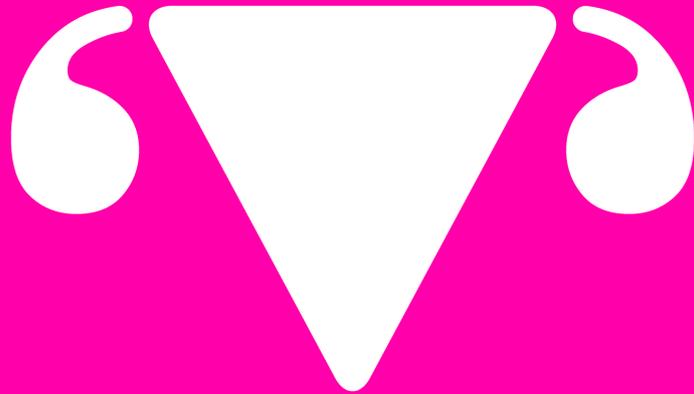


CREATING NEW NORMS AROUND  
PERIOD MANAGEMENT



# Myna Speaks '19

DAY 1

27th July 2019

Venue: Rooftop & Malabar,  
Trident Hotel, Nariman Point

DAY 2

28th July 2019

Venue: Govandi Manufacturing Unit,  
Natwar Parek Compound,



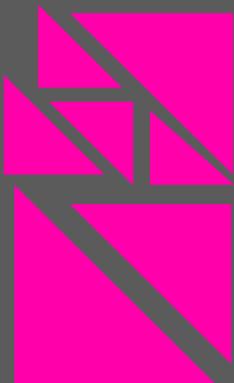
**Contact Us:**

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Table of

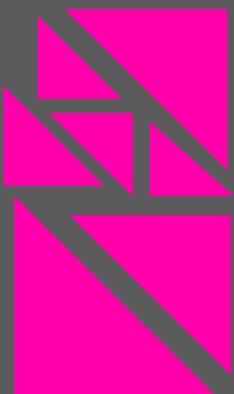
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## About the conference

Myna Speaks began with a warm welcome by Suhani Jalota, the CEO/founder of Myna Mahila Foundation. The dignitaries Nicola Brentnall, Rajiv Jalota, Rajesh Sharma, Rajeev Kumar, Sanjay Kothari, Mehul Shah, Ramu Deora and Crispin Simon were then invited to light the lamp for the conference. This was followed by the voices from the field and the key note address by Nicola Brentnall MVO - The CEO of the Queen's Commonwealth Trust. We then began with the first panel discussion, followed by the voices of the youth finalists play and speech. The conference then continued with Panel-II followed by a dance performance by girls who have been involved in our Sponsor A Girl programme. Post lunch Panel-III and IV were discussed. For this year's conference, we launched 'The Dr. Jockin Arputham Youth Service Award' in memory of Dr. Jockin Arputham who passed away in October 2018, and was Suhani Jalota's mentor. Saleha Khan was presented with this award by Bollywood Actress Taapsee Pannu, who also shed some light on her personal period story. The conference ended with a Closing note and thank you speech by Mr. Rajeev Kumar.



Ms. Suhani jalota- CEO/ Founder

## Welcome by Myna

Suhani Jalota the CEO/Founder of Myna Mahila first invited the dignitaries viz. Nicola Brentnall, Rajeev Kumar, Crispin Simon, Sanjay Kothari, Ramu Deora, Rajesh Sharma, Mehul Shah, and Rajiv Jalota to begin the conference by the lighting of the lamps. She then shared the story of how women in the community are trapped within norms that do not allow them to have access to menstrual hygiene products, which was the reason the conference topic emerged. At Myna Mahila Foundation, we believe that to make a woman more confident and healthier so she can work, play and do anything she wants, we need to help her remove the barriers in her way. We employ women locally. We improve menstrual health. And we build women's networks. After shedding light on last year's conference, Myna Speaks'19 was on the go.



