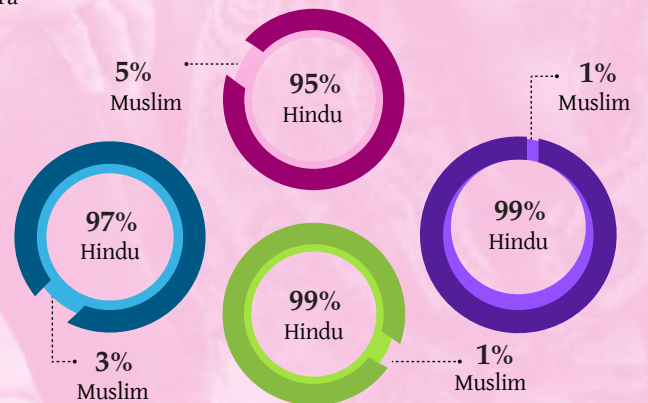
Education Qualification



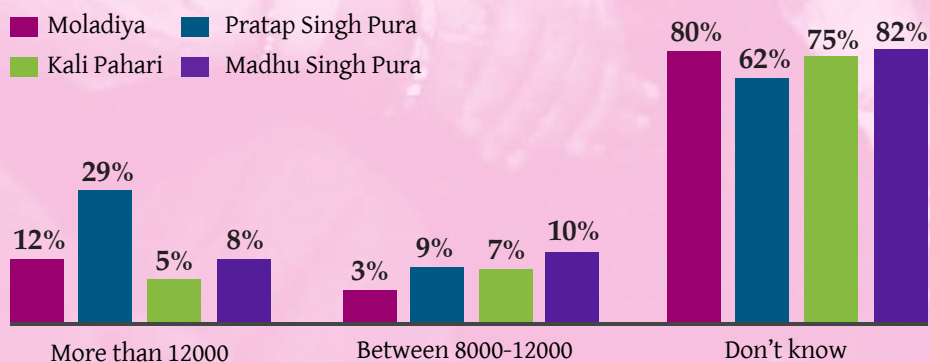
Family Structure



Religion



Family Income





Community Sessions

The stigma and silence on menstruation has made this an issue of low importance and priority. The discussions at both family and society level are quite limited where women prefer not to speak publically even with their other close kins. Young girls achieving puberty are not given prior knowledge. It is only on their first menarche that they are provide information which is also too limited to make them understand the importance of menstruation.

A similar kind of attitude was observed during our conservations with the target community during our baseline survey. They expressed their apprehension and embarrassment to share their understanding on the issue. However, at the same time they also showed keen interest in learning about menstruation and its related issues.

Thus, to achieve our objective of imparting comprehensive and contextual knowledge on menstruation the project team framed the training modules in various divisions. The modules were prepared keeping in mind the multiple opinions and beliefs shared with us by the community. The brief overview of the prepared are as follow:



Module - One

Explaining natural process of growth among children especially girls

- How does a child grow?
- What physical and mental changes does a girl witness?
- What is puberty?
- Age of achieving puberty?

Module - Two

What is Menstruations ?

- What do the community understands by menstruation
- What is menstruation
- Why menstruation is important
- First experiences of menstruation

Module - Three

Hygiene Practices and Disposal mechanisms

- Various Mechanisms to manage menstruation
- Pro & Con of Cloth & Sanitary Pad
- Hygiene & Cleanliness practices to be maintained during menstruation
- How to dispose cloth and sanitary pad

Module - Four

Myths & Taboos associated with the subject

- Can't go to religious places and perform any religious practice
- Can't touch pickle
- Can't take head bath
- Can't touch plants
- Can't cook food for family members

Module - Five

Diet to be maintained during menstruation

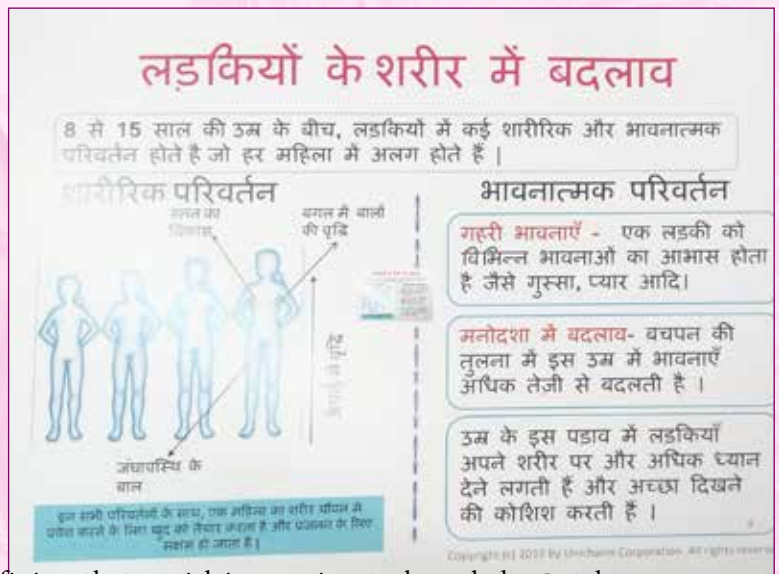
Module - One

Explaining natural process of growth among children especially girls:

