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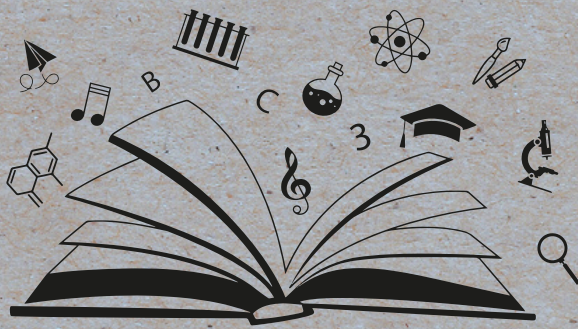
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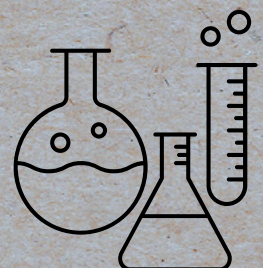
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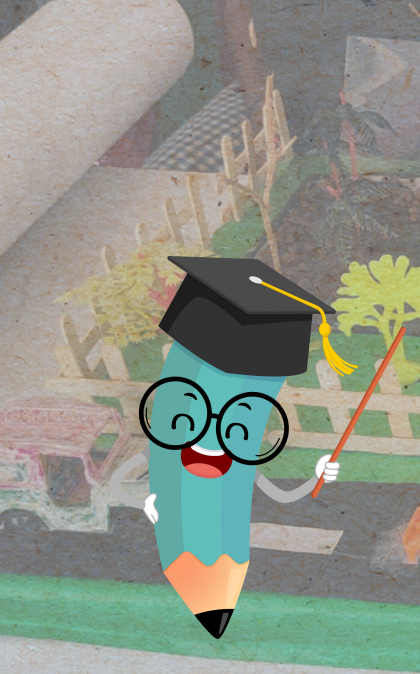


BRINGING YOUNG INNOVATORS TOGETHER AT SCIENCE FAIR



In association with Siemens Ltd. AROEHAN held a taluka-level students' science fair at Adivasi Vikas Bhavan in Jawhar. 16 Ashram Schools from Jawhar and 10 Ashram Schools from Mokhada participated in this event. A total of 52 projects on science, technology, and engineering were demonstrated at the exhibition.





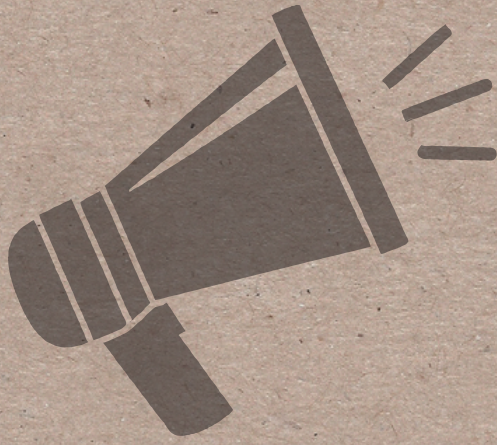
The primary objectives of the science fairs

- Showcasing Knowledge: - Provide a platform for students to display their scientific understanding and innovative projects.
- Promoting Practical Learning: - Enhance students' grasp of physics, chemistry, biology, and technology through hands-on experience.
- Encouraging Teamwork: - Foster collaboration among students and encourage the application of theoretical concepts in real-world experiments.

The Moderators were invited to evaluate the projects and based on the overall impact, the award prizes were distributed to the top three winners. Along with AROEHAN's activists, managers, and CEO, the event was attended by Jawhar Education Extension Officer, the P.S. Sabha Chairperson, and the Education Extension Officer of Ekatmika Adivasi Vikas Prkalak.

The 52 teachers and 104 students present were also briefed about the 'Marathi Vigyan Parishad Khelni Programme'. Marathi Vigyan Parishad and Shri Udyan Ganesh Seva Samiti Shivaji Park have jointly organized a Science Festival on 5th February 2025. The event, to be held in Dadar, will allow them to get an immersive experience of miniatures based on concepts of sound, air, gravity, and others. The event is open to all, and teachers and students from the tribal areas were encouraged to participate for better exposure to science-based evolutions.





