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THE PULSE OF YOUNG INDIA

Voice of Youth from Grassroot

HIGHLIGHTS:

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Empowering young minds through Summer Camp



CYDA Marks MHM day across India

The success of CYDA's Menstrual Hygiene Day initiatives across multiple locations was driven by the active involvement and collaboration of key partners and stakeholders. Individuals and Organizations such as CIE India, UNICEF, Rotary Club of Pune Sports City, ASK Foundation, Unipads, Anarock Property Consultants Pvt. Limited, Block Development Officers, Anganwadi workers, community leaders, Village Development Officers, Swachh Bharat Mission Team, frontline workers, Deputy Commissioner, Executive Health Officer. Health, Pune, played a pivotal role in mobilizing communities, facilitating dialogue and strengthening outreach. Their collective efforts significantly contributed to fostering awareness, breaking taboos, and promoting sustainable menstrual health practices.

STORY OF THE MONTH

The 10-Stitch Reusable Sanitary Pad Initiative

The 10-Stitch initiative originated from a group of young women in the Yerwada slums who had earlier worked on mask production during COVID-19. These women have now transitioned to making cloth sanitary pads, with over 30 women regularly involved in production and marketing, thereby generating a steady source of income. This grassroots-led effort demonstrates the dual impact of improving health while empowering local women economically.

The 10-Stitch initiative by CYDA is a comprehensive program that promotes sustainable menstrual hygiene, reduces environmental harm, and supports women's economic self-reliance, making it an impactful model for community-driven change. This initiative focuses on producing reusable cloth sanitary napkins that are both eco-friendly and economically empowering. Designed as a solution to the health and environmental issues caused by conventional disposable pads, these reusable napkins are made from high-quality, chemical-free materials such as pure cotton, hosiery cotton, and Polyurethane Laminate (PUL), ensuring durability, comfort, and protection against leakage. 10-Stitch addresses the need for safer menstrual hygiene products and also offers

a viable alternative to costly and polluting disposable pads. Each cloth pad can be reused for 2 to 3 years, reducing financial strain on women and significantly decreasing plastic waste. Proper disposal and maintenance of these pads further enhance their environmental benefits.

Menstrual Health Week: Youth lead a bold movement in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar

To mark Global Menstrual Hygiene Management Day 2025, Centre for Youth Development and Activities led a meaningful, multi-location youth-led awareness programs across multiple locations in Gujarat and urban Maharashtra. The initiatives brought together young people, frontline workers, and community stakeholders to break menstrual taboos, promote sustainable practices, and develop open dialogues on menstrual health and dignity.

In a powerful demonstration of youth-led grassroots activism, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar became the hub for a dynamic menstrual health awareness campaign. Organized by CYDA, the week-long initiative directly engaged over 1,138 people and reached more than 31,000 indirectly through a series of creative and inclusive activities. The campaign's objective was normalize menstruation conversations, break taboos, and empower women and girls with knowledge, tools, and confidence.



Social Media spark – Reels on Reality

Young content creators launched the "Reels on Reality" initiative, producing short, impactful videos that addressed everyday menstrual taboos. Shared widely on Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp, these reels resonated strongly with youth audiences. Through authentic storytelling, they challenged societal stigma and sparked public discourse, especially among students, young professionals, and urban youth.

Voices in Red – Youth urge the government to ensure Menstrual Dignity

About 150 young women became policy advocates in the "Red Letter to Government Offices" campaign. Using red ink as a symbolic gesture for menstruation, they wrote letters demanding improved menstrual hygiene infrastructure in workplaces, public spaces, and transit hubs. This initiative brought women's real-life experiences into government spaces and pushed policymakers to recognize the urgent need for menstrual-friendly infrastructure.

Educating young women and turning myths into facts

CYDA facilitators and youth volunteers conducted Menstrual Hygiene Management awareness sessions to create safe, inclusive spaces. These interactive discussions tackled misinformation and internalized shame, teaching participants that menstruation is

a normal biological process. By countering myths with science, these sessions helped women differentiate between traditional beliefs and accurate information, fostering confidence and self-care. Reusable sanitary pads were distributed, along with guidance on proper usage and hygiene practices.

Taking the Mic – "Chalta Bolta" in the marketplace

One of the boldest efforts, "Chalta Bolta at Market Place," featured youth anchors and facilitators hosting live Q&A sessions on Radio 93.4 FAT in busy markets. These spontaneous public dialogues brought menstrual topics into everyday spaces, breaking silence in areas where such conversations are rarely heard. The initiative helped normalize menstruation and gave a platform to women's voices in public settings.

Free health check-up camps in rural areas

The campaign expanded to rural outreach in villages like Chitegaon, Babulgaon, and Pangra. A free health check-up camp offered medical screenings, medications, and counseling, focusing on early detection of menstrual issues. In Babulgaon and Pangra, reusable sanitary pad distribution and awareness sessions promoted eco-friendly alternatives and proper usage techniques. These sustainable solutions were well-received by rural women and youth for their affordability and environmental benefits.