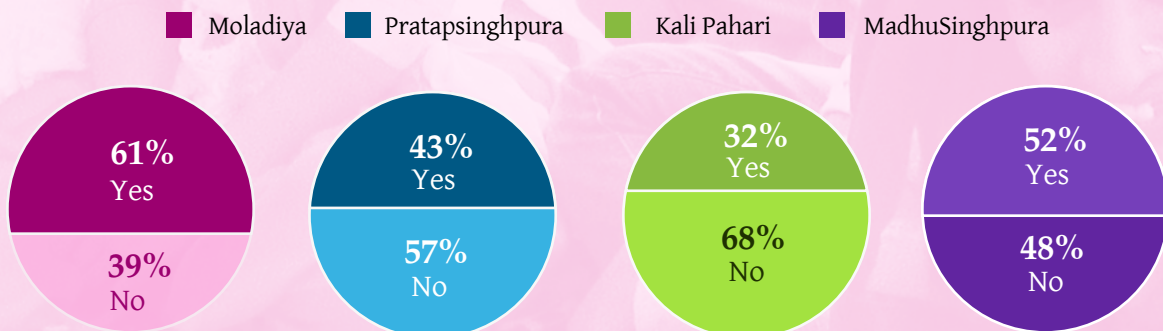
'Puberty' is a phase of life where human body undergoes physical and mental changes. It is considered to be a pivotal phase in life where a human faces diverse changes in their feelings, moods, thinking capacity and most importantly witness changes in body structure. Changes witnessed by both male and female body are different. Girls tend to start having breasts enhancement, develop hair growth on private parts and start menstruating.

Hence, to develop an understanding of menstruation it is very important to explain the concept of puberty as initiation of menstruation marks an important role in defining that a girl is growing to be a lady. But however, our community still lacks understanding on 'puberty' and are unable to relate with the bodily changes, they consider it to be issue of shame which needs to be just observed within oneself than to discuss with any close person.

To aware the community on the issue of menstruation the first session of the capacity building was oriented towards explaining them the process of 'puberty' in order to relate the concept of menstruation. Through the diagrammatic presentation the puberty process was explained to the community.

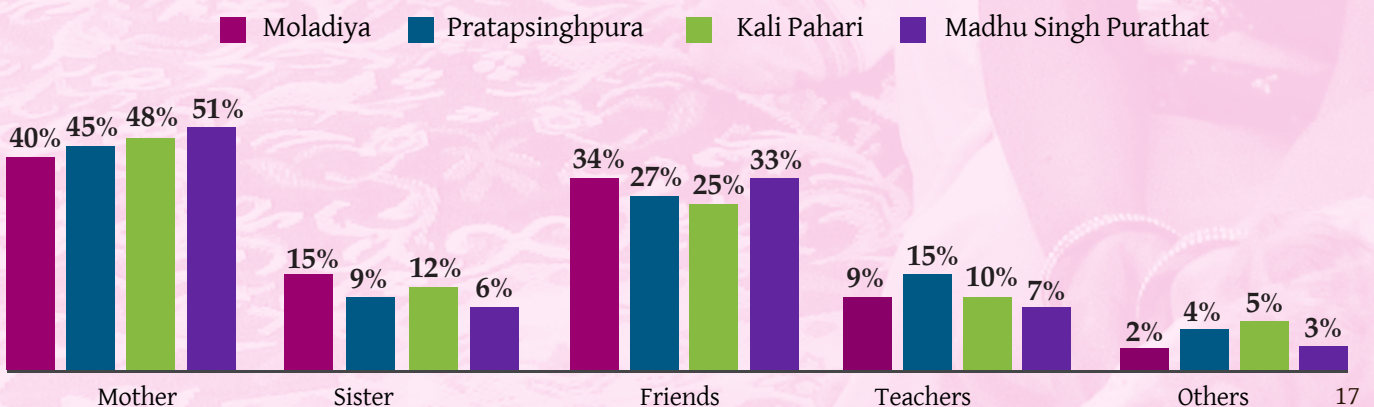


Prior Knowledge on Menstruation



The girls aged between 12 to 20 years were aware about menstruation as this was taught in their biology classes in school

Sources of information



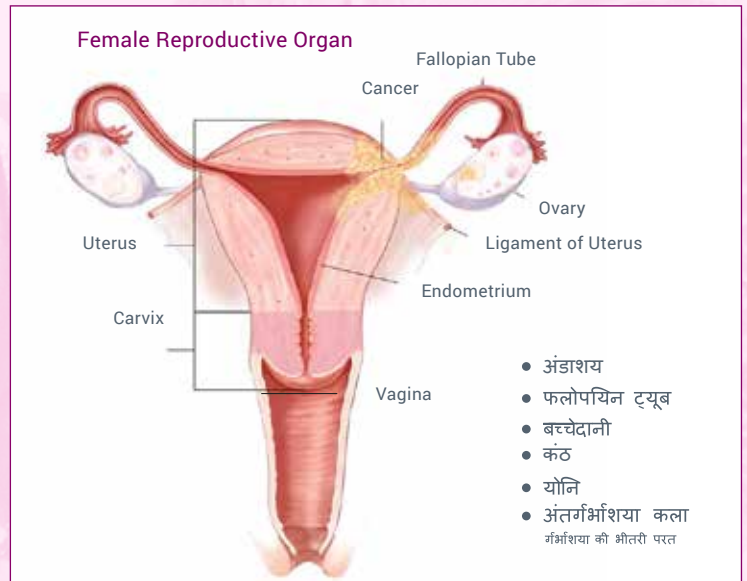
Module - Two

What is menstruation ?

The second module of the session highlighted on the natural procedure by which each individual grows towards adulthood. It is essential to biologically explain the process to the community as it is only then that their shyness, embarrassment and silence can be broken.

As unawareness on the natural process of menstruation leads misconception on the issue and forms basis for embarrassment. It is the tendency of the society to share restrictions and taboos with the new menarche girls than explaining them the process in biological terms. At our societal level many of us are not even aware how the process is initiated every month. Inadequate knowledge on the subject plus the diverse forms of myths and stigmas imposed on the girl creates a environment of shame and sacredness among the new menarche's. In our research, a lot of women shared that they had cried and felt depressed when they had got their first menstruation as they mother's never gave them any concrete answers regarding it.

Hence, to impart information and generate awareness among the community the second module of the sessions explained the term **"MENSTRUATION"**.



What is Menstruation?

