UN MATERNAL & CHILD STUNTING REDUCTION PROGRAM

CASE STUDY ON MHM SESSIONS

Sindh Agricultural Forestry Workers Coordinating Organization
PRE INTERVENTION

Menstrual hygiene management (MHM) has been under-researched by the WASH, health and education sectors. Menstruation is a sensitive subject and remains a taboo in many societies. Some cultural beliefs about menstruation reinforce gender inequities and have negative impact on the dignity, health and education of women and girls. There is a lack of knowledge and information about menstruation. Generally, MHM is taught too late. The majority of the girls did not know what happened when they experienced menstruation for the first time and therefore were scared. There is currently no education material on MHM available in Sindh, Pakistan.

The majority of the girls, in Government Girl Degree College, Mahrabpur, feels shy or stressed at school during menstruation and participate less due to shame, fatigue or pain. Psycho-social support for menstruating girls at school is missing. Girls would prefer discussing menstruation with other girls or female teachers at school. Menstruation remains a taboo and menstruating women are still often considered ‘dirty’. Negative socio-cultural beliefs may lead to forced seclusion and stigma: half of the girls said that there are activities and places that are forbidden for them during menstruation.

Due to lack of information about menstrual hygiene, students remain out of schools and considered some activities are forbidden for them that is leading to loss of their studies. Generally, girls use cloth like other girls in the village.

INTERVENTION

To respond the above issue, SAFWCO in collaboration with UNICEF, menstrual hygiene management sessions were designed and delivered at school and community level. SAFWCO social mobilization team triggered the awareness process and imparted the knowledge about menstrual hygiene. “Adolescence and
puberty is a time of intense physical and emotional change for young people between the ages of 10 and 17. Puberty marks a transition between childhood and adulthood that impacts adolescents’ physical, emotional and social wellbeing. Evidence shows that during puberty, adolescents embrace and solidify the gender norms of their society. So, the way girls and boys see themselves within their family, community and society can be drastically altered for the rest of their lives” said Azra Gandahi, Social Organizer SAFWCO, during awareness session in government girl’s degree college, Mahrabpur.

Moreover, it was elaborated that during the menstruation old practices are followed that a girl should not take bath, remaining dirty these days means your health is at risk, diseases are inevitable and chances of getting ill is higher than other days. Using cloth is also hazard to health. Girls were advised to stop following old practices and use sanitary napkin during those days.

Furthermore, major challenges exist in the school environment, including access to appropriate WASH infrastructure, Teachers and head teacher remain unsupportive as it is perceived taboo to society that result in mismanagement of menstrual hygiene that leads to absenteeism from school. To address that problem SAFWCO team has distributed Menstrual hygiene management kits among the students of the college for emergency incidents.

**IMMEDIATE OUTPUT**

- Menstrual hygiene management kits were provided to students of government girl’s degree college, Mahrabpur to ensure protective measures to be taken in emergency incidents.
- More than 60 adolescent’s girls provided with awareness sessions about menstrual hygiene management.
- Teachers of the government girl’s degree college, Mahrabpur were given responsibility to ensure the MHM of students.