

Integrating Menstrual Health and hygiene in Jaffna Healthy City Project

For a wholistic approach of any project, the gender dimension should be included. The Jaffna Healthy City Project is also not an exception. The one out of three-sub pillars of Healthy City Project is WASH in Schools. In a gender inclusive perspective, WASH in Schools included Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH). There are 10 schools from Jaffna city included for Jaffna Healthy City project. Out of these 10 selected schools, adolescent girls are attending in 4 schools. As such these 4 schools' teachers and girls included for MHH training to develop school based MHH action plan. In addition, the 16 days #OrangeTheWorld campaign also included in the training to aware the school community to know about Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV). The Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna, United Nations World Health Organization(WHO) , United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), Social Organizations Networking for Development (SOND) partnered with Health division of Provincial Department of Education carried out this training

28 November 2021

Integrating Menstrual Health and hygiene in Jaffna Healthy City Project

Introduction

Healthy city project is one of the many projects implemented by World Health Organization (WHO) with local partnerships to improve health status of cities. Jaffna is one of the cities, chosen in South Asia to improve health status. The WHO is engaged with Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna as their key partner to implement Jaffna Healthy City Project.

There are many health-related deprivations existing at Jaffna which hamper the health status. Three of the health deprivations chosen by Jaffna healthy city project to improve

They are:

1. Lack of garbage management
2. Comprehensive WASH management at schools
3. Lack of physical activities.

The locations chosen to improve the health status are communities, schools and workplaces. This report is about how the Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) concepts are integrated in Jaffna city schools.

Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health jointly developed a Health Promoting School guideline for Sri Lankan schools. UNICEF had a continuous technical engagement with Education and Health Sectors on WASH in schools both at national and sub national levels. As such UNICEF is supporting to lead the WASH in Schools sub pillar for Jaffna healthy city project.



In addition, the 16 day #OrangeTheWorld campaign included into the training as the training falls within the 16-day activism period.

Integration of Menstrual Health and Hygiene concept in School WASH.



Inauguration of MHH training session, at Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna

The major aim for this training is to direct the teachers and girls to understand the importance of having a focused school based Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) Action Plan. The top 5 impacts by active MHH action plan are:

1. Girls and female teachers will be empowered to talk about their own Menstrual Health and Hygiene needs;
2. A proper maintained functional girls' toilet will be available at schools.
3. Girls feel comfortable and use toilets as and when necessary for them at schools.
4. A transparent menstrual waste disposal mechanism will be in place for schools and it will greatly impact the school hygiene
5. Regular attendance of girls will be ensured especially among pre-secondary school girls (age 10 to 14 years)

The training briefly touches upon the ceremonial traditions related to Puberty and economic impacts at poor households.

In addition, the prevalence of menstruation related food myths in Jaffna City dwellers was discussed. The training reveals that there are certain nutritious foods being avoided traditionally. People avoided Papaya and pineapples. They strongly believe that papaya will adjust the menstrual cycles while the pineapples are avoided without any reasons.

The commonality about adolescent girls' and boys' behaviors and the reactions by parents and teachers discussed in detail. The teachers acknowledged that the verbal accusation on behaviors are so much towards girls than boys and it is wrong and obstructing their development.



A huge list of general myths still prevalent in cities but it was more in the rural areas compared to Jaffna city. Certain traditions goes up to the level of obstructing the girls and menstruating women to use toilets at household level. They mentioned “Varani” is an area where this practice is highly prevalent. In the city context, the access to shrine room which is traditionally the biggest room in a house, is not accessible during menstruating time for girls and women.

In Jaffna, the ground water is the main source of water for all purposes. The water usually being fetched from open dug well. The open dug wells are not allowed for menstruating girls and women to fetch water. Rich families use water pumps to get water to their WASH facilities. As such the issue is not prevalent there. However, among extremely poor families in cities, the water access might be an issue but not known very well. But the taboo is still existing. The general believe is, frogs will start to live in a well if a menstruating girl or woman fetch water from it.

Finally, a simple 10 indicators MHH action plan format was introduced to teachers and girls. A mock school-wise action plan development exercise carried out. The action plan indicators are tabled below.

Menstrual Hygiene and Health Action Plan (see Annex 1 for English and Tamil versions)

After the mock exercise, a black action plan format was given to each school, to develop their own MHH action plan at their schools (together with their school community). The obtained indicators will be used as a baseline indicator and the improvement will be monitored by Jaffna Healthy City Project by encouraging, networking and leveraging the resources to improve the lagging indicators.