Activists come together for preparation of Mahila Aarogya Haq Parishad

The Maharashtra Women's Health Rights Council AKA Mahila Aarogya Haq Parishad (MAHP) provides a credible forum for activists working directly at the village level to share their knowledge and experiences. However, activists frequently lack the expertise necessary to carry out this research procedure. The 'Study Training Camp' was held on January 18 and 19, 2025, at Mahavir Nagar, International Centre, Taluka Dahanu, Dist. Palghar, as part of the Maharashtra Women's Health Rights Council's preparatory process.

In the immersive two-day experience, activists and helpers from NGOs such as Masoom, Adivasi Sahaj Shiksha Sanstha, Yuva, Kashtari, Adivasi Ekta Ekalavya Parishad, Janavadi Sansthan, Sukhbhumi, Seva Vardhini, We Are For Our Health were present. Teachers and students associated with these organisations and AROEHAN's activists actively participated in the training. Activist Kajal Jain from Masoom, gave an overview of MAHP, the Maharashtra Women's Health Rights Conference held annually to cater to problems and preventive care for women's health along with significant stakeholders from the state. AROEHAN activist Sujata Ayarkar spoke about the role of the council in her work and shared her thoughts on the significance of the Palghar district as the venue for the conference.



Jyoti Kelekar provided information about Palghar's social, topographical, and economic context as well as its current state, including the rate of malnutrition, early pregnancy, mental health, issues and repercussions brought on by development projects, and the absence of water, forests, land, and health facilities. In addition to Jyoti Kelkar's presentation, Brian Lobo stated that women's health should be viewed as encompassing more than only reproductive health and that public health services are insufficient. AROEHAN's Secretary Anjali Kanitkar talked about potential research questions about women's health in the Palghar district as well as potential study techniques such surveys, focus groups, and case studies.

Following this, Achyut Borgaonkar talked with the participants about a variety of study-related subjects. During the session certain statistics & facts were presented such as He presented important statistics such as anaemia rates in India are 27% among males, 57% among women, and 69% among teenage girls. Pressing matters such as women being forced to seek health care alternatives due to the lack of gynaecologists in Palghar district's government hospitals, which occasionally results in situations like maternal deaths were brought up.

THE KEY TOPICS DISCUSSED WERE:

- HEALTH ISSUES OF WOMEN WORKING AT HOME
- INCREASING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AMONG STUDENTS
- RISING ALCOHOLISM & ADDICTION IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES
- HEALTH OF WOMEN WORKING IN MAHARASHTRA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (MIDC), INSURANCE SERVICES
- EARLY MARRIAGE/COHABITATION – RESPONSIBILITY OF CHILDREN AT A YOUNG AGE AND MALNUTRITION OF MOTHERS
- VIOLENCE AGAINST FEMALE SARPANCHS IN POLITICS/WOMEN IN POWER/DECISION-MAKING PROCESS BY HUSBANDS/OTHER PERSONS



- TABOO OF SEX AMONG ADOLESCENTS, RISE IN CYBER CRIME & SEXTORTION CASES
- MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MENSTRUATION, SEX, AND GENDER
- STRESS IN STUDIES, SPORTS, & COMPETITIVE EXAMS AMONG YOUNG STUDENTS
- SEXUAL ABUSE IN RESIDENTIAL ASHRAM SCHOOLS, MISCONCEPTION AROUND MENSTRUATION, MENSTRUAL REGISTER, AWARENESS ABOUT PREGNANCY TESTING
- FORCED/ UNNECESSARY STITCHES PERFORMED BY DOCTORS ON WOMEN UPON DELIVERY OF BABY
- MENTRUAL DISORDERS LIKE ENDOMETRIOSIS AND ITS EFFECTS
- LACK OF SENSITIVITY OF THE HEALTHCARE STAFF, DOCTORS AND NURSES TOWARDS WOMEN'S HEALTH ESPECIALLY IN TRIBAL AREAS
- ABHA CARD – WHILE CLAIMED TO BE INACTIVE MAHARASHTRA, WOMEN WERE ABLE TO GET HEALTH FACILITIES IN GUJARAT
- NOT GETTING BENEFITS OF HEALTH SCHEMES DESPITE REGISTERING DURING PREGNANCY
- MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS
- STUDYING CASES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY, POC SO CASES, FORENSIC CASES – COHABITATION OF TEENAGE BOYS AND GIRLS IN TRIBAL AREAS
- LACK OF HEALTH FACILITIES FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE MIGRATED FOR WORK, LACK OF AVAILABILITY OF TOILETS, IMPACT ON EDUCATION OF BOYS AND GIRLS