# SCHEDULE

Myna Speaks '19



10:00 AM

Welcome by Myna Mahila Foundation

10:30 AM

Keynote By Nicola Brentnall MVO (Queen's Commonwealth Trust)

11:00 AM

**Panel- I: Effective Methods for Menstrual Education**

12:00 PM

Presenting Finalists from Voices of the Youth Students from Sai Vidhyalaya School

12:15 PM

**Panel- II: Involvement of the State in MHM Programmes**

1:00 PM

Lunch, Networking and NGO Stalls

2:00 PM

**Menstrual Health Management Data and Research**

2:30 PM

**Panel- III: Effective Sanitary Waste Disposal - Challenges and Solutions**

3:30 PM

**Panel- IV: Discussion Inclusive Periods - Sex Workers**

4:00 PM

**Talk by Actress Taapsee Pannu**

4:15 PM

Dr. Jockin Arputham Youth Service Award

4:30 PM

Closing Note and Vote of Thanks

5:00 PM

**Open Networking**



# Keynote

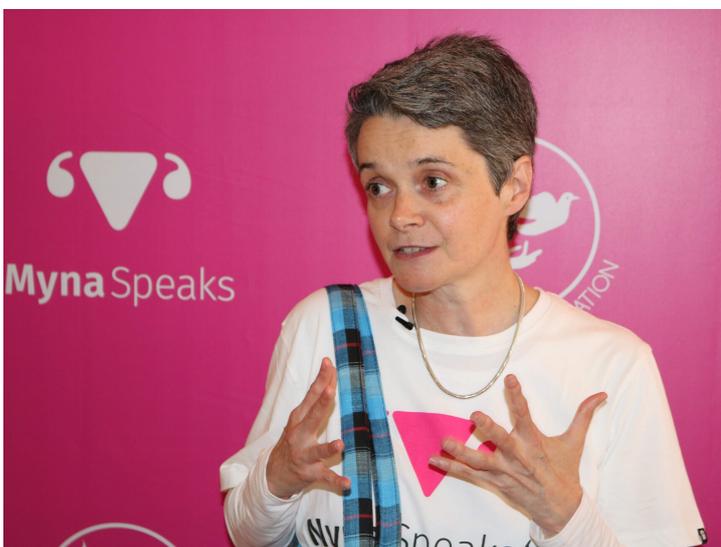
MynaSpeaks '19



Nicola Brentnall, MVO began by mentioning the Myna'18 Edition Bag she carried with her; "This bag has travelled continents." She is privileged to carry the bag as it represents the talent, courage and resilience of the women who have made it. There are no criteria for someone to make a difference; economically backward women are equally capable of bringing about change in society through their communities. Thus, the Queens Commonwealth Trust was launched in 2018, to give talent a place to be heard and viewed by all. Sharing stories, giving a platform to connect to the world and thus to inspire others to join the channel of change, was the core idea behind its formation. Further she touched upon the topic of Menstruation by mentioning that in India, 23% of the girls who attend school discontinue, due to the shame and inconvenience of menstruating.



She strongly believes that effective communication about products and resources is essential to overcome menstrual stigma. Mrs. Nicole Brentnall connected with the Myna Mahila Foundation- "In spite of the lack of infrastructure, resources and huge stigma associated with menstruation, they work so hard to improve the condition."



Nicola Brentnall MVO - Chief Executive Officer,  
Queens Commonwealth Trust

# Panel - I: Effective Methods for Menstrual Education

The Panel discussion was moderated by Maria Kuriakose (Myna Mahila Foundation). Panel members included Nithin Wadhvani (CARC), Kamini Prakash-MHM consultant, Dr. Nidhi Das (Doctors for you) and Nirmala Nair (Kaboom Social Impact). Overall the panel gave a wide view of the education access to the women and girls on menstrual hygiene. Menstruation which is an indicator of sexual maturation of the female is rather associated with negativity sometimes requiring isolation as well as prohibitions from engaging in normal daily activities. Appropriate selection, use and disposal of sanitary materials, as well as adequate body cleaning and maintaining a suitable diet during menstruation ensure good menstrual hygiene. Menstruation is not a choice therefore education about the same should be compulsory.

