

Empowering Adolescent Girls through Menstrual Health Awareness and Hygiene Access

In the remote and ecologically fragile villages of Hingalganj Block, nestled in the Sundarbans of North 24 Parganas, adolescent girls have long lived under the shadow of silence and stigma surrounding menstruation. The lack of accurate information and limited access to sanitary products has led to confusion, poor hygiene practices, and a distressing pattern of school absenteeism. For many young girls, menstruation was not only a biological change but a barrier to dignity, education, and self-worth.



To address this pressing issue, the Andrewspalli Centre for Integrated Development (ACID), with generous support from FADV, launched a targeted Menstrual Health and Hygiene Awareness Programme. Designed to be both educational and transformative, the initiative reached over 1,000 adolescent girls across 12 schools and neighbouring communities in the region.

At the heart of the intervention were interactive workshops, mother-daughter dialogue sessions, and the regular distribution of sanitary napkins, ensuring that information was not just disseminated, but deeply understood and accepted across age groups. Girls were encouraged to ask questions, share experiences, and overcome the shame often associated with menstruation.



The impact has been profound. Schoolgirls who once missed class due to fear and discomfort now attend with confidence and pride. “I was scared earlier, now I feel confident and even help my friends,” shared Anisha, a student whose words reflect the quiet revolution underway. Many girls now demonstrate improved hygiene practices and report a clear understanding of menstrual health.

To ensure long-term sustainability, the programme has also focused on capacity building—training a cadre of peer educators and establishing active linkages with local Primary Health Centres (PHCs). These partnerships have strengthened referral systems and enhanced access to health support beyond the programme’s immediate scope.

What began as a focused health intervention has now evolved into a grassroots movement for dignity, education, and empowerment—one that is slowly but surely breaking age-old taboos in one of India’s most vulnerable regions.