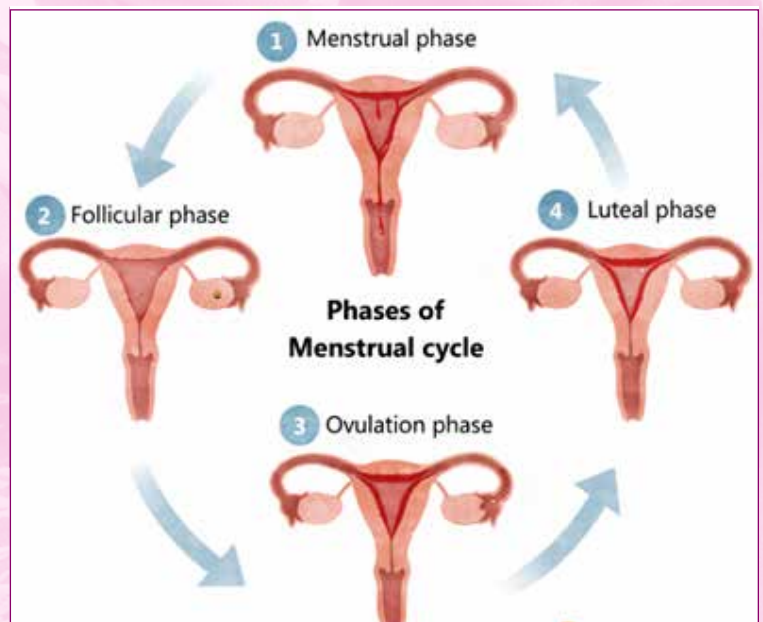
Menstruation is a natural process of the reproductive cycle where every month a girl or woman witness loss of blood from vagina. Menstruation is related with a female reproductive system.

How is it related with Female Reproductive System?

Every month reproductive egg is released from the ovary which moves towards uterus through the fallopian tube. Tissue and blood start to line the wall of the uterus for fertilization. As till the time the egg is not fertilized by the male sperm it is shed through the vagina along the blood. The bleeding is usually witnessed for two to seven days.

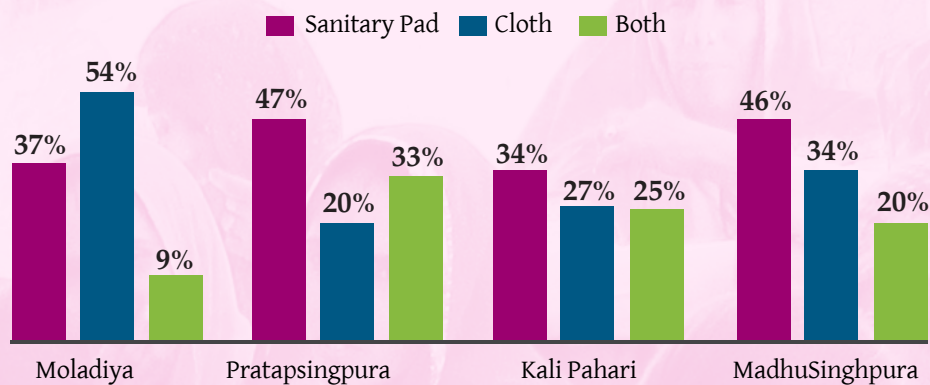
Menstrual Cycle

Menstrual Cycle is usually referred to as number of day gaps from one menstruation to another. The menstrual cycle is usually around 28 days but at times can also range from 21 to 35 days.