Menstruation in India has traditionally been associated with myths and taboos, which is why adolescent girls find it extremely difficult to even discuss the issue with their parents or elders in the family. Most of them turn to their teaching staff for advice on personal hygiene, therefore, more emphasis should be placed on the importance of teaching this information. Men and boys can support women and girls to manage menstruation effectively across different social domains including household, community, school, and work. Men and boys influence women's and girls' experiences of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) through many roles, be it as husbands, fathers, brothers, students, peers, teachers, community leaders, entrepreneurs, employers, development and humanitarian practitioners, and policymakers. While it is necessary to reach men and boys across all these roles, the central idea is to break the barriers, stereotypes or taboos by encouraging young girls to question and make informed decisions when it comes to implementing an approach which helps them in the future. Spaces across the society should be created in order to spread awareness about menstrual hygiene. Educating the disabled on menstrual hygiene is also important because they are vulnerable to sexual exploitation therefore accessibility for the same is important.



Maria Kuriakose



Kamini Prakash



Nirmala Nair



Nidhi Das



Nitin Wadhvani

# Menstrual Health Management Data and Research

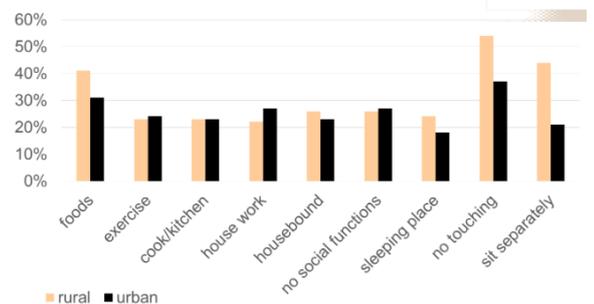


**M. Shivakami**

Research study on Menstrual Health Management presentation was by Dr. M. Shivakami - Tata Institute of Social Sciences. The research topic was Menstrual Hygiene Essentials: Information Material and Supplies Facilities (toilets with water, spaces for washing, bathing and drying) Disposal and waste management. Using systematic analysis, the aim was to assess the status of MHM among adolescent girls using all types of published grade literature 2000-2015. The two major aims were to understand the social and regional factors affecting the prevalence of MHM status, and whether changes had taken place to meet the needs of women. To understand what menstrual hygiene is, awareness studies were conducted, and it was found that the pre-menarche awareness was only 48% which means more than 50% girls were not aware about MHM when they got their first period.

Around 50% girls said periods were normal and the rest said it was not. Around 10% girls were aware that the uterus was the source of bleeding. This showed the lack of awareness among the girls. MHM is closely related to culture, there are a number of cultural blocks that hinder the prevalence of MHM. 77% of girls face either one of the following restrictions: Food, exercise, cooking/ entering the kitchen, house work, house arrest, no social functions, no proper sleeping places, having to sit separately and/or not being allowed to touch certain things. In the adolescent girls living in the slums, greater restrictions were placed on eating certain food items and cooking. The study was conducted from 2000 to 2015, while the education was in blooming stage.

**Cultural restrictions during menstruation affecting adolescent schoolgirls, 2000-2015 (pooled prevalence)**



M. Shivakami, TISS

79



There is a visible and direct relation between usage of napkins and school absence, the study showed that where the levels of napkin usage were higher, the drop out levels and absentees among adolescent girls was very low. To change these numbers and completely stop dropping out, the government and NGOs have made various efforts including spreading awareness and distribution of pads. MHM is for everyone not just girls and women, it should be inclusive. These gaps should be reduced. Men need to be approached to take their help to facilitate men in formal and informal sectors. Even for the needs of differently abled women, there are only two studies about MHM and disability in India. MHM is closely related to SDG's hence all aspects of full functioning of MHM has to be done.