LOKSHAHI UTSAV - CELEBRATION OF 76 YEARS OF THE REPUBLIC INDIA



Lokshahi Utsav, translating to 'Democracy Festival,' is an annual event celebrated in Maharashtra, India, aiming to promote democratic values and engage citizens in democratic processes. Initiated in 2003 by a group of citizens committed to upholding democratic principles, the festival typically spans five days, from January 26 to 30. AROEHAN celebrated a variety of cultural and educational activities with the community in Mokhada and Dahanu.


In spirit of celebration of 76 years of republic India, the team organized week long activities schools and junior colleges in Mokhada and Dahanu. The students were briefed about the history of freedom fighting, democracy, and establishment of Indian constitution on January 26. Students participated in the rallies to celebrate Lokshahi Utsav and chanted slogans in the area for celebrating the values of Indian constitution that enshrines values of sovereignty, socialism, secularism, democracy, justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, and the unity and integrity of the nation. the activists raised awareness about fundamental rights and articles in the constitution.



While there were 395 articles in 22 parts and eight schedules in the original Constitution, the number of articles has since expanded to 448 due to 100 changes. Besides cultural programmes that involved traditional dances, music, and plays, the team also facilitated a slew of academic activities like essay writing, drawing competitions, and constitution reading to get into the spirit of the democracy.



Students were reminded of the role of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who is known as 'Father of the Indian Constitution' and revered in tribal communities for ensuring the inclusion of provisions for social justice, equality, and fundamental rights, particularly for marginalized communities. This week long campaign witnessed participation of over 3000 individuals across areas of Mokhada and Dahanu block.



How many more women will have to suffer and die?

*Feature: Pradeep Khairkar,
AROEHAN*

Due to the weak and neglected health system in the remote taluka of Jawhar-Mokhāda, hundreds of tribal women including mothers and children die every year. When a tragic death like this occurs, the senior officials, political leaders, ministers with their sentries visit the villages for four to eight days and then the situation fizzles away. Neither the officials nor the politicians show the will to get to the root cause of these deaths in remote tribal areas and solve the problem permanently. It is a real tragedy.

Earlier this year, a 22-year-old pregnant mother living in Koldyacha Pada in Mokhada taluka died due to lack of treatment and facilities. If she had received proper health facilities at the government hospital in Jawhar-Mokhada, she would not have had to leave her newborn baby in the wind and say goodbye to this world. Neither the health system nor the stakeholders take accountability. Our attitude towards death of poor has become so ignorant that their issues just turn to dust few days after the occurrence of such tragic events.

Let's break down issues into:

1. Shortcomings in the system
2. Social Barriers in Health
3. What can be done?



Shortcomings in the system



Due to the shortcomings of the health system and the shortage and inefficiency of the staff, many mothers and children have lost their lives in such incidents. When the above incident happened, there was a shortage of doctors in the hospital. Since the Chief Medical Officer here is in charge of two talukas, Mokhada and Jawhar, he cannot give them full attention. The Chief Medical Officer of Mokhada Rural Hospital is an expert gynecologist. He has a good image in the public mind about his services. He is also known as an officer who works with social commitment. But the services cannot be accounted for or problems cannot be solved solely on the goodness of one health officer. The question arises, what the officer will do if there is no availability of resources at that place.

