

Press Release

07 October 2021

**State Health Minister inauguratesthe**

**Innovative Menstrual Hygiene Management programme THINKAL**

Smt Veena George, Minister for Health & Women and Child Development, Govt of Kerala inagurated the Project on Awareness Creation and Distribution of Menstrual Cup - **THINKAL**at Mascot Hotel, heretoday (7th October 2021).“Menstrual cup is a game changer especially helping women to travel freely during their periods and is a much healthier option and also environment friendly” quoted the Health Minister while inaugurating the Thinkal Menstrual cup distribution and awareness project of HLL Lifecare Ltd. **THINKAL** is a CSR initiative of HLL Lifecare Ltd (HLL), implemented by HLL Management Academy, the educational & social development wing of HLL, a Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

She handed over the Thinkal Menstrual cups to 10 women representing four wards of Thiruvananthapuram- Kowdiar, Peroorkada, Shankhumugham and Valiathura.Thinkal project in it’ first phase is implemented in coastal areas (Valiyathura Ward & Shangumugham Ward) and urban areas (Kowdiar Ward & Peroorkada Ward) of Trivandrum Municipal Corporation, covering around 10,000 beneficiaries.

“If 10000 people use these menstrual cups continuously for 5 years it will lead to reduction of almost 200 tonne of sanitary napkin waste”. Minister also appreciated the initiatives of HLL in the Women Healthcare Sector in the country.

Shri (Adv.) Antony Raju, Minister for Transport, Govt of Kerala released Thinkal M-Cup awareness booklet by handing over the copy to ward councillors of - Peroorkada, Kowdiar, Shangumugham and Valiyathura. “ Thinkal is a novel initiative of HLL”, said Adv Antony Raju. This project aimed at protecting the Health and environment will be heartily accepted by the women in Kerala, for sure. Since its inception, HLL has been instrumental in implementing exemplary projects in the healthcare sector adding that is a role model on how the corporate should be utilising their CSR fund.

The function was presided over by Shri.K. Beji George IRTS, Chairman & Managing Director, HLL and Shri. Amar Fettle, State Nodal Officer (Adolescent Health), NHM Kerala offered felicitations.

Shri. E.A. Subramanian, Director (T&O), HLL welcomed the audience and Smt. Anitha Thampi, CEO-HMA proposed vote of thanks.

**Thinkal** Menstrual Cup (M-Cup)is a healthy, safe and affordable alternative menstrual hygiene product with multiple advantages.

The distribution of M-Cups is expected to be completed by 31st March 2022. The project also includes awareness creation on how to use the product properly.

HLL hadearlier implemented M-Cup projects in Kochi Municipal Corporation and Alappuzha Municipality in Kerala through well designed awareness sessions about the product and its multi-fold advantages.

The project, pioneering in nature, was conceived as an alternative to address the waste disposalissues emergedduring the 2018 Kerala floods. Sanitary napkins distributed to women in flood hit areas caused challenges in the disposal. HLL introduced M-Cups as an alternative to address this challenge.

In the follow-up study, it was found that~~,~~ the acceptance level of M-Cups among the users was 91.5%.

Despite its acceptability among those who were introduced to it, M-Cups have not yet gained proper acceptability among the larger public due to non-availability in retail shops and lack of knowledge & awareness about the product. Therefore, a conscious attempt is required to create knowledge and awareness of Menstrual cups among the public and the product is to be made available readily. Encouraging the use of M-Cups among menstruating women in India will be a novel initiative with a long-term impact like reduced solid waste, reduced public health hazard, improved menstrual health, safety, convenience and freedom for women.

The product is made of FDA approved medical grade silicone material and is reusable for upto five years. It is shaped like a bell and is flexible, considered as a safer alternative to disposable menstrual hygiene products. It is worn inside the vagina during menstruation to catch menstrual fluid (blood). About every 6–12 hours (depending on the amount of flow), the menstruating woman removes the menstrual cup from her vagina, empties the collected menstrual blood into a toilet or sink, washes the M-Cup under running water and inserts it again. At the end of the monthly period, the M-Cup can be sterilized, usually by boiling in water. Unlike tampons and pads, the M-Cup collects menstrual fluid rather than absorbing it.

M-Cups are small enough to be stored and carried in private and are easy to clean. International studies on M-Cup indicate that it is a safe device with no reported health issues.

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