



Change Initiatives

GC-79, Salt Lake City, Sector III, Kolkata 700106,

Email: changeinitiatives@gmail.com

Contact: 9831007306

<https://www.changeinitiatives.in>

Reflection Report on Menstrual Hygiene Awareness Programme

Date: 5th March, 2025

Venue: Kalikapur Basanti Devi School

Organized by: Change Initiatives

Participants: Students of Class Six (Approximately 50-60 students)

Menstruation is a natural and essential part of the female reproductive system, marking the beginning of a person's ability to conceive. Far from being "impure" or "shameful," menstruation is a biological process as normal as breathing, digestion, or growth. Despite its biological basis, menstruation is often shrouded in myths and taboos across cultures. Many societies label it "dirty" or restrict girls from daily activities, such as worshipping, cooking, or socializing. These myths stem from outdated beliefs, not science. Menstruation does not weaken, pollute, or limit a person—it is simply a part of life. By learning about menstruation, we replace fear with knowledge, silence with confidence, and stigma with pride. It's time to celebrate this natural process as a symbol of strength, not something to hide. Therefore, on 4th March 2024, **Change Initiatives** organized a menstrual hygiene awareness program at **Kalikapur Basanti Devi School**, focusing on students aged 11–12 years. These young students are at an age where they are about to enter puberty, and the goal was to help them understand menstruation as a natural process while addressing the myths and taboos that surround it in society. The session began with the facilitator trying to create a comfortable environment for the students. Knowing that shyness and hesitation often block open conversations about menstruation, she started by asking the students about movies they had watched. This casual icebreaker helped students relax and slowly engage in the discussion. From there, the facilitator gently steered the conversation toward everyday activities, asking the students about household chores they usually do. Many of them mentioned tasks like cooking, cleaning, and even worshipping. When the facilitator asked why they sometimes couldn't participate in worshipping, the students grew quiet and shy. A few finally admitted, with hesitant voices, that during menstruation, they were not allowed to worship. This moment revealed how deeply cultural taboos had influenced their lives. The facilitator used this example to explain that menstruation is a normal biological process, not something "impure" or shameful. She encouraged them to question such restrictions and shared scientific facts to counter the myths they had grown up hearing.



It was clear that the students initially felt uneasy talking about menstruation. However, as the facilitator kept the tone supportive and non-judgmental, they began to open up. By linking the discussion to their daily lives—like household chores and worship—the students started connecting the dots between societal rules and the lack of logic behind them. She began by demystifying the biology of



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Menstruation, explaining the roles of the uterus and ovaries in simple terms. Our facilitator showed two movie clips that highlighted how women are treated during menstruation in a patriarchal system. The clips showed that these practices are completely illogical and have no scientific basis. As a result, the students understood the myths better and shared their feedback. They expressed their commitment to maintaining positive practices and working towards creating a society free from myths and taboos.

Moving beyond biology, she offered practical guidance: the importance of hygiene, recognizing when to seek medical help, and the value of iron-rich foods to replenish the body. But it was her emphasis on mental well-being that resonated most deeply. After discussing nutrition, she said, *"Always remember, if you take care of yourself, then automatically your mind will be fresh and fine."*



During the session, students eagerly raised their hands with questions like, "Can we exercise during periods?" and "Why do people call it 'dirty'?" The facilitator patiently explained each myth, encouraging them to question these false beliefs. One student confidently asked, "If temples are open to everyone, why should something natural keep us away?" Our facilitator answered all their questions and helped them understand that these myths

have no real impact on their lives.

The program not only educated but also inspired a shift in perspective. The facilitator's closing quote became a rallying cry, reminding students that self-care is an act of empowerment. While myths may persist, seeds of change were sown—proving that open conversations and compassion can turn hesitation into hope. Change Initiatives recognized the need for follow-up workshops, involving the school students, young youths, and community-wide efforts to create lasting change.

Reflection Report on Menstrual Hygiene Awareness Programme

Date: 5th March, 2025

Venue: Kamrabad Girls High School

Organized by: Change Initiatives

Participants: Students of Class Six (Approximately 50-60 students)

On 5th March, **Change Initiatives** organized an impactful menstrual hygiene awareness program at **Kamrabad Girls High School**, specifically designed for 50-60 students of Class Six, with the goal of dismantling deep-rooted myths surrounding menstruation, particularly the harmful notions of "purity" and "impurity" attached to it. Our facilitator encouraged the students to set aside their shyness and



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assured them that this session was meant to openly discuss menstruation without any hesitation. The facilitator motivated the students by saying, *"Girls, you should break all the shyness in this session. This is the time to understand how we can overcome our fears and doubts about menstruation and learn that there is nothing impure about it."*