Going digital – Social Media campaigns & podcasts

A concurrent digital campaign used trending content like infographics and reels to communicate with the internet-savvy generation. Blending humor, honesty, and facts, these posts went viral, sparking crucial conversations across digital platforms. Complementing this was a podcast series on Radio 93.4 that featured experts, listener Q&As, and real-life stories. Participants who engaged by sending questions received sanitary kits, further boosting awareness and involvement.

Safe Spaces – Ask me anything & experience circles

To deepen engagement, "Ask Me Anything" sessions allowed women to ask questions openly in a judgment-free environment, moderated by trained youth and health professionals. Another emotional highlight was the "My First Period" circle, where young women shared personal stories—funny, painful, and heartfelt. These experiences-built solidarity and helped younger girls feel supported and less alone.

Building young leaders – Girls' and Women's Circles

The campaign invested in long-term change through Girls' (Bal Sabha) and Women's Circles (Mahila Sabha), where participants received scientific education on menstruation and developed leadership skills. Many girls emerged as advocates, promoting menstrual health at schools and community gatherings—multiplying the campaign's reach.

Collective Action in Pangra

In collaboration with CIE India, a large-scale awareness and pad distribution session was held in Pangra, engaging 167 women. The event, led by Mr. Ashish Thakare (Admin and Security Head, CIE India), received heartfelt participation. For many, it was the first time discussing menstruation openly in a public setting.

Voices from Ground

"I had never spoken openly about my periods before, even with my family. But after attending the session, I felt confident enough to ask questions and share my experience without shame." – Kanchn Thakare, 32, Pangra

"I always thought using cloth was the only way. I didn't know reusable pads existed or how important hygiene is. Now I understand the risks and how to take care of myself better." – Rita Mahajan, 28, Pangra

"Buying sanitary pads every month was difficult for me. When they gave us reusable pads and explained how to use them, I felt a big burden lifted." – Bhgyashree Ghanvat, 35, Pangra





Youth and Community members unite for Menstrual Health in Rural Gujarat

On May 26–27, CYDA conducted a two-day menstrual health awareness drive across five villages in Kotada Sangani block, Rajkot—Juni Khokhari, Devaliya, Hadmatiya, Nana Khijadiya, and Dharampur—reaching 247 participants, including youth, women, and elders. The initiative featured interactive sessions with support from Unipads, Anganwadi workers, Block and Village Development Officers, the Swachh Bharat Mission team, and local youth leaders. A key theme was the environmental impact of menstrual waste, with discussions on how commercial pads, composed of up to 90% plastic, take centuries to decompose. Participants were encouraged to adopt biodegradable products for personal and ecological well-being.

Core activities included education on the menstrual cycle, nutrition and yoga for menstrual pain relief, and breaking harmful cultural taboos. Supported by UNICEF and CIE India, the event was attended by dignitaries including Mr. Sandeep Tendolkar (UNICEF Maharashtra), Mr. Vijay Wavare (CSR Cell, PCMC), and Mr. Sachin Pawar (Deputy Commissioner – Health, PCMC). With reusable sanitary pads distributed and topics like sanitation worker health, insurance, and menstrual hygiene discussed, the campaign empowered over 470 individuals across two states, fostering youth leadership and community-driven menstrual health solutions.





Empowering young Frontline Workers on World Menstrual Hygiene Day - Pune



On May 28 and 29, CYDA, in collaboration with Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC), CIE India, and UNICEF, observed World Menstrual Hygiene Day with a special awareness event. The program was graced by dignitaries including Mr. Sachin Pawar, Deputy Commissioner – Health, PCMC; Mr. Ganesh Deshpande, Executive Health Officer, PCMC; Mr. Sandeep Tendolkar, State Senior Advisor, UNICEF Maharashtra; Mr. S.S. Gaikwad, Chief Health Inspector, PCMC; Mr.Dr. Laxman Gophane from the Medical Department; Mr. Vijay Wavare from CSR Cell, PCMC, and CYDA. The event witnessed participation from 224 frontline workers including sanitation staff, ASHAs, and ANMs from Pimpri Chinchwad. Mr. Sachin Pawar emphasized the importance of menstrual hygiene and open dialogue. Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Laxman Gophane shared scientific insights and best practices related to menstruation, while Mr. Sandeep Tendolkar delivered a comprehensive educational session explaining hormonal changes, hygiene practices, types of absorbents (cloth, pads, tampons, menstrual cups), and debunking prevalent myths and misconceptions, including government schemes, insurance, and nutrition. Reusable sanitary pads were also distributed, promoting sustainable menstrual practices.

