

Greetings from Kolkata!

All of us from the CHP Team are happy to inform you that we conducted an Awareness Programme about Menstrual Health & Hygiene, and the use of sanitary napkins, at the Monobikash Field area. It also included health and hygiene education for adolescent girls and women. There were 50 participants in all.

We addressed the following topics:

1. Menstruation: Its nature, cause and what happens when a girl has her period.
2. Menstruation is a not disease.
3. Poor menstrual hygiene and its effects on health.
4. Certain practices which are likely to increase the risks of infection- such as using cloths instead of sanitary napkins; not washing and drying them properly, preferably in the sun. We advised them to use sanitary napkins instead of cloth; to maintain personal cleanliness; to have frequent change of napkins (3-4 times a day and also hygienic disposal of used sanitary napkins.
5. Maintaining proper toilet hygiene.

We were also able to discuss some of the social taboos associated with menstruation, such as:

1. Not touching plants and trees for fear of them withering and dying
2. Not entering temples
3. Remaining in isolation and being regarded as uncountable

We were able to distribute 48 packets (of 20 sanitary napkins each) and a panty to each attendee. There were possible thorough donations from friends.

We also distributed Iron Tablets, Cough mixtures, Anti- Inflammatory Gels and Vaginal Tablets. Ladies with Gynae problems were advised to visit the clinic at Jan Seva.

During a previous visit we had noticed an elderly lady who had no slippers. We were able to provide her a pair on this visit.

At the end of it all we were left feeling that we had made a satisfactory beginning to addressing a cause that was worthy and could impact the quality of lives. Some pictures are attached.

We plan to have many more such field visits to different areas in the near future. We realise that it will not be possible to keep providing sanitary napkins free of cost.

We are therefore looking into the possibility of contacting an organisation which manufactures sanitary napkins and is willing to supply them to us at a nominal price, or even free.

We also hope we can train our ladies to setup a self- income generating project. This is just a thought at the moment, but we are looking forward to it becoming a reality.

We are grateful for your support and encouragement in so many ways.

With our warm regards,

Dr. J.N. Hartnett and the entire CHP Team



