 Providing a platform to future mothers to further community dialogue on women’s aspirations, education and good nutrition

A community based meeting was organised by our DPO, Mr. Bijendra Singh, at the AWC named Thanagazi 6 in the Thanagazi block, Alwar District. The objective of this activity was to provide a platform to adolescent girls to speak freely about the issues which directly or indirectly affect their lives and educate them about their rights and the importance of good nutrition and good health practices to live a healthy life.

The event was actively attended by the ANM, ASHA, LS, AWW and nearly 70 adolescent girls. The main points of discussion broadly included importance of education, their aspirations, their rights, importance of a nutritious diet and the right age for marriage.

These topics were in line with the Government of India’s guidelines on initiating a Jan Andolan with the following objectives-

- Every girl completes her school and higher education
- Every girl is provided adequate diet without any discrimination
- Every adolescent receives life skills training to stop early marriage and early pregnancy
- Anemia prevention

It was heartening to see that the majority of the girls were pursuing their studies with the support of their families and those who were not, were inspired by the stories shared and decided to change it. They realised the need and importance of education in their lives.
To become a doctor, a teacher, a nurse, and an IAS officer were some of the most popular professional aspirations expressed by the girls. The ambitious girls inspired the other’s who lacked inspiration, showing them that they are the captains of their lives.

Discussion on rights of the girls was the least interactive of the conversations where the discussion turned into a one-sided lecture. This platform was used to educate the girls on their rights to freedom and expression.

The best thing about the session was that it started a discussion on the above-mentioned topics, and the girls enjoyed to have gotten a group to talk freely with about their issues. The feedback on the session was highly positive and a girl stated at the end of the session that being a girl cannot be treated as a barrier to success in life. Though everyone has a different definition of success, it was encouraging to see the girls deciding to get a grip on their lives and deciding to steer it in the way they want, not limited by other’s view on their lives.

The session then turned to talk about menstrual hygiene management among girls and the consequences of the lack of it. It was facilitated by the front-line workers themselves and got a good response from the participants. They further spoke about all the facilities and services that can be availed by them and their loved ones by the AWC.

The session concluded with an oath taking ceremony where all the girls pledged to lead a life with pride, happiness and dignity.