Youth in Action – Menstrual Health Week sparks change in rural Nandurbar



CYDA conducted a week-long Menstrual Hygiene Management awareness campaign in Chirde and Pimprani villages of Nandurbar district, reaching 116 participants including adolescent girls, mothers, Anganwadi workers, and self-help group members. Chirde was specifically chosen due to its unique challenges such as low school attendance among girls and widespread menstrual taboos caused by limited education. The campaign included five key events: a community meeting on menstrual waste disposal which led to plans for Bal sabha and Mahila Sabha and introduced clay burners as a sustainable disposal solution; a joint Mahila and Bal Sabha session with a practical demonstration on safe sanitary pad disposal using newspaper wrapping and red ink markings; an interactive "Walk and Talk" quiz and storytelling session that encouraged open dialogue and clarified menstrual hygiene practices; and Menstrual Hygiene Day celebrations in both Chirde and Pimprani, where participants engaged in awareness sessions on biology, hygiene, nutrition, and myth-busting, complemented by community activities like rallies and games to reduce stigma and encourage participation. The campaign empowered women and girls with accurate information, practical tools, and the confidence to manage their menstrual health with dignity, while also promoting sustainable practices and encouraging broader community involvement for lasting behavioural change.

Awareness on Menstrual Health and Hygiene – Yerwada, Pune



A Menstrual Health Management event was organized in Yerwada, Pune on May 28. In all, 60 adolescent girls from Yerwada and Hadapsar communities participated. The event raised awareness about menstrual health and hygiene among adolescents and young girls.

The session was graced by Ms. Kanchan, a representative from Samajbandh NGO, who addressed the participants on the importance of maintaining hygiene during menstruation. She emphasized the role of nutritious food and shared insights into the physical and emotional changes that occur during puberty. A practical demonstration on making paper bags for the safe disposal of used menstrual pads was also conducted, offering an eco-friendly and hygienic solution to disposal challenges.

The interactive session provided a safe and open platform for girls to share their personal experiences about menstruation, breaking societal taboos and encouraging peer learning. The participants gained scientific knowledge about menstrual hygiene management and engaged in discussions that promoted body positivity and self-care. This event served as a significant step towards empowering young girls with information and confidence to manage their menstrual health with dignity and awareness.

School students visit CIE India Plant in Shapar, Rajkot



As part of an ongoing effort to bridge classroom education with real-world industrial exposure, CYDA, in collaboration with CIE India, organized educational plant visits for 186 school students accompanied by eight teachers. The initiative offered students firsthand experience of industrial operations, workplace safety standards, and modern technological practices.

Key dignitaries from CIE India—including Mr. Rohit Chauhan (HR Manager), Mr. Chandan Pal, and Mr. Dhairy Gouswami from the HR Department—shared valuable insights with the visiting students. Highlights included:

- The importance of safety protocols in industrial settings
- An overview of CIE India's production processes and the role of innovation and automation
- Real-time exposure to plant machinery and operational workflows
- Lessons in teamwork, punctuality, and discipline within a professional environment

Encouragement for students—particularly girls—to explore careers in engineering, manufacturing, and technology

The plant visit proved to be an eye-opening experience, inspiring students by offering a window into the industrial world. It helped them connect theoretical learning with practical application, while also broadening their understanding of career opportunities in STEM fields.

Key outcomes of the visit:

- Improved understanding of industrial systems and operations
- Greater appreciation for sustainable practices and quality control
- Motivation to explore technical and engineering career paths
- Stimulation of curiosity and critical thinking through real-world learning

This initiative underscores the shared commitment of CYDA and CIE India to nurturing future talent and sparking interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) among young learners. Through such experiences, students do not just learn—they aspire.

Empowering young minds through Summer Camp

CYDA, with the support of Coforge, organized a two-day Summer Camp at the Community Resource Centre and STEM Innovation Learning Centre, Yerwada, Pune, on 16th and 17th May. A total of 30 enthusiastic adolescents (17 girls and 13 boys) from underserved communities participated in the camp, which focused on combining emotional intelligence, leadership skills, and exposure to emerging technologies such as robotics, sensors, and 3D printing.

The sessions were led by experts and facilitators, including Mr. Satyajeet Jagtap, a Robotics Educator from In Sculpt Technology, who emphasized the importance of hands-on learning, sustainable technology, and using robotics as a tool for problem-solving and innovation. The facilitation team from CYDA guided the students through a range of interactive activities and learning modules. The summer camp featured a variety of engaging sessions on robotics, windmill generation, automation, and art-based activities, promoting the development of both technical and creative skills.

A special highlight of the camp was the recognition of Priya Mahata, a Grade 9 student, as the "Best Performer" for her exceptional leadership, curiosity, and active participation.

The Summer Camp was more than just an educational program—it was a transformative experience that reaffirmed CYDA's mission to nurture compassionate, capable, and future-ready youth through inclusive and innovative education.





Thanks to our Amazing Partner organizations for their generous support

CIE India

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Rotary Club of Pune Sports City

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Unipads® Reusable Sanitary Pads







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IFSC Code - SIBL0000147
Branch - MOLEDINA ROAD, CAMP, PUNE
MICR Code - 411059002

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