# Panel - II: Involvement of the State in MHM Programmes



Tanya Mahajan



Bharathy Tahiliani



Zoya Rizvi



Lara Gulia



Swati Agarwal

Panel discussion was moderated by Tanya Mahajan and the panel members included Bharathy Tahiliani (UNICEF), Dr Zoya Rizvi (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare), Lara Gulia (Tata Trusts) and Swati Agarwal (Johnson and Johnson). The opening statement was given by the moderator Ms. Tanya, who gave a brief introduction about the panelists. Government of India has been one of the front runners in schemes of menstrual hygiene and health across the globe. Ms. Bharathy shared her experience of working with various state governments and UNICEF and how they have worked to shift the focus to spreading awareness rather than just providing sanitary napkins. Ms. Lara shared her views on the shift of perceptions at level of officials as stakeholders in regards to MHM. There is a steady shift seen among various states. In Gujarat, a help line has been created by the Ministry of Health regarding any FAQ's about MHM and these queries come from the field itself and have been documented. Initially the knowledge about sanitary napkins was restricted to rural areas.

The discussion then shifted to the safety of the products being provided to the masses, and Ms. Swati from Johnson and Johnson commented on the efforts taken by J&J. During the initial phase of MHM many units started manufacturing sanitary napkins, but it was important to keep in mind not only the requirements but also the type of product needed to benefit the women. Tata Trust takes the effort to provide access to alternate hygiene products. Organizations like Boond have been providing Cups in certain villages and also educating women about their hygienic use. Initially during the menstrual hygiene sessions with women from rural areas, speakers found it challenging to connect to their audience. Helping them accept the topic, understand and be comfortable with it took time. Once the women understood this, other health-related concepts were introduced, shifting the dialogue from menstruation to reproductive health and sex, which enabled women to open up and seek further information. Not only the girls, but their mothers also needed to be educated, as they are the most important medium of conveying such information. Once teachers are also trained, the process will run smoothly along with the government.

# Panel - III: Effective Sanitary Waste Disposal: Challenges and Solutions

Panel discussion was moderated by Arundhati Murlidharan and the panel members included Suchismita Pai (SWaCH), Minesh Damodar Pimple (Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai), Deane De Menzes (Red is the new Green) and Omkar Sathe (All for a smile). The opening statement was given by the moderator Ms. Arundhati, who began with a question- 'Raise your hand if you were ever in a situation which compelled you to carry your used sanitary napkin, just because there were no dustbins or you just didn't know where to dispose the sanitary waste!' A crowd of hands went up. The distribution, sale and use of sanitary pads are increasing, but there are still serious gaps in our knowledge of how they must be disposed of. Secondly, a lot of attention has been given to the type of technologies used to dispose of the pads. Solid waste management and incinerators are being used currently, but there is a lot of debate in the country about what is safe and sustainable, whether incinerators are really good, or simply worthy of being banned entirely. It is found that girls use one pad for 15 to 24 hours, due to which there may be serious health related consequences. Dr. Khan also informed us that since the pad contains fluids (blood), according to the Environment Protection 1984, the pads should not be burned. Miss Pai spoke about SWaCH, which collects and segregates waste. Of the 350 tonnes collected, 66% is wet waste and 220 tonnes are recycled. She explained that pads require over 900 – 1200 degrees to incinerate them, but their ashes may not be safe as they contaminate the air and land due to land filling. Mr Pimple, who deals with waste disposal spoke about how segregation of waste is still a huge issue in Mumbai. Mumbai is now collecting waste from schools and colleges and is sending it to thermal plants. The BMC receives a lot of segregated waste from Red Dot campaign and also encourages us to segregate our wet and dry waste. Miss Deane spoke about the importance of waste disposal and how important its awareness is, since in India, very few people are interested in talking about menstrual waste. Mr Sathe spoke about the importance of menstrual hygiene and that 30% of the population have shifted to cloth pads.



