

Community engagement for Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM): Case of formal engagement of women SHGs in Maharashtra, India

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Need of MHM infrastructure in shared sanitation facilities



- Menstruation is inevitable part of most women's lives
- Practising safe MHM can be a **challenge** for users of shared sanitation facilities such as community and public toilets
- CTs and PTs in most small and medium towns of India are **not maintained** due to high maintenance cost

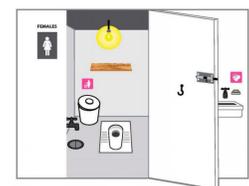
Piloting MHM facilities in Wai, Maharashtra



45,000 Population

85% Individual toilets
15% Community toilets

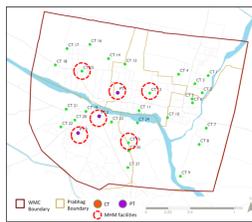
One of the 8 global CWIS cities supported by the BMGF



To achieve inclusive sanitation, the CTs and PTs were assessed from a 'gender lens'.

Finding: Toilets lacked appropriate MHM infrastructure

Sanitary napkin dispensers and incinerators installed at 6 locations (3 CTs and 3 PTs)



- ✓ CTs/PTs with High footfall
 - ✓ Area with issues of space/finance for construction of individual toilets
 - ✓ Availability of space to set up the infrastructure
- The MHM infrastructure is safeguarded from **vandalism by putting iron mesh** around it.

Wai engaged local women's Self-Help Groups for operation and maintenance of the MHM infrastructure

Process of engaging SHGs for O&M of MHM infrastructure

1 Orientation of the SHGs

Meetings of the SHGs were conducted to inform them about the activity and gauge their interest in engagement



2 Developing SHG friendly tender and contracts

WMC floated 'SHG only tenders' and developed contracts conducive for engaging SHGs on long term

Key features of the contracts:

- ✓ Simple eligibility criteria
- ✓ Clearly defined scope of work of SHG and ULB
- ✓ PPE and Safety Clauses
- ✓ Clear payment clauses
- ✓ Monitoring of work

2 SHGs - **Shakambhari SHG and Jay Shreeram SHG**, were selected for the work through tenders

The SHGs have been working **since October 2022**

3 Training and capacity building

To empower the SHGs to successfully undertake the activity, timely trainings and capacity building sessions were conducted by WMC



Activities daily performed by the SHGs

- ✓ Visit each toilet **twice a day**
- ✓ **Clean the machines, refill sanitary pads if needed, collect ash from the incinerators, dispose as biomedical waste and maintain records.**
- ✓ **Conduct awareness sessions** amongst the communities on importance of MHM and use of the infrastructure.

Interactive awareness materials were developed which were prominently displayed near the machines to reach a wider audience,

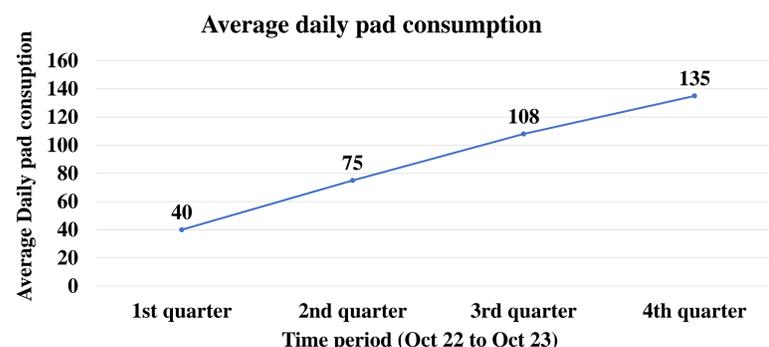


Key outcome

Confident and financially empowered SHGs through a systematic engagement and sustained source of income.....

Key achievements

- ✓ **Rs. 20,000** Per month timely payment by WMC to the SHG
- ✓ **Per day pads consumption has increased** over one year in all 6 CT/PTs



- ✓ Based on the demand, WMC plans for **scale up the model** in **additional 11** community toilets

Scaling-up the model in rest of the Maharashtra...

- ✓ The Government of Maharashtra under the SBM and SMMU program has constructed around **1.6 lakh+** new CTs and PTs to facilitate those who cannot construct their own toilets
- ✓ Maharashtra also has **strong network of SHGs**, around **90,000+** SHGs of which around **90%** are active.



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