The session commenced with an ice-breaking activity led by the facilitator, who warmly encouraged the girls to shed their inhibitions and participate openly, framing the discussion as a safe and judgment-free space. To capture their attention and spark curiosity, the team screened engaging video clips that depicted relatable scenarios of menstrual taboos, such as restrictions on entering kitchens, attending religious events, or social isolation during periods. The videos resonated deeply with the students, who began nodding in recognition and even interjected with comments like, *"Yes, ma'am, this happens in my home too!"*

This breakthrough moment led to a lively and interactive dialogue, where students shared personal anecdotes about societal practices they had witnessed, such as being barred from touching certain foods or sleeping in separate rooms. To further deepen their understanding, the facilitator invited small groups to role-play



common societal attitudes toward menstruation, with students dramatically enacting scenarios that highlighted stigma, silence, and misinformation. This participatory exercise not only broke the ice but also revealed the pervasive nature of these taboos. Following this, the expert took the stage to demystify menstruation through a clear, scientific explanation of the biological cycle, using simple analogies and diagrams to illustrate how menstruation is a natural, healthy process. She emphasized that the concept of "impurity" was a social construct with no basis in science, stressing that menstrual blood is no different from other bodily fluids and that hygiene, not shame, should be the focus. The students listened

intently, their initial hesitancy gradually replaced by nods of understanding. By the end of the session, the students felt much more confident and informed. Many students expressed that they had never received such clear and open information about menstruation before. They said that the session had helped them overcome their fears and doubts. Some students even promised that they would no longer feel ashamed or afraid to discuss menstruation with their friends. They were inspired to



talk openly with their peer groups and spread awareness to others. A few students emotionally admitted that no one had ever explained menstruation to them in such a compassionate way. One student shared, *"At home, they just tell me not to pray or touch anything during my period, but no one ever told me why it happens or that it's not dirty."* Another vowed, *"I'll teach my younger sister what I learned today so she does not grow up feeling scared or ashamed."*



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The awareness programme was successful in educating the students about menstrual hygiene and helping them understand that menstruation is a natural and normal process. The students responded positively to the session, and their willingness to share what they learned with others showed that the session had a meaningful impact. Change Initiatives remains dedicated to organizing such programmes in the future to promote healthy conversations about menstruation and break the myths surrounding it.

Reflection Report on Menstrual Hygiene Awareness Programme

Date: 5th March, 2025

Venue: Balia Nafarchandra Balika Vidyalaya

Organized by: Change Initiatives

Participants: Students of Class Six (Approximately 50-60 students)

Our society still holds many misconceptions and myths about menstruation. These outdated beliefs often create fear, shyness, and confusion among young girls. To address this issue, **Change Initiatives** has been actively conducting menstrual hygiene awareness programs in various schools. On the 21st of March, Change Initiatives organized a session at **Balia Nafar Chandra Balika Vidyalaya** to educate young students about menstruation and break these social taboos. The session started with our facilitator engaging the students by asking them about the kinds of movies they usually watch. This casual conversation encouraged the students to participate and feel more comfortable. The facilitator then asked what kind of activities the students usually do at home, which helped break their shyness and allowed for better communication.

To introduce the topic, the facilitator showed a video clip that depicted common myths and restrictions women face during menstruation. After watching the video, one student curiously asked, *"Is there something that happens in our body every month? My mother told me this."* The facilitator responded by asking if the student had started her periods. The student replied, *"No."* This conversation highlighted how these young minds are already exposed to ideas about menstruation, yet they often lack clear and correct information. Following this, another student asked if there were things they should avoid during menstruation. This question provided a perfect opportunity for the facilitator to explain the





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biological cycle in simple language. The facilitator emphasized that menstruation is a natural process and there is nothing shameful or fearful about it. She further explained, *"If your periods are irregular or you face any problems, you should inform your family members and visit a doctor without feeling embarrassed."* One student also asked if eating sour fruits should be avoided during menstruation. The facilitator confidently explained that this is a myth. In fact, she

shared that doctors often recommend eating nutritious foods like fruits that are rich in Vitamin C to maintain good health. As the session progressed, several students opened up and admitted that their families often restrict them from doing certain activities during menstruation without giving clear reasons. The facilitator clarified that such practices are based on myths, and there is no scientific reason to follow these restrictions. She encouraged the students to see menstruation as a natural and healthy process. The facilitator highlighted that menstruation is not an illness but a sign of a healthy body, and it is nature's way of preparing a woman for motherhood.

By the end of the session, the students felt more informed and confident about menstruation. One

student emotionally expressed her gratitude, saying, *"Thank you so much, ma'am. I don't have my mother with me, so there was no one to guide me. But you came and taught us something that I will remember for my whole life."* The session successfully helped students understand that menstruation is a natural and healthy process. The students actively participated, asked



questions, and shared their own experiences. This open discussion allowed them to break their shyness and clear their doubts. Change Initiatives remains committed to continuing such awareness programs to ensure young girls grow up with the right knowledge and confidence about menstruation.