Suchismita Pai



Deane De Menzes



Minesh Damodar Pimple



Omkar Sathe



Aamir Khan



Arundhati Murlidharan

# Panel - IV: Discussion on Inclusive Periods & Sex Workers



**Kamini Prakash**



**Girish Kulkarni**



**Jayatai Jogdand**

Panel discussion was moderated by Ms. Kamini Prakash and the panel members included Dr. Girish Kulkarni (Snehalaya organization) and Jayatai Jogdand- MHM consultant. The moderator Ms. Prakash initiated the discussion by asking Dr. Girish about Snehalaya and how he decided to work in this sector. Dr. Girish has been working in the red light area for 30 years. He remembers that in 1982 AIDS started to spread in large numbers, due to which Snehalaya started condom distribution campaign. Usually, daughters are informed about menstruation from their mothers when the mothers themselves are not very aware about the process. Consequently, there is a serious lack of awareness in both the mother and daughter, and diseases or menstrual problems are likely to increase. The conditions are even worse for sex workers, who suffer from substance abuse addiction to alcohol, gutka, sleeping pills and even whitener in order to get more customers. Sex workers are also out of work once they cross a certain age or during their periods. To avoid the loss of customers during menstruation, these women put betel nuts into their Vagina to prevent the occurrence of periods. Some women even take pills to postpone their menstrual cycle, thus seriously risking their menstrual health. The rampant illiteracy, lack of human rights, and time off during their periods has resulted in terrible working conditions for these women, who are under constant pressure from brothel keepers to ensure that no customers are lost. Jayatai said that most of the sex workers do not use pads as there is no accessibility and not even cloth as others come to know about the period and they lose the customers. To avoid this, they insert sponge in their vagina as it absorbs blood. Certain superstitious beliefs around menstruation result in women being deprived of food during their period. Snehalaya has started campaign called SMILEY in which they have peer educators through which they distribute pads, and their clinical set up has helped many women understand the importance of using pads during menstruation. They have also been putting pressure on brothel keepers to keep the place clean, to ensure that the health conditions for women improve, and making them aware about menstruation. But a lot more needs to be done in this area to make women fully aware and have access to these amenities.

# Voices From the Field

Archana Jadav, Sapne Tupe and Archana Ambre (Myna Mahila Foundation) shared with the audience their experiences at Myna, the changes they underwent in thought process, and how they became a channel of change for the members of their community and homes. Archana Jadav said that she was never educated about periods, she was also very shy. After she became a part of Myna, however, she feels confident and empowered to take on these issues. Archana Ambre also shared with us her period story, the way she was silenced and how after being a part of Myna, she is now a chattering bird who speaks openly about periods.

## Voices of the Youth

6 Girls from the Sai Vidyalay School in Mankhur wrote and performed their skit on Ancient Period Culture. These girls were the winners of a competition hosted by Myna across Mumbai schools.

Nisha, one of the girls, also beautifully told the audience of the Letter to her Period that she wrote. Here is a glimpse of what she said:

*Dear Period,  
I do not like you at all. I get mood swings, stomach ache and back ache on your arrival. But if you don't come I also start wondering why haven't you come yet. I do know you come for my own good. I know you getting irregular means a problem in conceiving. But I don't understand why you need to come every month. You can come once or twice in a year or so. Or else you can come once in a month but only for one day. But please don't get pimples and back and stomach aches along with you. Even in a city like Mumbai, in the 21st century we are made to sit at one place and treated like untouchables. Adolescent girls must be finding it so difficult to face these superstitions.*



Archana Jadav



Archana Ambre



Sapne Tupe



A still from the Voices of the Youth Play



# Talk by Actress Taapsee Pannu

Akshaye Rathi, a film exhibitor and distributor with operations spread across central Indian states introduced Taapsee Pannu and also was a part of the panel discussion. Taapsee Pannu is an Indian actress known for her work in Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil films. She was a software professional before modeling and later became an actor. Taapsee brought up the topic of periods with her personal period story. At the panel discussion, mixed with a lot of humor, she gave insights on how each person shouldn't blindly follow any customs and traditions but should feel the need to question such age-old customs. She mentioned during the panel discussion that when she was a little girl, she would use other excuses but never say she was on her periods, and today she looks back and finds all of that so amusing. From using code words to talk to friends about her periods, to hiding sanitary napkins in the corner of the closet, she described the seemingly small daily stigmas women themselves have about periods. The panel discussion was centered around how Taapsee Pannu, through acting, can create awareness to make periods sound as natural as it is in real life.



