



Hygiene impacts Education

The Indaram village of Aheri Block is 7 km away from the Aheri town and 122 km away from the District place. The village is surrounded by agricultural land and is situated near a dense forest. The population of the village is 1200 with agriculture as the main source of income and animal husbandry as a supporting occupation. The literacy rate of the village is 70%.

The Kasturba Gandhi Girls' School of the Indaram village is an all girls' school and comes under the Devalmari Center of the Aheri block. The school was established in 2011. There are total 150 girls enrolled in 6th to 10th standards of the school.

Earlier 4 toilet units had been constructed in this schools and were in use till 2018. However, after that the toilets could not be used as the soak pit had been filled to its capacity. Additionally, the fixtures in the toilets and the urinals were also broken. This resulted in unclean premises of the school as the students used to urinate in the school premises or at the nearby lake or went home. There was also a lack of handwashing facilities in the school. All these factors were having a negative impact on the health of the students. As majority of the students are adolescents, many did not attend the school during their menstruation which led to decline in the attendance rate of the school.

In order to resolve these serious issues, the school principal Ms. D. Y. Dhavas regularly followed up with the Gram Panchayat, but to no avail. She also tried to find a solution through the Panchayat Samiti but remained unsuccessful. Finally, she approached the Zilla Parishad (ZP), Gadchiroli with her requests. The ZP took note of the situation and approved a fund of Rs. 2 Lakh for the repair of the toilets.

Using the fund allocated by the ZP, the 4 toilet units of the school were repaired and the remaining amount was used to construct a Handwash Station consisting of 10 taps. The school also already had a water filter providing access to safe drinking water for the students. The ASHA worker also meets with the adolescent girls once a month to discuss issues of menstrual hygiene and the school has installed a separate garbage can for the disposal of menstrual hygiene products. These improvements to the school premises had a very positive impact on the health of the students, they started attending the school even during their menstruation, resulting in an increase in the attendance rate to 95%.

Parents' Testimonial:

The parents of all the students are greatly satisfied with the improved amenities provided at the school. The parent of one student said, 'The girls now attend the school regularly even during their menstruation.'

Government officials' Testimonial:

The Block Education Officer and Center Head regularly visit the school. They regularly make note of the improvements made in the school and appreciate the efforts of the school staff.

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