

NIRDPR to collaborate with BDL to create awareness on Menstruation & Hygiene

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Project to be implemented under CSR Practices in 5 Mandals of Telangana State to supply Sanitary Napkins to Govt School Students free of cost



National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) is collaborating with public sector enterprise Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) on a pilot project to create awareness on menstruation and menstrual hygiene among children in government schools in Telangana State.

The pilot project will benefit over 11,516 girl students enrolled in 75 government schools in five mandals of Telangana State. The project, taken up as part of BDL's Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, is likely to be expanded to 22 more mandals in the next phases consequent upon the results. BDL has provided a funding of Rs. 71.82 lakh for this project. The sanitary napkins will be supplied to students free of cost through the team of volunteers identified and female teachers from the schools.

BDL is a Government of India Enterprise under the Ministry of Defence and is a manufacturing base for guided missiles and allied defence equipment in the country. It has approached NIRDPR to implement this pilot project on 'Awareness Creation and Supplying of Sanitary Napkins to the Girl students of Government Schools.'

Highlighting the importance of this project, Prof. R. Murugesan, Head, Centre for CSR, Public Private Partnership and People's Action, NIRDPR, said, "The present union government is giving more attention to health and sanitation issues. CSR is a catalyst for inclusive development, uplifting rural poor through skill development, employment generation and substantiating income and environment. Through this particular project, NIRDPR is aiming to create awareness on health and menstrual hygiene along with sociological and environmental issues, and removing the stigma associated with menstruation among rural adolescent girls, driving them towards fruitful education without any absenteeism and health hazards. We have also prepared IEC material in both Telugu and English languages which may be useful not only for the students but also for other women in the villages. For procuring the sanitary napkins, we are giving importance to Self Help Group entrepreneurs who produce them and also call for open tenders for meeting additional requirements if any. Based on the experiences, we hope the project will be expanded to other areas as well to benefit adolescent girls with the generous support of corporate donors".

The objectives of the overall pilot project are:

- Ø To conduct programs to create awareness on menstruation, hygiene and its importance for adolescent girls in government schools
- Ø To share knowledge on the use of good quality sanitary napkins among adolescent girls studying in government schools primarily in rural areas
- Ø To ensure safe disposal mechanism of sanitary napkins without affecting the environment
- Ø To supply sanitary napkins to students in need who are enrolled in the selected government schools

Speaking about this CSR Initiative, a BDL official said, "It is a felt need for any adolescent girl in the government schools in rural areas. We are very keen on investing to ensure hygienic and clean

environment. We are sure that this project would yield expected results and positive impact in line with the objectives."

Hygiene-related practices of women during mensuration are of considerable importance as it has a health impact in terms of increased vulnerability to Reproductive Tract Infections (RTI). The interplay of socio-economic status, menstrual hygiene practices and RTI are commonly noticeable in the rural areas.

According to the Department of Secondary Education, Government of Telangana State, there are 38,656 girl students studying in 419 government schools. To attain the objectives, NIRDPR is reviewing the range of economic, social, cultural and geographical conditions with feasible representatives of beneficiaries in the sample areas. The methodology also includes Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to deliver fair information to the sample respondents.

NIRDPR has established an exclusive Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility, Public Private Partnership and Peoples Action (CSR, PPP & PA) which is functioning as 'Nodal Centre' for engaging the leaders in business, Panchayati Raj Functionaries, Government Development Administration, NGOs, Public and Private Sector Enterprises and other stakeholders in policy dialogue and advocacy for better involvement of these players towards inclusive development of the country.

The Centre – CSR provides academic services on consultancy basis in the form of specific training-on-demand such as capacity building and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) programs on CSR management and undertakes research activities like Baseline surveys, Monitoring and Evaluations, Impact Assessment studies and Social Audits etc. for Public Sector Undertakings, Private Corporate Houses, National and International Service Organisations. Many CSR Executives have been trained through such national level programs.