

## Project Report: Internship with योनि - Bleed with Pride

Joining the social internship with योनि - Bleed with Pride has been an eye-opening experience, changing how I think and feel about menstruation. Before this internship, I didn't know much about menstruation, and my views were shaped by societal stigmas and misconceptions. But this internship has taught me a lot, and I've learned to see menstruation as a natural and important part of life.

Participating in a plantation drive was a special experience that connected environmental sustainability with menstrual equity. We planted trees and plants that represented life and growth, showing the importance of taking care of our environment and our communities. Working with volunteers who cared about both environmental and social issues was inspiring. This activity showed how different social issues are connected and how caring for the environment and promoting menstrual health can go together.

Organizing an essay and poem writing competition was a meaningful experience. I met participants who shared their stories and thoughts about menstruation, giving a voice to those often silenced by stigma. The creativity and honesty in their writings showed the personal and societal impacts of menstrual stigma and the need for change. Reading the essays and poems, I saw the diversity of experiences and the common themes of resilience and hope.

Conducting a seminar on menstrual education was both challenging and rewarding. Preparing PowerPoint presentations and posters required thorough research and understanding. Engaging with the audience, answering their questions, and seeing their transformation from scepticism to understanding was very satisfying. The seminar covered various aspects of menstrual health, including hygiene practices, managing pain, and debunking myths. Seeing participants gain confidence in discussing menstruation openly was a testament to the power of education and dialogue.

Throughout my internship, I learned the importance of teamwork and coordination. Working with a diverse group of volunteers and staff required effective communication and collaboration. We had to plan, delegate tasks, and ensure that everyone was on the same page. This experience taught me the value of different perspectives and the strength that comes from working together towards a common goal. Whether it was organizing events, conducting seminars, or running awareness campaigns, our collective efforts made a significant impact.

As part of my responsibilities, I regularly submitted event proposals to the NGO. This involved identifying relevant themes, planning the logistics, and outlining the objectives and expected outcomes of each event. This task enhanced my organizational skills and allowed me to contribute creatively to the NGO's mission. Proposing new initiatives and seeing them come to fruition was incredibly fulfilling and demonstrated the importance of proactive engagement in social work.

My internship focused on promoting menstrual equity, a critical aspect of health and human rights. Menstrual equity goes beyond providing sanitary products; it encompasses education, breaking stigmas, and ensuring that everyone has the resources and knowledge to manage menstruation with dignity. Through seminars and competitions, I realized the power of education in dismantling myths and promoting informed discussions about menstruation. Educating both men and women about menstrual health is essential for creating a supportive and equitable society. Menstrual education should start early in schools and continue through community programs, ensuring that everyone, regardless of gender, understands the biological and social aspects of menstruation. Comprehensive education can help break down barriers and foster a culture of respect and support.

Menstrual equity is intrinsically linked to broader social issues, including gender equality, health, and education. Women and girls often face barriers in education and employment due to inadequate menstrual health management. Addressing these issues is crucial for achieving overall societal progress. Ensuring access to menstrual products and education can improve attendance and performance in schools, increase productivity at

work, and enhance overall well-being. Menstrual equity is not just a women's issue; it's a societal issue that affects everyone.

Effective change requires robust policies and advocacy efforts. Collaborating with local communities and policymakers to implement sustainable solutions is vital for long-term impact. This includes providing accessible menstrual products, promoting menstrual education, and challenging discriminatory practices. Policy changes at local, national, and global levels are necessary to ensure that menstrual health is prioritized in public health agendas. Advocacy efforts should focus on creating systemic changes that address the root causes of menstrual inequity.

Looking ahead, I plan to continue organizing awareness campaigns in my community and college. By leveraging social media, workshops, and local events, I aim to reach a broader audience and foster a culture of openness and support regarding menstrual health. Using creative approaches such as art, storytelling, and interactive sessions can engage people and make the topic more approachable. Collaborating with influencers and local leaders can amplify our message and reach a wider audience.

Developing educational materials and resources tailored to different age groups can make a significant impact. Collaborating with schools and community centres to integrate menstrual education into their curriculum is a practical step toward sustained awareness. Creating engaging and age-appropriate content can ensure that students understand the importance of menstrual health and can discuss it without embarrassment. Training teachers and educators to handle the topic sensitively and accurately is also crucial for effective education. In the long term, I aspire to engage in policy advocacy, working with NGOs, healthcare professionals, and policymakers to implement comprehensive menstrual health programs. Ensuring that menstrual health is prioritized in public health agendas is crucial for systemic change. Advocating for policies that provide free or subsidized menstrual products in schools, workplaces, and public spaces can make a significant difference. Lobbying for menstrual health to be included in health education curricula and public health campaigns can also create lasting change.

My internship with योनि - Bleed with Pride has been a journey of personal growth, learning, and empowerment. It has not only transformed my views on menstruation but also equipped me with the knowledge and skills to advocate for menstrual equity. By continuing to educate, engage, and empower others, I am committed to making a positive difference both immediately and in the long term. The lessons learned and experiences gained during this internship have laid a strong foundation for my ongoing efforts to promote menstrual equity and create meaningful change. Additionally, the skills in teamwork, coordination, and event planning have broadened my capabilities, allowing me to approach social issues with a more holistic and strategic mindset. These experiences have prepared me to take on more significant challenges and contribute effectively to the cause of menstrual equity and beyond.

I would like to extend my heartiest gratitude to Miss. Ritika Panwar the founder and CEO of योनि-Bleed with Pride. She is not only the founder and CEO of योनि Bleed with Pride but also the backbone of the NGO. Her empowering words of wisdom were profoundly uplifting. She helped me in every step throughout the internship and made sure that we all were loving the work we were doing it. I also wish to express my deepest thanks to the incredibly supportive team, who were the pillars of strength throughout my journey with योनि.-Bleed with Pride. I feel deeply honored and fortunate to work alongside योनि-Bleed with Pride.