

Success Story of Menstrual Hygiene Scheme (Dhubri district, Assam)

‘Freedays’ : Pads of hope

The introduction of sanitary napkin ‘Freedays’ at subsidised rate for adolescent girls has positively affected the lives of many in more ways than one. Now, Salima (name changed on request) no longer has to stay out of school during her menstruation days and she can also participate in various other everyday activities while menstruating. For quite some time after the setting on of menstruation Salima has been using unsterilized clothes for taking care of her menstruation since they are cheaper.

“I was told by the ASHA of my village that use of unsterilized clothes during my menstruation days can increase the chances of Reproductive Tract Infections. She also said that the government is providing ‘Freedays’ at a very affordable price. I was very happy to learn this,” says Salima, a Class XI student. Says a Medical Officer working under Dharmasala Block PHC, “Use of alternative sanitary care during menstruation like unsterilized clothes, increases the chance of infections. Sanitary napkins can act as a preventive measure against Reproductive Tract Infections. In many cases, the girls’ knowledge level on menstrual hygiene is low. Girls in rural areas are bound to use unsterilized cloth during menstruation since sometimes they are unaware about the necessity of maintaining menstrual hygiene and also they cannot afford the napkins available in the market. This makes them prone to infections. ‘Freedays’ has come as a ray of hope for the rural girls. Our ASHAs are also doing a great job in educating the adolescent girls about menstrual hygiene during various meetings with them.”



The ASHAs under Dharmasala Block PHC in Dhubri district are happy that the government has given thought to this important issue of menstrual hygiene. “Some girls even have taken my phone number and said that they will call me whenever they need ‘Freedays’. However, I personally visit their homes and give it to them even before they call!” says the ASHA, laughing.

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