For presentation slides of MHH training: See annex 3



Participatory MHH action plan development exercise together with teachers and School girls.
Health staff explaining the anatomy of reprotive health (Middle)

Proposed Actions

1. Develop a base line MHH action plan for selected 4 schools;
2. Gather and summarize the supply gaps in MHH plans;
3. Encourage schools to raise funding through networking for fulfilling the gaps in MHH plan;
4. Support awareness sessions with the help of health sector resources;
5. Support to do a networking for disposal;
6. Support to be given to make schools to develop flood mitigation plan to avoid safe school sanitaion access during heavy rainy seasons. (Even in rainy seasons menstruation never stops);
7. Measure the progress on the action plant together with school community in reasonable intervals.



Key Message from Provincial Department of Education, NP.

Now a days, little girls (around 10 years) are getting their first menstruation. These little girls need so much support to manage their menstruation at schools. Teachers need to prepare well to support such girls. Otherwise irregular attendance and loss of education is inevitable.

Ms. Nirubarani, DDE (Science), PDE-NP

#Orange the World campaign

The objective defined for the campaign at school settings is as follows by UNICEF

**“Let's allow girls to make their own life choices &
Teach boys to break free from harmful stereotypes”**

When targeting parents’ the same messages converted as

**" Be a daughter’s hero; Allowing daughters to make their own life choices &
Raise boys to break free from harmful stereotypes"**

There is a strong co-relation between SGBV, MHH and decision making by girls. Girls are basically vulnerable towards both SGBV and MHH in all settings. As such it was decided that, it is so important to talk about SGBV in MHH training specially in 16 DAY activism period.

In the training, the general awareness on the importance of allowing girls to make their own life choices and teach boys to break free from harmful stereotypes discussed.

In addition, the violence against girls and woman and how the impact increased during COVID-19 context also discussed in detail.

Three groups of teachers and girls developed three logos, after a discussion on how the girls could be protected in a long run from SGBV.

There are two ideologies came up: in developed logos

1. Violence could be stopped through education
2. Violence could be stopped through bravery



The created logos are attached in Annex 2

Annex 1

School Name

Contact number of area MOH/PHM/PHI

No	Activities	Current Status(Y/N)	Proposed mitigation measures	In-charge	completion date
facilities					
1	Availability of separate toilets with water facility for girls				
2	Sanitary pad removal systems within the toilets				
3	Availability of soap within the toilet				
Awareness					
4	Children (both boys and Girls) aware about Menstruation				
5	Teachers (both male and female teachers) aware about menstruation				
6	Parents (both fathers and mothers) aware about menstruation				
7	Girls aware about menstruation pre-preparations during school days				
Services					
8	Mechanism to get sanitary pads at schools				
9	A system established to remove menstrual waste				
10	A networking established to contact PHMs incase girls need menstruation related issues				

පා.ප.සංවර්ධන වෛෂයික ප්‍රවර්ධන කමිටුන්හි කාර්යයන් ඉටුකරගැනීම සඳහා සැලසුම්කළ නි.ව. සහන

පා.සංවර්ධන වෛෂයික _____

PMM ප්‍රවර්ධන මූලධර්ම : _____

නි.ව.	පා.සංවර්ධන වෛෂයික ප්‍රවර්ධන	ප්‍රවර්ධන වෛෂයික මාර්ගෝපදේශ	නියමිත ක්‍රියාමාර්ග	වැය	සහන
සැලසුම් : Facilities					
01	සෞඛ්‍ය සේවාවන් සැලසුම් කිරීම				
02	ප්‍රවර්ධන වෛෂයික ප්‍රවර්ධන වැඩසටහන් (වෛ.ව.) සැලසුම් කිරීම				
03	වෛ.ව. වැඩසටහන් සැලසුම් කිරීම				
සැලසුම් : Awareness					
04	ප්‍රවර්ධන වෛෂයික වෛ.ව. වැඩසටහන් (වෛ.ව.) සැලසුම් කිරීම				
05	ප්‍රවර්ධන වෛෂයික වෛ.ව. වැඩසටහන් (වෛ.ව.) සැලසුම් කිරීම				
06	ප්‍රවර්ධන වෛෂයික වෛ.ව. වැඩසටහන් සැලසුම් කිරීම				
07	ප්‍රවර්ධන වෛෂයික වෛ.ව. වැඩසටහන් සැලසුම් කිරීම				
සේවාවන් : Services					
08	ප්‍රවර්ධන වෛෂයික වෛ.ව. වැඩසටහන් සැලසුම් කිරීම				
09	ප්‍රවර්ධන වෛෂයික වෛ.ව. වැඩසටහන් සැලසුම් කිරීම				
10	ප්‍රවර්ධන වෛෂයික වෛ.ව. වැඩසටහන් සැලසුම් කිරීම (PHM)				