Akshaye Rathi



Taapsee Pannu

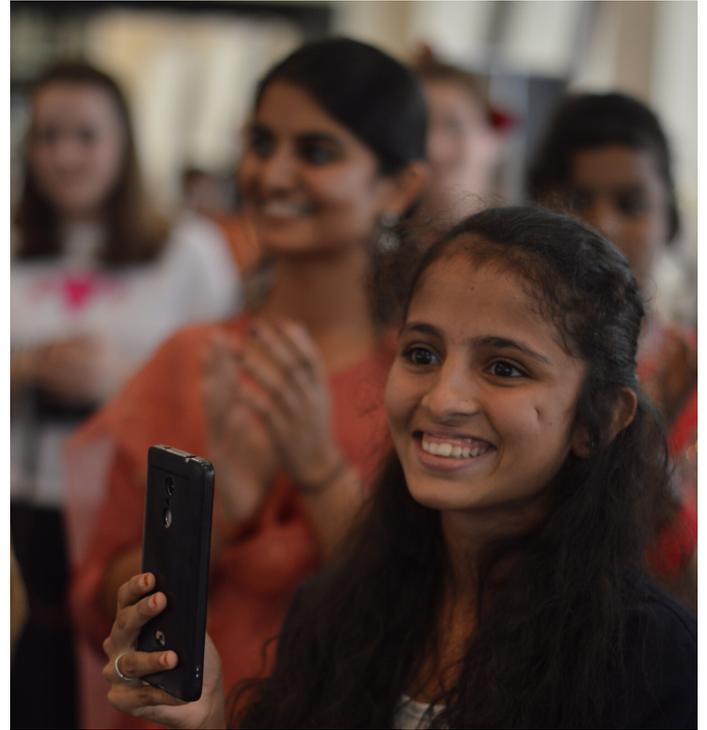


# Dr. Jockin Arputham Youth Service Award

## About the Award

In 2011 Suhani first met Dr. Jockin Arputham, and it was around the same time that she also first met the women from Mahila Milan, a Self Help Group he had been running for decades in slums all over the world. She worked with them on toilet and hygiene projects for many years. Toilets were a way to make women feel more confident and safe. Dr. Jockin passed on lifelong lessons with such simplicity and humility. He spoke to the women, gently, yet with purpose and drive. The way he would mobilize people, and how much they respected him - with one phone call, thousands would gather to support his cause. His small stature juxtaposed his loud, charismatic personality. He was a guide and mentor at Myna Mahila and the Team misses him deeply. For more than 40 years, he worked tirelessly in slums and shanty towns, building representative organizations into powerful partners with governments and international agencies for the betterment of urban settlements. Dr Arputham was the president of the National Slum Dwellers Federation which he founded in the 70s and of Slum Dwellers International which networks slum and shack dweller organizations and federations from over twenty countries across the world. In 2011, the Government of India bestowed on him its fourth highest civilian honor, the Padma Shri award. He was Megasaysay Awardee and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee 2014. But as he would say, these awards meant little. He had a PhD in subjects ranging from history to urban development, architecture, and film.

Dr. Jockin Arputham was our guru, and as he passed away in October 2018, in his honor, we want to launch the Dr. Jockin Arputham Youth Service Award.



**Saleha Khan- First recipient of the  
Dr. Jockin Arprputham Youth Service Award**

## About Saleha Khan

In its inaugural year, Myna presented the Dr. Jockin Arputham Youth Service Award to a youth icon who stood up against all odds and speaks for her community - Saleha Khan!

17-year-old Saleha has been breaking taboos surrounding menstruation by conducting awareness sessions with the members of her community in the slums of Govandi, Mumbai. She has also been at the forefront of a unique children-led campaign called 'WASH4LIFE'. She mobilized her children group and promoted WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) in Govandi through innovative methods of messaging (street plays, photo exhibitions, and talk shows). Through this initiative, she, along with her team members, could reach out to 10000 community members. She was also awarded the prestigious Savitribai Phule Award in 2017.

# Closing note and Vote of Thanks

Mr. Rajeev Kumar gave the closing note as well as the vote of thanks.

He began by summarizing the panel discussions of the entire conference. He focused on two major points to reflect upon. First, the means through which the government is already dealing with MHM and secondly the cause of absenteeism and drop out of girls due to menstruation.