For example, in Mokhada, AROEHAN, was able to install sonography machine with help of donor Siemens Ltd. to cater to needs of pregnant women and mothers. However, the women including pregnant women in third trimester, who went to avail the services, were repeatedly sent back because the radiologist was absent for longer periods. With help of AROEHAN's advocacy efforts a new technician was eventually hired but right now the services are only available once a week. The lack of accountability and availability affects not only the health of women but also affects their daily wages, their efforts to reach the place in the area that has miniscule public transportation, and also affects health of infants. Sonography plays a vital role in detecting potential abnormalities or complications.

In the remote tribal areas of Jawhar-Mokhada-Vikramgad-Wada, the health system statistics show that 30 percent of the total pregnant mothers registered in health centers are at-risk mothers. This proportion is very alarming. Therefore, serious attention is required to be paid to the health facilities, medicine stock, and number of employees in this area. While the government bodies are aware of the situations, there also systemic apathy towards resolving these issues.





Social Barriers and Health

On the one hand, the shortcomings of the health system and on the other hand, the oppression of various social customs and superstitions in this society, the health of women in this area is caught in such a double bind. The latest example of this happened recently in Jawhar taluka. A 31-year-old woman from Pawanmal fell victim to extra pregnancies due to the desire for a male child. She lost her life on January 8, 2025, during treatment at the Civil Hospital in Nashik due to internal infection during the delivery.

Not taking the diet prescribed by the doctor during pregnancy due to superstitions, child marriage, child motherhood that occurs without marriage by mutual consent, going to a "religious healers" for treatment instead of going to a hospital, fear of medical treatment, no alternative to overwork due to poverty (many pregnant women have to do heavy and overworked work up to the ninth month), excessive childbearing imposed by the husband and family for the sake of the child, the ill effects of all these are ultimately borne by the woman herself. Many times the woman even loses her life. Conscious efforts will have to be made to remove these social obstacles.

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Factors such as child marriages, adolescent girls being pushed to be brides without their consent, pregnant women forced to do work on farm or labour work all nine months due to poverty, excessive childbearing that is imposed by the husband and family for the benefit getting a "male child", fear of doctors due to ignorant attitude at hospitals, unable to follow medical instructions for self-care, apathy of partners/ husbands, superstitions, turning to "religious healers" instead of medicine, among other factors causes grave situations like child and mother mortality. There is an urgent requirement to tackle these societal barriers that largely affects women of all ages.

What can be done?



Every region has a distinct lifestyle, social norms, and geographic location due to which the typical fixes for this region's health issues may not be effective. In order to solve the issues, it is essential to investigate them in depth and implement relevant solutions. In order to carry out planned activity, the government and NGOs in this area must improve their mutual collaboration. By offering efficient training, it is vital to boost the involvement of the numerous local committees established by the government. Additionally, deliberate efforts must be made to improve the mindset of government personnel and authorities.

The employees at government hospitals could be sensitized about the local issues and understand the importance of developing a welcoming space for patients. Men in the family should actively participate in raising awareness of women's health issues, in addition to women themselves. Boys and girls must be adequately taught physiology in schools and universities. The availability of civic infrastructure and employment are other issues that require significant attention.



**“Communities and countries
and ultimately the world are
only as strong as the health of
their women.”**

– Michelle Obama

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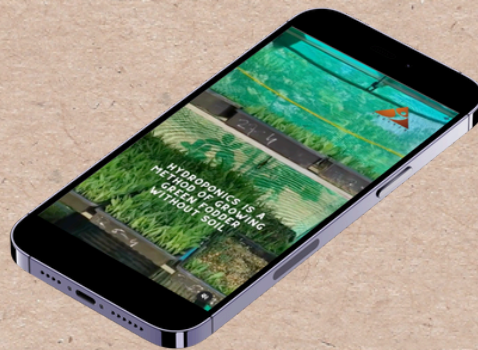
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