AWARENESS OF HYGIENE AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN RADHANPUR BLOCK OF PATAN DISTRICT, GUJARAT
(JULY AND AUGUST 2016)

Meetings were held regularly across various villages to spread awareness of menstrual hygiene among adolescents and women.

Date	Village	Place	No. of Participants
7/7/2016	Maghapur	Community Leader's House	36
8/7/2016	Alhabad	Community Leader's House	35
11/72016	Subapura	Anganwadi Centre	32
13/7/2016	Jawaharnagar	Temple	38
21/7/2016	Kalyanpura	Community Leader's House	50
26/7/2016	Javatri	ASHA Worker's House	40
2/8/2016	Memdavad	Community Leader's House	38
13/8/2016	Chaniyaghar	Community Leader's House	35
17/8/2016	Masali	Anganwadi Workers home	34
23/8/2016	Karsangadh	Community Leader's House	20

Viilage Maghapura:

- When we went to the village, the Anganwadi Worker had gone for a meeting. The caretaker ben was busy and the leader that has now come of age, was out of town.

- Thereafter the meeting was organized at the Choudhari Vaas. Since there is not much unity amongst the participating communities, women from other communities were not present.

- Nobody in the village was willing to become a leader. During the meeting, a number of women had discussed many issues. Around 2 to 3 college going girls use pads.

- Saataa in the Choudhari community is high, as a result of which 2 women who are faced with problems in their marital home are not willing to sever ties. With this the life of 4 people is ruined, but with AWAG's interventions of building understanding, they have started attending meetings.

- After the meeting, 14 women expressed their readiness to use pads. Four women complained of white discharge and said that they were ready to take medication for it. 1 woman who complained of vaginal infection with itching was advised to take immediate treatment.

- Women were talking about the earlier meetings conducted by AWAG years ago and expressed that they would like such meetings to continue.

Village Alhabad

- The women from Choudhari community in this village were not ready to attend the meeting. Thus, meetings were conducted with women from Bharwad, Thakor and Rawal Vaas.

- Women responded by saying that they have heard about AWAG for the first time today. Meetings are held in our village but nobody comes into our vaas so far. Today we have learnt a lot.



- Primary counselling of 3 women was undertaken since they faced problems in their marital homes. They were also advised to visit the organization's office.

- Ramiben Bharwad said that earlier they would not bathe daily during their periods, but now they will do so daily.

- Gitaben Rawal expressed that she has been experiencing white discharge and irregular menstruation but chose to ignore it. But now she is ready to treat the problem and will also ensure that the village girls start using sanitary napkins. 14 women from this village have started using sanitary napkins.

Village Subapura

- Both the anganwadi workers of this village lent their support in the meeting that was held at the anganwadi centre.

- The adolescent girls have started taking iron supplements. Similarly 20 women have started using sanitary napkins.

- Anganwadi worker said that henceforth we will organize a meeting with the adolescents of the village to share the information conveyed here. So far we used to conduct meetings where we would serve snacks and send off the participants since we were not aware as to what to discuss.

- Women said that many women in the village suffer from reproductive tract diseases but feel embarrassed and hesitant to reveal it. As a result even minor ailments often take a major turn and prove fatal. Through these meetings,

women set aside their inhibitions and openly discussed the matter for all to learn.

- A number of women also remarked that they had never seen sanitary napkins earlier, but are now keen to use it. Similarly, information about menstruation and uterine problems was absolutely new for them.

Village Jawaharnagar

- Not a single woman in this village had seen sanitary napkins, but 12 of them have started using them. The participants were happy to learn about the reproductive system and need to maintain hygiene especially during menstruation. They said that they were totally ignorant about these matters but have now got an opportunity to learn about them. Those women who were not wearing underwear have started doing so.



- A woman who had cancer passed away. So now women said that they have realized the importance of timely handling of health problems.

Responses: Hinaben, Roshana, Sugana, Kailash, Aarti, Meena, Sangita, Mamta

- For the first time in our village, we got to learn many things from Chetnaben. Through the meeting we learnt about maintain hygiene during menses, use of sanitary napkins to prevent the occurrence of diseases in the reproductive tract. We also learnt about cancer and its related problems.

- Women were also given understanding on handling violence inflicted on them by male members. Information on contraceptive pills and family planning methods was also shared with the participants.

- With this, the women expressed that such meetings should be held regularly.

Village Kalyanpura

- Most families in this village belong to the Thakore community. The extent of education is low because they do not believe in educating girls.

- The girls present said that they are very keen to study but their parents do not allow them to do so. Most of the girls are simply sitting idle all day long but their parents are not ready to send them to Radhanpur even.

- Though they had never seen sanitary napkins before, 15 of them have started using them.

- Women said that this is the first meeting that has been conducted by AWAG in their village. 14 years ago they used to come and take embroidery work. Since education is less in our village, such meetings should be held regularly.

Viilage Javatri

- Women said that due to lack of knowledge, a lot of women are facing problems related to white discharge, weakness etc.

- It seems that in case of one woman is now faced with a problem of prolapsed uterus in a serious form since she did not pay attention to it in the initial stages.

- A total of 20 women have started using sanitary napkins.

- The Asha Worker said that this village being large in area, she is putting in efforts to ensure that maximum girls/women start using sanitary napkins.

- Leelaben said that she constantly experiences pain in the uterine area and will now surely address the problem.

No. of adolescent girls/women who have started consuming Iron supplements:
Memdavad : 18
Chaniyaghar: 15
Masali : 12
Karsangadh: 5

After the meeting, a total of 12 women with problems of irregular periods, white discharge and uterine pain got relief through medication procured from government health centres.

Village Memdavad

- Since there is not much unity among various castes, all the women do not come to a common place for the meeting. Thus, meetings were held in two separate

locations in the village. The level of education is high in this village; hence 60% adolescents were busy at school.

- Women reported cases of cancer among two women who lost their lives due to lack of treatment. With this, the participants were explained the importance of timely treatment.

- College-going girls have started using sanitary napkins.

- Gitaben said that initially she was embarrassed to go to the doctor regarding her prolapsed uterus, but will do so now.

- Champaben and Leelaben too realized the need to address their problems as well as to prevent it from manifesting itself.

Village Masali

- The women present voiced that women from certain communities indulge in some addictions. Moreover, since saataa is practiced in some communities, girls get married early and become mothers at a young age which affects their reproductive health.

- Gitaben complained of vaginal itching and was advised to take treatment.

- The ASHA worker voiced her readiness to distribute Iron tablets to all the adolescent girls in the area.

- Adolescents expressed that they too would undertake the entire course of treatment for their benefit.

- Many girls resolve that they would gather courage and ensure that they get married after 18 years of age.

Village Chaniyaghar

- Girls in this village normally attain higher education upto the college level. Around 10-12 girls said that they use sanitary napkins.

- The ASHA worker said that she would hold meetings and distribute sanitary napkins.

- Problems such as irregular menses, uterine pain and vaginal itching were discussed during the meeting.

Village Karsangadh

- A large number of women and adolescent girls here were found to be malnourished. Even young women look older than their age. The level of education is also low.

- Women expressed that they bathe every two days and use some rags as menstrual protection.

- Namitaben said that due to language problem, all women do not attend the meetings.