

Summary on Menstrual Hygiene Program

Introduction

Every May 28, nonprofits, government agencies, the private sector, the media, and individuals come together to celebrate Menstrual Hygiene Day (MH Day) and advocate for the importance of good menstrual hygiene management (MHM). This year, MH Day recognizes that periods do not stop for pandemics and will continue to drive home the idea It's Time for Action. This theme highlights the urgency for the collective work needed to both change the negative social norms surrounding menstruation and also catalyze progress toward empowering women and girls to unlock their educational and economic opportunities.

On the occasion of MH Day, Smart WASH Solutions organized zoom discussion program on 28th May 2020 (15th Jestha 2077) at 1 PM to raise awareness of MHM. The speakers of this program were Dr. Anjana Dongol (Gynecologist, Dhulikhel Hospital) and Mrs. Promisha Mishra (Computer Engineer, Nepal Electricity Authority) & Mrs. Bimala Sharma (Deputy Mayor, Dhulikhel Municipality) was Chief Guest of the program. Presentations were provided by the speakers on Menstruation and Menstrual Hygiene Management respectively. A total number of 100 participants participated in the program.

Presentation and Discussion

First presentation was presented by Dr. Anjana Dongol on Menstruation. She focused on menstruation, myths and cultural practice on it, genital hygiene, personal hygiene and diet during menstruation. She explained that normal menstruation takes place at an interval of 28-35 days and painful menstruation is called Dysmenorrhea. She explained about myths about menstruation like girls or women need to sleep separately during these days, girls and women can't bath during these days and so on but she stressed that these are all false doings. She also explained about cultural practices followed during these days such as during menstruation girls and women can't touch gods, they can't take part in rituals, etc. She addressed that whatever may be myths and cultural practices, girls and women must follow genital hygiene, regular personal hygiene and eat nutritious food during menstruation. She stressed that still there is lack of awareness among educated male and other family members. She enlightened that womanhood is incomplete without period.

Second Presentation was presented by Mrs. Promisha Mishra on Menstrual Hygiene Management. She focused on unmanaged menstruation, social problems and environmental aspects of pad. She said that girls and women die in the hut (Chhaupadi) during their stay in menstruation due to snake bite, cold, rape etc. and there is untouchability faced by girls and women during menstruation. She explained that we use environment to dispose our menstrual waste so it was requested to use reusable pads. She explained that menstruation becomes healthy only if there is balance in economics, society and environment. She stated that we should embrace menstrual blood and period, menstrual blood is a greatest source of NPK fertilizer. She suggested to produce zero menstrual waste through the use of reusable pads, cloth and cups, less dependency on sanitary pads

and make eco-friendly periods. She informed that nothing is wrong with menstruation but the way we are taking it is wrong so it is time to talk about menstruation that it is boon to girls and women and every one should take it positively.

Mrs. Bimala Sharma said that our society is still conservative and remote areas of people are still unaware on menstruation. She stated that schools students do not continue their schools during menstruation days and cultural practices are still practiced in rural areas and educated families. These kind of awareness program has to be effective and conducted frequently. She mentioned that Dhulikhel Municipality has distributed pads free of cost to the school students (girls) studying within this municipality and provided training to prepare reusable pads. She explained that it is necessary to eradicate the conservative and unscientific concepts on menstruation and aware people or make people and society more informative on menstruation. She suggested that local governments should take this issue as an important one and make people aware that girls and women should take proper hygiene, proper diet, go to their works, both male and female should have positive attitude towards menstruation and facilitate in these works.

Participants were grateful to participate in the program and were found very interactive and informative. The number of 100 participants showed people's enthusiasm to take part in the program. Even more people were trying to attend this program but due to the limitation of 100 participants in a zoom meeting, they couldn't attend it. This kind of program helped to provide more knowledge and aware participants more about menstruation and menstrual hygiene management. This shows that there is demand of such programs to increase awareness.

Annexes

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Annex 2: Photographs