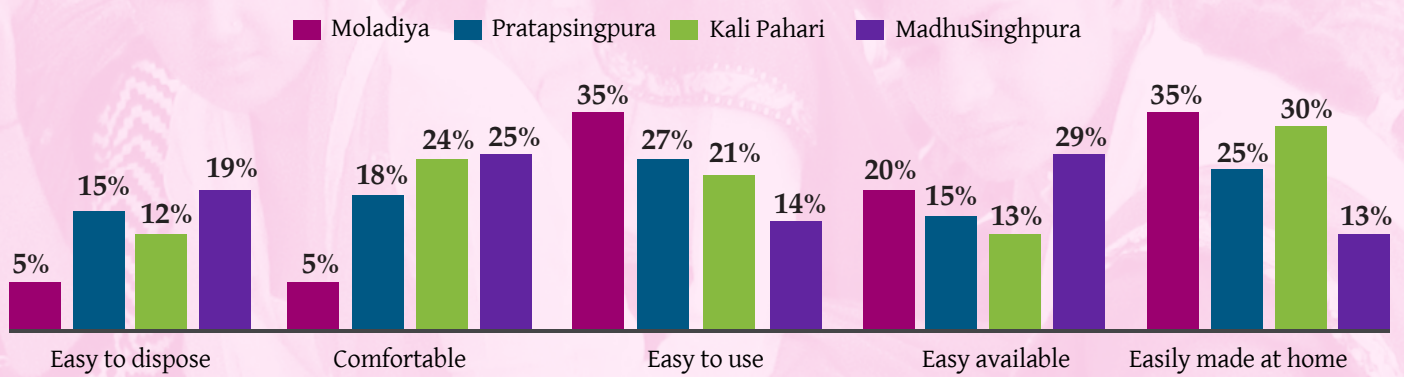


Community Practices on menstruation

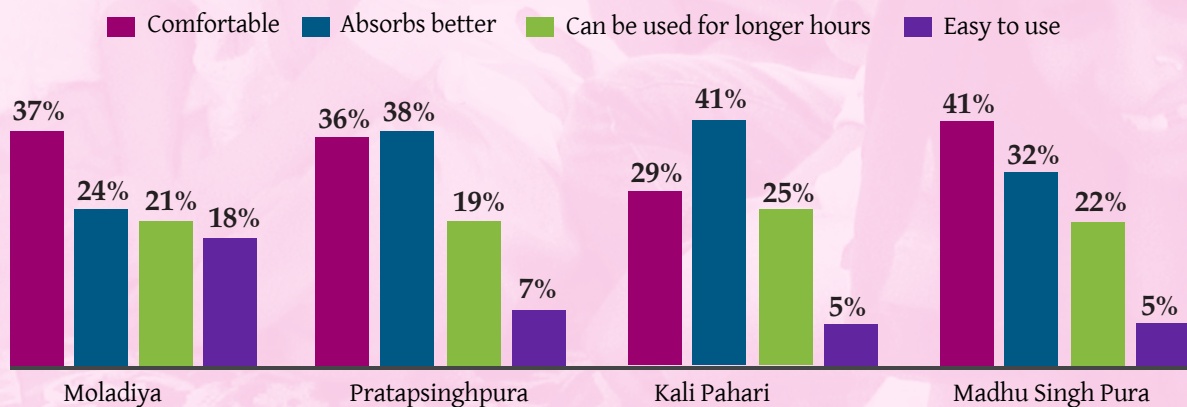
Products used during menstruation



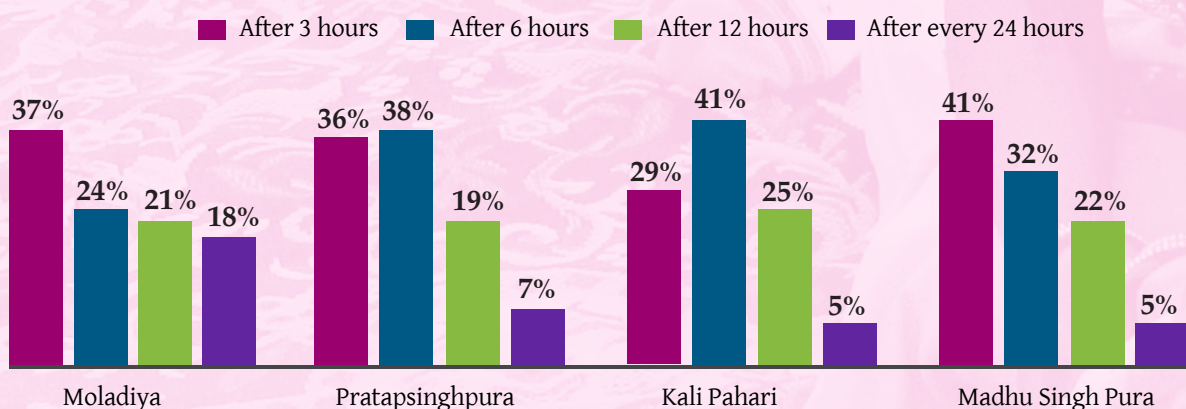
Why cloth is used



Why sanitary pad is used

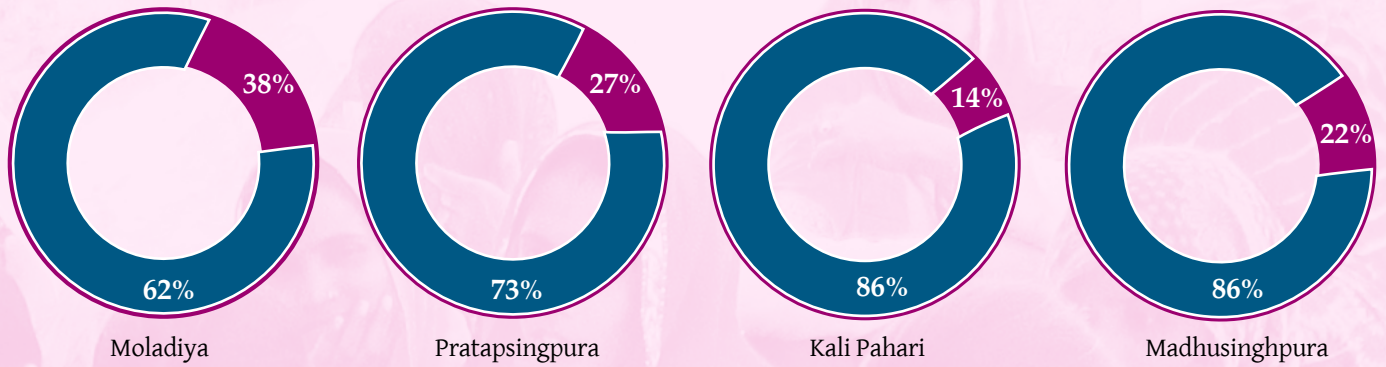


Duration of changing pad & cloth



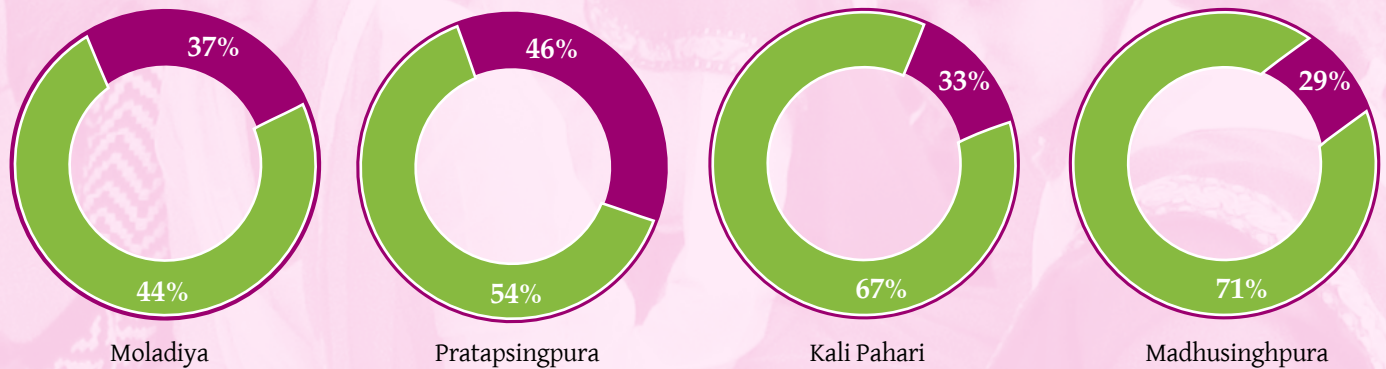
Place for buying Sanitary Pads

● General Store ● Medical



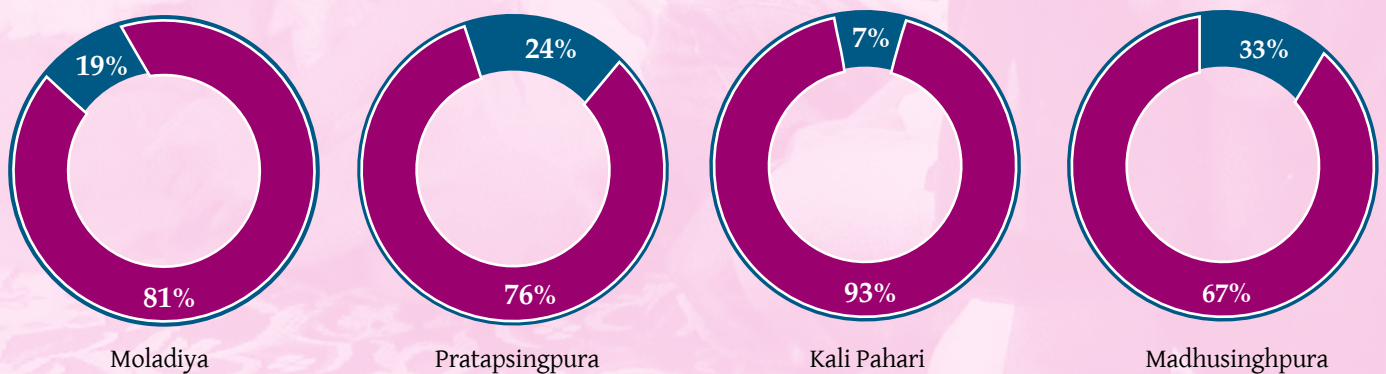
Who Buys Sanitary Pad for You

● Myself/Female members of family ● Male members



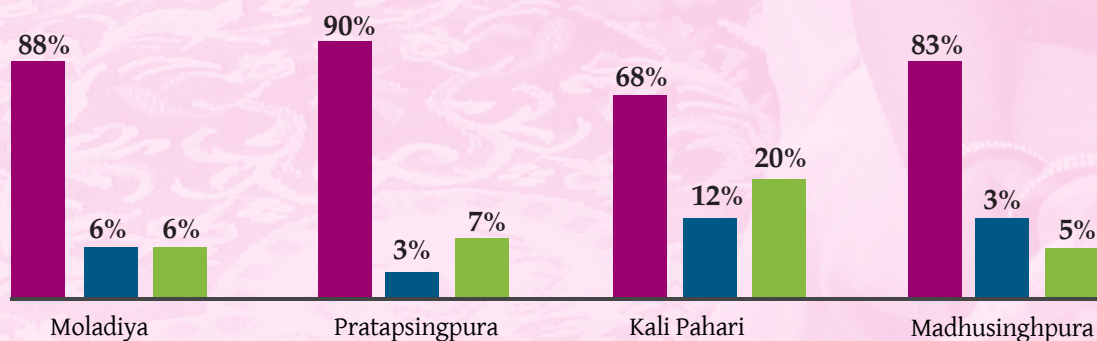
Do You Feel Ashamed while buying Sanitary Pads from Male Shopkeepers

● Yes ● No



How is Sanitary pad & cloth disposed

● Throw in dustbin ● Burn it ● Bury it



Module - Three

Hygiene Practices and Disposal mechanisms

The third module of the session oriented the community towards maintaining basic hygiene during menstruation. As unhygienic practices during menstruation days can lead to infection, pain in the lower abdomen and at times cyst in the uterus which may lead to infertility among girls and women. Thus, the following hygienic points were shared with the community:

- Bath should be taken during menstruation days.
- It is important to clean private parts of the body every day and also during menstruation.
- The part should be cleaned thoroughly every time one uses the wash room.
- Before and after cleaning the part it is essential to keep one's hand clean.
- Depending on the flow, one should change sanitary pads and cloth accordingly; however, it is advisable to change in a gap of 4-5 hrs so as prevent oneself from infection.
- Both cloth and sanitary pad should not be used beyond 6 hrs.
- For disposing sanitary pads and cloth the following mechanism should be used.



For Sanitary Pad

- Sanitary pad should be disposed off only in dustbin.
- After removing it should properly wrapped in a newspaper or pad wrapper to dispose off.
- Sanitary pad should never be flushed in the toilet as it can lead congestion of the toilet pipe.