Annex 2

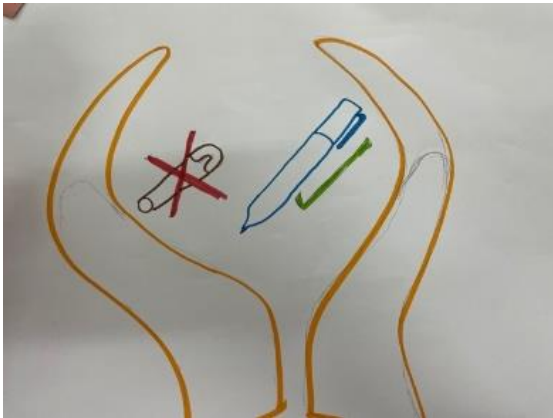


Education empowerment is the best tool to protect against SGBV. But sometimes fighting against SGBV there is a need to take weapons

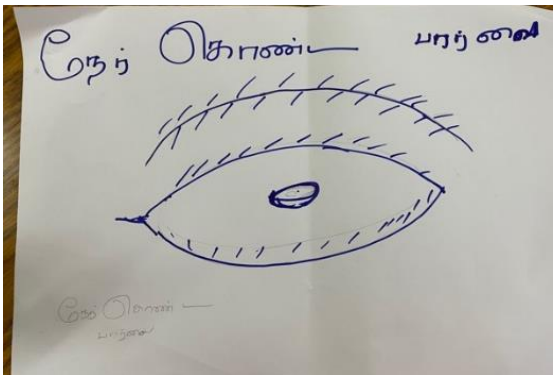
Book and pen symbolics education

Blade symbolizes fighting

Hand symbolize violence



Education empowerment is the best tool to protection against SGBV. Taking violence for fighting against SGBV not a correct tool to fight against SGBV



A forthright gaze in all actions will give strength to fight against SGBV

Annex 3

Healthy City Jaffna

Orange the World

Draw a symbol for

பெண்களுக்கு எதிரான வன்முறை
16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence
brighter future, free of violence

Time : (15 min preparation and presentation)

Breaking the silence

Introducing the tools

Food Myths

Eatable

Not eatable

MHH Video

Gender Feelings

Boys'

Girls'

Common

Understanding the natural feelings among adolescents

General Myths

Identifying the general myths existing in a particular community will help to tackle the issue by experts in the later stages...

(30 minutes discussion)

Who is affected

Who	How
Principal	
Male Teacher	
Female Teacher	
Girls	
Boys	
Father	
Mother	
Community	
School	
Grand parents	

How?

MHH Action plan for Schools

How to prepare school-based action plan

வசதிகள் : Facilities	
O1	பெண் சுற்றுக்கார தனிமலசலக்கூடம் தீர் வசதி உடனாக உடனாக.
O2	மாதவீடாய் காலங்களில் பயன்படுத்தப்பட வேண்டிய அணையாண்டியினை (நுப்தின்) அகற்று வதற்கான கூடை வசதிகள் உடனாக.
O3	மலசலக்கூடத்தில் சுவர்க்கார வசதி உடனாக.

(30 minutes discussion)

How to prepare school-based action plan

O4	மாதவீடாய் தொடர்பாக மாணவர்கள் இடையூறுகளை (ஆணி, பெண்) விழிப்புணர்வு உடனாக.
O5	மாதவீடாய் தொடர்பாக ஆதிமயங்கள் இடையூறுகளை (ஆணி, பெண்) விழிப்புணர்வு உடனாக.
O6	மாதவீடாய் தொடர்பாக பெற்றோர்களுக்கு விழிப்புணர்வு உடனாக.
O7	மாதவீடாய் காலங்களில் மாணவர்கள் முன்னெய்தத்தகை உடனாக உடனாக.

சேவைகள் : Services

மாதவீடாய் காலங்களில்

How to prepare school-based action plan

சேவைகள் : Services	
O8	மாதவீடாய் காலங்களில் அணையாண்டியினை (நுப்தின்) அகற்று வதற்கான கூடை வசதிகள் உடனாக.
O9	மாதவீடாய் காலங்களில் பயன்படுத்தப்பட வேண்டிய அணையாண்டியினை (நுப்தின்) அகற்று வதற்கான கூடை வசதிகள் உடனாக.
O10	மாதவீடாய் காலங்களில் பெண் சுற்றுக்கார தனிமலசலக்கூடம் தீர் வசதி உடனாக.

(30 minutes discussion)

Let's allow girls to make their own life choices & Teach boys to break free from harmful stereotypes

#Orange the World

For Contacts:

1. Dr. P.A.D. Coonghe, Programme Manager/Activity manager, Head, Dept. of Community and Family Medicine. Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna
email: jaffnahealthcity2020@gmail.com
2. Ms. Veneka Logenthiran, BSc (Hons) Town & Country Planning
Project Coordinator, WHO Healthy City Project, Jaffna
Email: jaffnahealthcity2020@gmail.com
3. Eng. Radika Sivakumaran (Child Survival and Development Officer, UNICEF, KZO, Sri Lanka)
Email: rsivakumaran@unicef.org