

Swasti Health Catalyst join hands with Marks & Spencer

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Growth of urban centres are often accompanied by a splurge of urban slums in small clusters. Nestled in the heart of Gurugram, is the retrograded urban poor settlements of Mohammadpur. There are about 60,000 people dwelling in Mohammadpur, out of which more than 25,000 people are migrants working in the nearby factories. These migrant community members primarily come from rural areas of Bihar, UP, and Jharkhand. This semi-urban, semi-rural community face several challenges in creating a healthy and safe environment due to lack of access to healthcare services, clean water and waste management system. Combined with widespread cases of gender-based violence, the situation in Mohammadpur is grim.

Upon observing the grim situation in this locality, Swasti Health Catalyst, India based not for profit in partnership with Marks & Spencer, an international brand, have taken up the initiative to address the challenges faced by the community in Mohammadpur and transform the lives of at least 11,000 people by September 2019.

Under the program, community members are sensitized about their wellbeing through healthy living and gender equality. Members of the community are made aware about nutrition, menstrual health, reproductive health, mental health, legal literacy, social protection and norms, various forms of gender-based inequalities as well as foundational life skills. In order to create a healthier environment for the community, Swasti initiated a sanitation and cleanliness campaign called Mission Swachh Mohammadpur with the support of Municipal Corporation of Gurugram and ECOgreen.

While men have higher rates of disease morbidity for major diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria and others; a large proportion of women die since they are brought for diagnosis and treatment at severe or last stages. Hence, to prevent such instances, it must be fortified that universal health coverage and financial protection reaches every woman. Keeping the context in mind, the gender equality is a cross cutting theme within Swasti's Invest for Wellness programme in Mohammadpur is designed with a combination of health and wealth interventions for the poor in an affordable, quality assured and scalable way.

Commenting on the initiative, Shaonli Chakraborty, Urban Health and Gender Lead, Invest for Wellness, flagship programme, Swasti Health Catalyst said, "Swasti advocates for better health and well-being for everyone with an ecosystem approach,

especially women and girls from the marginalised community. Following the belief that women and girls have the right to choose for their health, we facilitate it by providing access to information and facilitate services related to health, gender rights, gender equality and nutritional benefits under Invest for Wellness (i4We) programme”

“We build capacities of women to maintain cleanliness and hygiene, conduct regular trainings to ensure they are well informed. Through the model we aim to establish an affordable and accessible primary healthcare system, so that the community members are benefitted,” She added.

Ranjeeb Sarma, who is heading CSR and Sustainability at Marks & Spencer India commented, “We are proud to e have partnered with Swasti’s flagship programme, ICHW to drive the behavioral change programme in Mohammadpur. The programme has immensely impacted the lives of the local people There has been an increase in the level of awareness among resident families on issues related to health, hygiene and gender equality. We look forward to the continuing to work in partnership to create a -lasting impact within the community.”

Other community engagements such as movie screening around socially relevant movies, nukkad nataks (street plays) around gender equality, Taekwondo for youth empowerment, support group formations, sanitation drive for cleanliness have been undertaken to improve the living conditions. It is important to continue to promote the shift in attitudes and behaviour towards better hygiene and health.

Swasti Health Catalyst, founded in 2004, is a springboard from where innovative solutions are developed, adapted or scaled to create transformative changes in the lives of the poorest communities.