

HFO/WASH/KAR/2024/060  
09 May 2024

**Dr. Shalini Rajneesh, IAS**  
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**Government of Karnataka**  
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Dear Dr. Rajneesh,

### **Request for observance of Menstrual Hygiene Day/Week/Month**

Greetings from UNICEF.

Menstrual Hygiene (MH) is crucial for the health and well-being of girls and women. It is estimated that about 76% of girls had no knowledge of periods before menarche (girl's first menstrual period). It is time that we accelerate actions to maximize the attention to Menstrual Health and hygiene. Lack of education, ongoing taboos, and stigma cause poor Menstrual Health. Lack of access to clean menstrual products and bad sanitation also contributes. These problems harm the education, health, and social status of women and girls. As a result, millions of women and girls face obstacles to realize their full potential.

UNICEF plays a significant role in increasing menstrual health and hygiene worldwide, including in India. We congratulate the state government for actively championing Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) by advocating initiatives that combat menstrual stigma and foster healthy MH practices.

Menstrual Hygiene Day (MH Day) envisages to break the taboo around Menstrual Health and hygiene. It raises awareness and shifts negative social norms. In this regard, MH Day is observed globally on 28th of May every year. The theme for this year is "Together for a #PeriodFriendlyWorld". MH Day presents an opportunity for the state government to integrate Menstrual Hygiene Management into its existing programmes.

UNICEF seeks your guidance/direction/support in organizing MH Day campaign/programmes as follows:

- Organize a state-level event to highlight the importance of Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) and convene a meeting of State Level Working Committee to review programmes, provide guidance, and increase priority for MHM.
- Encourage all relevant departments such as Health, Education, Women and Child Welfare, Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, BC, SC and ST welfare departments (particularly in schools, hostels etc.) and allied institutions like Rural and Urban Livelihood Mission to actively observe MH Day and prioritize MHM.
- Ensure formation of district level multi-departmental (where not formed) MHM committees and integrate MHM activities in ongoing departmental activities.
- Assess the current MHM status in the state, identify gaps, and prioritize policies and programmes through rapid studies to ensure targeted and impactful actions.
- Organize public talks, lectures, seminars, and discussions at the state and district levels on May 28th or on a convenient day to effectively raise awareness about MHM.

To facilitate observance of MH day/ week/month, we have provided resources and suggested activities in the guidance note. We also provided tailored SBC creatives on MHM, readily shareable on various platforms. Please access the materials through this link: <https://bit.ly/44ubQZf>

We request you to instruct concerned officials at the state and district levels to partake in the MH Day Week/month-long programme and report the events and activities using the following Google sheet: <https://bit.ly/4bqbxRk>

UNICEF team is available for any necessary technical support in this regard. Mr. Venkatesh Aralikatty, WASH Specialist ([varalikatty@unicef.org](mailto:varalikatty@unicef.org)) and Mr. Kulandai Raj, Social Behaviour Change Consultant ([kraj0304@gmail.com](mailto:kraj0304@gmail.com)) may be reached.

Thank you for your leadership and guidance in improving the development outcomes for the women and children in Karnataka.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Khyati Tiwari**

Officer in Charge and Nutrition Specialist  
UNICEF Field Office for Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana

**Encl: Guidance note**

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