

Empowering Women Through Sustainable Menstrual Hygiene: Avadhi Foundation's Journey

Khashikha Vaddiraj

Oakridge International School, Gachibowli, Hyderabad

Abstract

This technical paper presents a profound examination of menstrual hygiene as an intrinsic woman's right, viewed through the lens of the Avadhi Foundation. Established in 2021, the foundation is dedicated to supporting girls and women in rural and marginalized communities, ensuring they can manage their menstrual hygiene effectively. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the foundation's two primary projects: Mission Sameeksha and Mission Samraksha. These initiatives collectively aim to revolutionize societal perceptions, provide accessible menstrual hygiene products, and create livelihood opportunities for disadvantaged women. The overarching vision is to foster 'Green Menstruation' in the State of Telangana, India, emphasizing eco-friendly practices while dismantling the stigma associated with menstruation. The Avadhi Foundation recognizes that menstrual hygiene is not just a matter of health but a fundamental human right. In many underserved communities, women face significant challenges in this regard, including limited access to resources, entrenched cultural taboos, and environmental concerns linked to disposable products. In response, Mission Sameeksha endeavours to challenge and transform societal attitudes by raising awareness about menstruation, hygiene management, sustainable sanitary products, and safe disposal methods. This initiative conducts awareness sessions in educational institutions and communities to promote knowledge-sharing, effectively breaking the silence surrounding menstruation. Mission Samraksha complements these efforts by making menstrual hygiene practices accessible to economically disadvantaged women. Through the distribution of biodegradable menstrual hygiene products, marginalised women are empowered to protect both their own health and the environment. These products are thoughtfully bundled in custom-designed dignity period hampers, distributed free of cost, and designed to last for an extended period, ensuring sustained access to hygienic products. In summary, this paper offers a comprehensive perspective on menstrual hygiene as a fundamental woman's right. The initiatives of the Avadhi Foundation are highlighted as an exemplary model to address the challenges, promote sustainable practices, and empower women, thus making meaningful strides toward a society where every woman can manage her menstrual hygiene with dignity and in an environmentally responsible manner.

Keywords: Menstrual Hygiene, Human right, sustainability, women empowerment