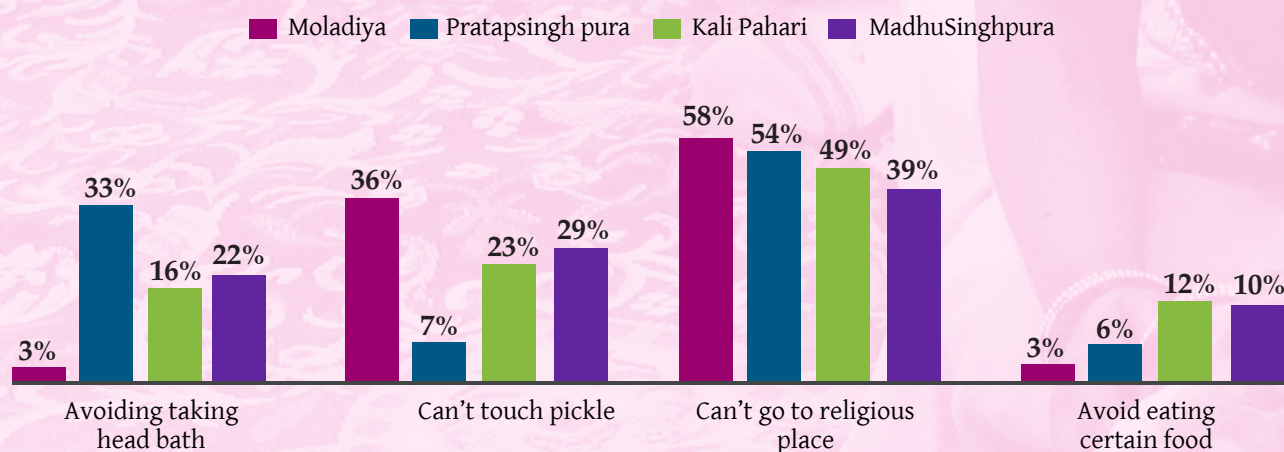
For Cloth

- Usually a cloth should not be used more than 2-3 times.
- After every usage it should be washed with soap and water.
- It should be dried in direct sunlight.
- The cloth should be used only when it is totally dried.
- The same cloth should not be used by other female members of the family.



Also, it was shared that consumption of any kind of pills to control menstruation should be avoid and should be consumed with proper consultation with doctor or gynecologist

Social Taboos followed by the Community



Module - Four

Myths and Social Taboos

Inability to speak on the issue is deeply associated with diverse myths, taboos and social stigmas. Almost everywhere in every culture and society certain kinds of stigmas and social exclusion are followed by women and girls during menstruation. In our target region, the women community observed certain restrictions during their menstruation days which tend to limit their social mobility in the society and affected their daily routine.

The basic notion among community prevailed was that menstruation blood was impure as it came out from the vagina. Thus, being an impure blood certain daily routine practices should be monitored to avoid forwarding the impurity to other household items and family members. Some examples of taboos practiced among the community are as followed:



Practice	Reason
Can't enter the temple	Temple being a sacred place and menstruation being an impure stage therefore going to temple or performing any religious practices is avoided in those days.
Can't take pickle	Pickle making is not a talent which everyone is endowed with. Thus, if a menstruating women touches pickle then it is ruined or becomes stale.
Avoid taking head bath	Those 2-7 days are the days of impurity hence; to clean oneself properly and be pure again head bath should be taken only after the periods are over.
Avoid touching cattle or any plant	To avoid passing the impurity to the cattle which may become infertile or the plant will die. Hence women in their menstruation days avoid touching cattle and plants.
Avoid eating certain kind of foods	It is believed that by consumption food such as cold foods, cold water, curd etc. by menstruating women leads to cramps in the body.

Thus, to provide them adequate knowledge and overcome such beliefs of the community; the fourth sessions of the capacity building discussed such beliefs with the community and the team provided their logical explanations to each of the myths cited by the community.

Module - Five

Diet to maintain during menstruation

Sensitizing the women community on the basic diet to be maintained during menstruation was an important part of the capacity building module as the community had apprehensions about certain kind of dietary intakes during menstruation.

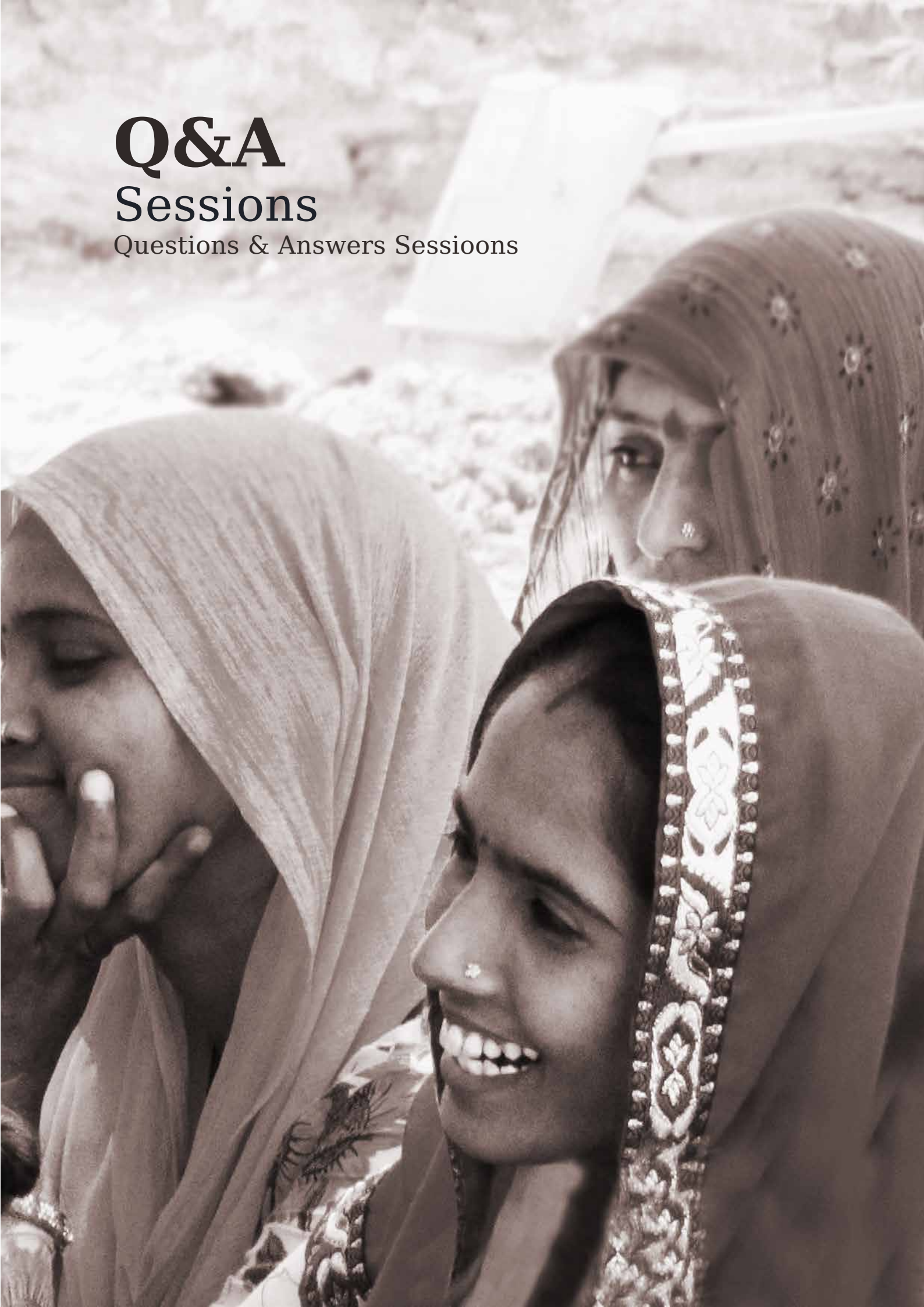
They were explained the interrelation of taking nutritious foods to maintain a healthy body during menstruation as most of the community were unaware about the correlation between the two. Hence, the project team briefed them on the importance of nutrition, healthy lifestyle and increase food items with *Calcium, Iron and Proteins*. Sources of vital nutrients such as food containing *Calcium, Carbohydrates, Proteins, Minerals, Vitamins etc.* were briefed to them.

