Month-long MHM campaign in Simdega

Period poverty is the lack of access to sanitary products, menstrual hygiene education, toilets, handwashing facilities, and waste management. To address this issue, the district administration of Simdega in Jharkhand has commenced a month-long Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) campaign to break harmful taboos about menstruation, provide education and promote safe sanitation.

Being held from 28th May 2020 to 27th June 2020, the campaign is being implemented under the chairmanship of Sri Mithilesh Kumar Thakur, Minister, Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen, Drinking Water and Sanitation Department, Government of Jharkhand.

The MHM campaign was launched despite the lockdown conditions, to coincide with the World MHM Day that fell on 28th May, as ‘periods do not stop for pandemics,’ said Mr. Radhe Ratan, District Coordinator-IEC, Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen). It is a part of Jharkhand’s ODF (open defecation free) sustainability plan in keeping with SBM-G Phase II campaign.

Jharkhand had constructed more than 42 lakh IHHL (individual household latrines) in 29,564 villages during phase I of the campaign. Today, Swachhagrahis continue to work towards ensuring ODF sustainability in the villages.

Leading from the front, the District Coordinator has made a district-level action plan for the mass campaign featuring various MHM related activities. This includes regular visits to all villages along with Swachhagrahis and discussions on MHM with village groups.
Interpersonal communication - on one to one basis, joint discussions with adolescent girls and their families, distribution of sanitary napkins, frank discussion about the myths and taboos of menstruation among girls and boys with the help of young male and female Swachhagrahis were among the activities carried out.

Various IEC materials are being used to inform people about MHM, such as MHM calendar, pamphlets, etc. Anganwadi workers have supported the campaign immensely, encouraging girls to break the silence on menstruation and speak openly about their concerns. All this was done while maintaining proper social distancing amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Additionally, social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter) are being used to spread awareness about MHM.