Mr. Rajeev Kumar began the Vote of Thanks by thanking all the dignitaries; Mr. Rajiv Jalota, Mr. Rajesh Sharma from Rajesh Sharma & Company, Mr. Mehul Shah from Gem and Jewellery Foundation, Mr. Rajendra Durve, Mr. Sanjay Kothari, Mr. Ramu Deora, Mr. Crispin Simon- British Deputy High Commissioner and Nicola Brentnall. MVO. He also thanked all Myna Donors, Queen's Commonwealth Trust, Comic Relief, HDFC, Bombay Rayons, Garware, Bhimrajka Foundation, Sun Jewels. Myna Speaks 2019 wouldn't be complete if all our super interns and myna speaks volunteers weren't thanked. Deepshika, Hana, Tanya, Revati, Prisha, Naveen, Bhagyashree, Anushree and all our volunteers who were a huge support to us and making Myna Speaks 2019 come to life! He expressed his gratitude towards this amazing team!

Followed by which he thanked all the partners of the Conference Trident Hotel, PeeSafe and Tendersinfo. Post which he then invited the entire Myna Team on Stage Suhani, Maria, Archana, Gudda, Vaishnavi, Nicole, Shraddha and all our staff members, Uzma, Sunita, Aisha, Noorjah, Mumtaz, Sapna, Haseena, Rashida, Shobha, Mariyam, Kajal and Roshni.



Rajeev Kumar- Director  
Myna Mahila Foundation



Myna Speaks '19

# Day Two



Nicola Brentnall visit to the Myna Manufacturing unit at Govandi



Lunch with the Myna Team





Myna Speaks '19

# Day Two



Visit to the manufacturing unit



Sponsor A Girl Event



Voices from the field



@mynamahila

# Testimonials

A whole day long conference 'Myna Speaks'19 'by Myna Mahila Foundation (MMF) at Rooftop & Malabar, Trident Hotel, Nariman Point on 'Creating New Norms Around Period Management ' kept the all invited guests engaged throughout.

Myna is helping to raise awareness around menstruation and in bringing affordable sanitary products directly to the women in need.

Conference moved forward with Panel discussion from eminent speakers from UNICEF, Tata Trusts, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, various NGOs like 'Doctors for you, Kaboom Social Impact, Red is the new Green, All for a smile, Snehalaya' etc. My professor Dr. Sivakami Muthusamy Ma'am from TISS- SHSS gave her presentation on 'Menstrual Health Management Data and Research and explained us in much simpler way the problems and solutions. Her researches have been published in the prestigious best known magazines like 'The Lancet'. Later the session was followed by 'Talk by actress Taapsee Pannu'. She shared her own experience about menstruation- myths and beliefs. A truly learning session! Thank you Professor Ma'am." Let's do everything that make India a happy 'period'. "