Some important inputs given to the community were:

- To remain healthy during menstruation it is important to take a healthy diet of fruits and vegetables.
- Reduce caffeine intake to feel less tensed and irritable.
- To avoid swelling in body intake of salt should be reduced.
- High calcium foods such as milk and yogurt, green vegetables, legumes should be consumed.

Q&A Sessions

Questions & Answers Sessions



Project Team posed questions to the Community

- Why do they know about menstruation?
- Why do they think that menstruation blood is impure?
- Why do they think that they suffer cramps and depression during menstruation?
- What hygiene practices do they practice to keep their vagina and nearby area clean?
- Why do they feel ashamed of discussing the issue with their daughters and among one another?
- Have young girls ever asked about menstruation from their mothers or any other close female member?
- Why do they feel ashamed of buying sanitary pads from male shopkeeper?
- What kind of dietary intake or avoid during menstruation



Community posed questions to the Project Team

- What is menstruation?
- Which is correct age to have menstruation?
- Till what age does menstruation happen?
- Why is it irregular in some people?
- Why do some witness heavy bleeding and some witness very less bleeding?
- Why does cramps are felt in the stomach and back?
- What is the white discharge that also comes from vagina?
- Why does irritation and rashes are felt near and in the vagina?
- How do we know that we have got infection?

Sofy Sahyogi

Women Change Agents in the Community

Our interactions with community also made us realized that the purchasing sanitary napkins was huge concern in the community as there are no nearby shops inside the village that provide sanitary napkins. It was usually the male member of the family that would purchase the pads from the local market almost 5-10 kms away from the village.

Also, the shops by women of the village were usually cosmetic shops that although provided female related items but were not keeping sanitary pads. Hence, most women preferred opting for cloth pads or purchasing them whenever their male counterparts visited the local market. To bridge the gap the inaccessibility in the community the project team created 'Sahyogis' - women change agent from and for the community. The prime role of the Sahayogis is to manage the project at the local level where they would provide *Unicharm* women care products to the community.

Being locally located at the village level they interact with the community, provide them knowledge and products for managing their menstruation. The community also feels reliable on these Sahayogis as they already know them and they are not ashamed to share their concerns or feel shy to buy sanitary pads.



Role of Sahyogi's

- *Sahyogi's are the change agents for the community.*
- *They will introduce the product within the community and will also generate knowledge on safe usage and disposal of the napkins.*
- *Map the overall practice among women and adolescent girls.*
- *Sensitize the community towards safe and hygienic menstrual practice.*
- *Run and manage the project at the local level*



Profiles of Sahyogis selected for the project



Rinki is a school teacher and a beautician where she takes classes in morning and run her beauty parlour in the evening. Both her profession gives her an immense opportunity to interact with women community of the village where she has developed a friendly relation with all them. Being associated with the project she has been able to communicate the right and wrong practices to the community and most importantly have been able to break their silence.



Rekha had always dreamt about helping her husband in contributing towards family earnings and income. She wanted to initiate her own business through which she can be self independent and can save money for her daughter's future. With her association with the project now she has been able to start a fully fledged shop of women cosmetics. The Sahayogi project has given her wings to be an entrepreneur



Shakuntla despite running a general store in the village had felt the need to keep sanitary pads to address communitiy inconvenience. However, lacked solution to help her community. The Sahayogi project gave answer to her problem where now she can assist the community and help them from going far off market



Babli is an anganwadi worker and understand the need to communicate the understanding of menstruation in the community. She knows that women in the community are unaware and even lack basic understanding on the issue. Thus, community sessions are crucial to change their mind set and evolve their thinking. Sessions have made an attempt to break their silence on the issue and have created a space to share their concerns.



Maya is a social worker and an ex-anganwadi worker. Despite being no longer associated with anganwadi centers she has the commitment to serve and aware the community on crucial social issues on her own. She knows that to bring a change in the society there is first a need to initiate the work towards change. Hence, her relationship with the project supports her will to always work towards the society.

