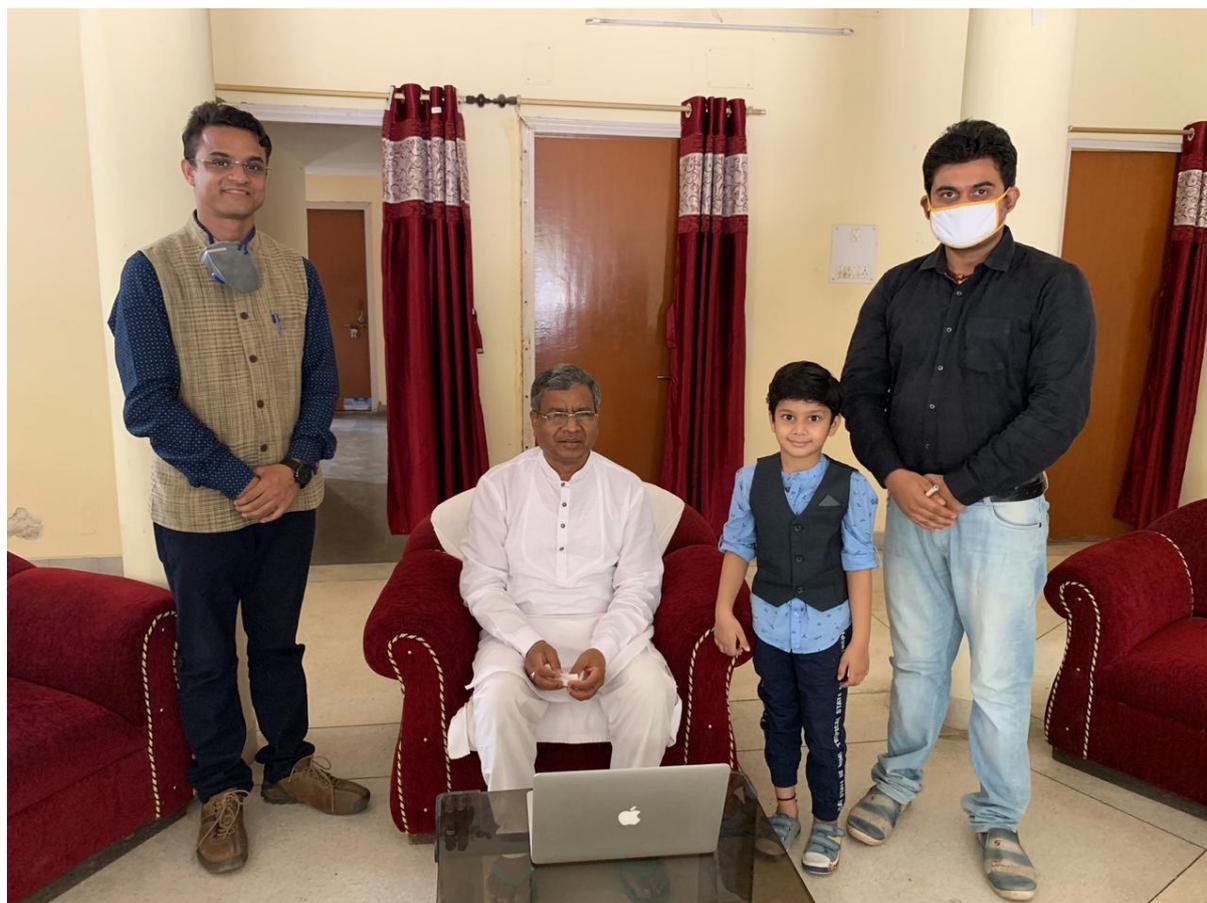


## Men 4 Menstruation campaign launched in Ranchi



Men have a vital role in achieving general equality and promoting women’s empowerment through activities such as creating awareness on menstruation and busting myths concerning the natural biological phenomenon. Believing in this thought, Men 4 Menstruation (M4M) campaign was launched in Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand on World Menstrual Hygiene Day – May 28, 2020.

Men 4 Menstruation campaign was digitally launched by Motive8 and its five male co-founders namely – Satwik Mishra, Rakesh Singh, Abhinav Kishore, Viswajeet Kumar and Biswambharnath Naik.

The purpose of the campaign was to break the societal silence on menstruation and to overcome ‘Period Poverty.’ Period poverty refers to the inadequate access to menstrual hygiene tools and education, including but not limited to sanitary products, washing facilities, and waste management.

“We aim to bust taboos and create menstrual awareness among both the urban and rural masses, our motto being - ‘Menstruation is not just a women’s thing but a man’s responsibility too’,” Mishra asserted.

According to the data released by Water Aid lack of menstrual hygiene facilities is the fifth largest cause of female deaths across the globe. As per a 2014 report shared by an NGO called Dasra states that in India about 23 million adolescent girls drop out from school every year from standard VI or VII as they hit puberty. Alarmingly, about 70 per cent of the mothers with menstruating daughters consider the biological process insignificant while 71 per cent young girls remain unaware about the cycle till menarche (the first occurrence of menstruation).

Meanwhile, an ICMR report of 2012 states that 38 per cent of girls do not talk to their mothers openly about periods while a survey report of the Ministry of Education said that 63 per cent of rural schoolteachers never discuss the natural process.

“These are not just mere figures but also emphasise that we live in a society where menstruation has always been a taboo topic. Being an Aspirational District Fellow, I realized that periods should not be limited to just a district-level activity and work on menstrual hygiene management should not be confined only to a district but instead, it should be dealt with at a national level. This campaign aims to eradicate period poverty and also provide a period friendly environment, ensure a two- day menstrual leave every month, create awareness and provide access to hygienic menstruation products,” said Mishra.

This has changed to some extent with the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G) campaign over the last few years. By making Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) an integral part of the campaign, deserving importance is given to the otherwise taboo topic that impacts not just health and wellbeing, but also education and overall development of girls and women in the country. The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation has issued guidelines for sanitation in schools and has emphasised the need for MHM facilities and awareness-raising. In keeping with this, several districts across the country have been running active campaigns to break the silence on menstruation.

The project M4M will include six major components. Under the signature campaign, all-district administration officials will be asked to take a pledge to support menstruating women.

In the second part workshops in schools and organisations will be conducted to create a menstrual friendly environment for women. Setting up MHM Chachi (Menstrual Hygiene Management) libraries across various schools is the third component while upgrading existing washrooms and making period friendly toilets as per UNICEF standards is the fourth constituent.

A report by Plan India and AC Nielsen revealed that 88 per cent of women use old fabric, rags or sand to manage their flow, because they cannot access or afford commercial sanitary pads. Hence, the fifth component aims to promote sustainable menstrual products

like menstrual cups and reusable cloth napkins. It will also include drives to distribute the same. The last element is urging people to join the campaign digitally,” added Mishra.

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