- Mozahid Alam





MynaSpeaks '19



# Moments



@mynamahila



MynaSpeaks '19



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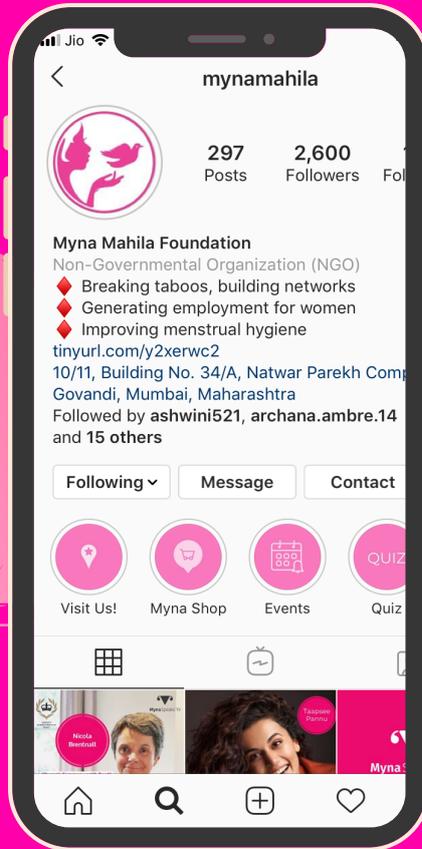
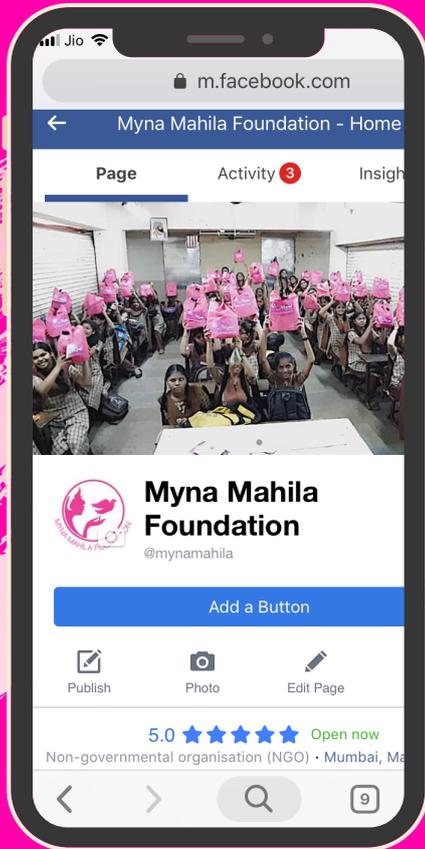
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@mynamahila

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Follow us on  
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We share updates from the latest activities at Myna, period stories, research insights everyday!





## Rangalore Times

## Calcutta Times

### 'Why are women made to feel awkward when they talk about something as basic as periods'

Rosika Pannu  
@rosikapannu

**R**osika Pannu, a social activist and founder of Myna Media Foundation, organized an event to talk about the importance of menstrual health management. The NGO's series of events was attended by social workers, government representatives and other Taapsee Pannu. The organization, founded by Rahul Jais, was chosen as one of the special charities to benefit from the donations marking the royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle in May 2018. At the event, Taapsee Pannu, among others spoke to us about issues surrounding periods, her personal experiences as a young girl, and the need for open conversation.

#### LACK OF AWARENESS ABOUT MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AMONG SEX WORKERS

The workers were brought and in some cases, sleeping. A sex worker, who is now a peer educator with her partners, is someone that has been working to bring women's rights and rehabilitation to those adversely affected by the commercial sex industry's left over. She shared what sex workers go through during their periods. "We don't have access to sanitary pads to begin with.

## Pune Times

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2018

### 'Why are women made to feel so a

...Jasika Taapsee Pannu at an event held by a Meghan Markle backed NGO that organized multiple sessions on the importance of menstrual hygiene in Mumbai on Saturday

**O**n Saturday, Mumbai was the backdrop for an event organized by Myna Media Foundation, a social activist and founder of Myna Media Foundation, organized an event to talk about the importance of menstrual health management. The NGO's series of events was attended by social workers, government representatives and other Taapsee Pannu. The organization, founded by Rahul Jais, was chosen as one of the special charities to benefit from the donations marking the royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle in May 2018. At the event, Taapsee Pannu, among others spoke to us about issues surrounding periods, her personal experiences as a young girl, and the need for open conversation.



**THE SHAME, STIGMA AND TABOO SURROUNDING MENSTRUATION NEEDS TO END. I LEARNED A**

### 'Why are periods perceived as a girl's 'problem'? Why is it a 'problem' at all!'



**AS A GIRL, I WOULD WISH IF A SANITARY PAD WAS CONSIDERED AS COMMON AS A GRADY IN SHOPS TO PEOPLE**

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### Menstrual health: Taapsee Pannu attends event by Meghan-backed NGO

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## Bombay Times

### are periods perceived as a girl's 'problem'? Why is it a 'problem' at all!'



**AS A GIRL, I WOULD WISH IF A SANITARY PAD WAS CONSIDERED AS COMMON AS A GRADY IN SHOPS TO PEOPLE**

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**THE SHAME, STIGMA AND TABOO SURROUNDING MENSTRUATION NEEDS TO END. I LEARNED A**

### Menstrual health: Taapsee Pannu attends event by Meghan-backed NGO



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