With the expansion of the project more such Sahyogi's will be recognized in the more villages of Neemrana so as wider dissemination is spread on the issue

Sustainability Plan

Time Limit:

The Sofy Sahyogi project is a yearlong initiative for the 4 villages of *Neemrana*, Alwar district, *Rajasthan* were the project focus on imparting knowledge and awareness on menstruation hygiene and management. The project is implemented in phase-wise were rapport building with community, understanding their practices and knowledge towards menstruation, the social and cultural taboos of the community, conducting awareness sessions for the community and mapping the change in attitude and is being conducted. The project is based on multiple of visits to the community and each visit has been defined with a clear purpose. Thus, the criteria of time line played a crucial role in planning the exit strategy of the

Achievement of Benchmarks:

The benchmarks for the project have been defined in terms of a baseline survey of the community, number of awareness sessions with the community, identification of Sofy Sahyogi and facilitation of products to the Sofy Sahyogi and an end line assessment to map the impact of the community.

Achievement of Program Impacts:

In broad terms, the major objective of the programme is to sensitize women on the issue of menstruation. Along with selecting those change agents from the society who can address the issues of lack of knowledge, unavailability of sanitary napkins and inaccessibility to purchase pads. Thus, to measure the impact of the project an end-line assessment questionnaire is prepared which will cover about the change in knowledge, behavior of the community bought by the awareness sessions, the number of reached through Sofy Sahyogi who are now able to purchase pad without any hesitation and the product feedback is collected to map the impact within the community.

Time Limit

- 3 baseline study.
- Almost 20-22 rapport building sessions with community.
- 10 awareness sessions.

Project Impacts

- Behavioral change among women.
- Building knowledge on the subject.
- Accessibility of sanitary pads to the community.
- Creating women entrepreneurs.
- Initiating the process of hygienic sanitation among women.




Project Benchmarks

- Mapping existing knowledge.
- Building modules for community learning.
- Community awareness.
- Identification of Sofy Sahyogies.
- Addressing the concern of non-availability of pads.
- Tracking and reviewing the project progress.

Key Performance Indicators

Deliverable	Current Scenario	Objectives	Outcomes	Methodology
Awareness & Sensitization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture of silence is observed. • Menstrual Hygiene performs very low in Sanitation area. • The area is largely overtaken by social myths, taboos and constrains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To aware on menstrual cycle. • To discuss several myths, taboos and constrains related with the issue. • To break inhibitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myths and Taboos require dissemination of education. • Create dialogue to spread knowledge • Break the silence prevalent on the issue. • Bring menstruation into discussion women which is lacking among them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local household level interactions with women. • Dialogues with Anganwadi workers. • Discussions with Village sarpanch.
Training & Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menstruation is considered as impure. • Society lack basic knowledge on <i>what, why & how of menstruation</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To educate on what, why and how of menstruation. • Introducing menstrual management. • Overcome menstrual related challenges faced during daily lives and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through training and capacity building session make women understand the meaning and interrelated factors and practices of menstruation. • Build their existing capacities to manage menstruation as normal cycle in a women's life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass community level capacity building sessions.
Product Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-availability of safe sanitation products at reasonable cost is still an issue. • Purchase of sanitary products for female members of family is not a priority. • Lack of accessibility of cheap sanitary products among poverty driven people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce safe sanitary products within targeted community. • Address the issue of non-availability of pads both at individual and community level. • Build expertise on safe sanitary products, usage and disposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sanitary products affordable and accessible to all. • Create sustainable system of menstrual management. • Make sanitary pads available to all. • Enhance existing life skills of women and adolescent girls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Sahyogi's to bridge the gap of unavailability of sanitary products.
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menstruation, a human right issue, is not a priority and the social and governance structures. • Lack of concrete research in the area to understand and map the practices associated with issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the practices of menstruation practiced at household level & village level. • To build and identify key areas of concerns in respect to knowledge, practice, attitudes and most important usage of sanitary products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effort towards compiling diverse perspectives associated with the issue. • Identification of key challenges prevalent among the community. • To map these practices through interactive dialogue, questionnaires, field interview etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline Survey. • Focused group discussions • Informal meetings

Baseline Study process

Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health & Sanitation• Women Empowerment• Education   				
Name	Sofy Sahyogi- addressing the three most crucial concerns of menstruation i.e. awareness, availability and affordability within rural and semi rural communities				
Location	Village: <i>Moladiya, Pratap Singh Pura, Kali Pahari & Madhu Singh Pura</i>				
Pilot study	Pre-project field visit in order to identify <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing community• Existing scenario in respect to the subject• Feasibility of the project				
Timeline	1 Month				
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Socio-economic profile of the community• Existing knowledge of menstruation• Social & religious taboos and practices followed• Usage of sanitary products• Availability and affordability of sanitary products				
Scope	Project coverage	4 Village	Focus	Socio-economic profile	Age, religion, educational qualification, marital status, earning status, total family members, total female members in house and family income.
	Target Community	Female members of the village		Sector specific information	Knowledge on menstruation, age when started, source of information, information on menstruation cycle, usage of sanitary products & their disposals and religious taboos followed.
	Issue	Menstruation hygiene and management		Issues and local concerns	Low knowledge level on menstruation, shyness to discuss the topic, non-availability of pads within village, management of menstruation hygiene and absence of local health centres.
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Field interactions• Participant Observation• Semi structural interviews• Designed questionnaire• Group discussions• House to house interactions• Workshops				

Way Forward

Capacity Building

- Sensitization on child care
- Pros and cons towards usage of sanitary napkins
- Changed behaviour towards the subject
- Communication on menstrual management

Upscaling the Project

- Expansion of the project in other villages
- Enrollments of new Sahyogi's
- Provision of more sanitary napkins to the members
- Introduction of Child care awareness and products in the programme modality

Sahyogi

- Marketing skills to Sahyogi's
- Financial Literacy training
- Improve their consumer based skills





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