



Study on Menstrual Hygiene and Managing Your Sanitary Budget

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ABSTRACT: Menstrual hygiene management(MHM) or menstrual health and hygiene(MHH) refers to access to menstrual hygiene products to absorb or collect the movement of blood during menstruation, privacy to change the materials, and access to facilities to dispose of used menstrual management materials. It can also include the "broader systemic factors that link menstruation with health, well-being, gender equality, education, equity, empowerment, and rights". Menstrual hygiene management can be particularly challenging for girls and women in developing countries, where clean water and toilet facilities are often inadequate. Menstrual waste is largely ignored in schools in developing countries, despite it being a significant problem. Menstruation can be a hurdle to education for many girls, as a lack of effective sanitary products restricts girls' engagement in educational and social activities. This Research Paper gives us an idea of how to manage menstrual hygiene and what is an alternative for managing menstrual hygiene and managing your budget.

Keywords: Menstrual Hygiene, Menstrual Management, Menstrual Budget.

1. INTRODUCTION

Menstruation (also called a period) is a normal biological process that millions of people around the world experience every month. A period occurs when the uterus rejects blood and tissue from the uterine lining and exits your body through the vagina. Menstruation is a woman's monthly bleeding, often referred to as her period. When you menstruate, your body sheds the monthly uterine lining. Menstrual blood and tissues flow from your uterus through the small opening in your cervix and exit your body through your vagina.

During the monthly menstrual cycle, the uterine lining builds up to prepare for pregnancy. If you don't get pregnant, estrogen and progesterone levels begin to decline. Very low estrogen and progesterone levels cause your body to start menstruating. The menstrual cycle is the monthly hormonal cycle that the female body goes through to prepare for pregnancy. Your menstrual cycle is counted from the first day of your period to the first day of your next period. Your hormone levels (estrogen and progesterone) usually change throughout the menstrual cycle and can cause menstrual cramps.

The typical menstrual cycle lasts 28 days, but every woman is different.² In addition, the length of a woman's menstrual cycle can vary from month to month. Your period is still regular if it normally occurs every 24 to 38 days. This means that the time from the first day of your last period to the start of your next period is at least 24 days but no more than 38 days.

Some women's periods are so regular that they can predict the day and time their period will start. Other women, while regular, can only predict when their period will start within a few days. Follow the instructions that came with your period product. Try changing or rinsing out your feminine hygiene product before it gets soaked or full. Most women change their pads every few hours. A tampon should not be worn for more than 8 hours due to the risk of toxic shock syndrome (TSS). Menstrual cups and sponges may only need rinsing once or twice a day. Period panties (underwear with sewn-in washable menstrual pads) can usually last about a day, depending on the style and menstrual flow. Use a product that is appropriate in size and absorbency for your menstrual flow. The amount of menstrual blood usually changes during a period. Some women use different products on different days of their period depending on how heavy or light the flow is.

Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) is a rare but sometimes fatal condition caused by bacteria that produce toxins or poisons. In 1980, 63 women died from TSS. A certain brand of super-absorbent tampon was cited as the cause. These tampons have been withdrawn from the market.

Today, most cases of TSS are not caused by tampon use. However, you could be at risk of TSS if you use more absorbent tampons than you need for your flow or if you don't change your tampon often enough (at least every four to eight hours). Also, menstrual cups, sponges, or diaphragms (anything that is inserted into your vagina) can increase your risk of TSS if left in place for too long (usually 24 hours). Remove sponges within 30 hours and cervical caps within 48 hours.

The changing hormone levels during the menstrual cycle can also affect other health problems: depression and anxiety disorders. These disorders often overlap with premenstrual syndrome (PMS). Symptoms of depression and anxiety are similar to PMS and can get worse before or during your period. Asthma. Your asthma symptoms may get worse at some parts of your cycle. Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Irritable bowel syndrome causes cramps, bloating, and gas. Your irritable bowel syndrome symptoms may get worse right before your period. Bladder pain syndrome. Women with bladder pain syndrome are more likely to experience painful cramps during PMS.

Good menstrual health and hygiene practices can prevent infections, reduce odours, and help you stay comfortable during your period.

You can choose many types of menstrual products to absorb or collect blood during your period, including sanitary pads, tampons, menstrual cups, menstrual discs, and period underwear. Follow these tips when you are using menstrual products, in addition to instructions that come with the product:

Menstrual products

Wash your hands before and after using the restroom and before using a menstrual product.

Discard used disposable menstrual products properly: wrap them with toilet paper, a tissue, or other material and then toss in a trash bin. Do not flush menstrual products down the toilet.

Sanitary pads: Change sanitary pads every few hours, no matter how light the flow. Change them more frequently if your period is heavy.

Tampons: Change tampons every 4 to 8 hours. Do not wear a single tampon for more than 8 hours at a time.

Use the lowest-absorbency tampon needed. If you can wear one tampon for up to 8 hours without changing, the absorbency may be too high.

Menstrual cups: Clean cups every day after use. Sanitize menstrual cups after your period is over by rinsing them thoroughly and then placing them in boiling water for one to two minutes.

Period underwear: Most reusable period underwear is machine washable. Follow product directions on the best way to clean. These hygiene practices can help you stay healthy and comfortable during your period:

Wear lightweight, breathable clothing (such as cotton underwear). Tight fabrics can trap moisture and heat, allowing germs to thrive.

Change your menstrual products regularly. Trapped moisture provides a breeding ground for bacteria and fungi. Wearing a pad or period underwear for too long can lead to a rash or an infection.

Keep your genital area clean. Wash the outside of your vagina (vulva) and bottom every day. When you go to the bathroom, wipe from the front of your body toward the back, not the other way. Use only water to rinse your vulva. The vagina is a self-cleaning organ. Changing the natural pH balance of your vagina by washing or using chemicals to cleanse out the vagina can be harmful and may result in a yeast infection or bacterial vaginosis.

Use unscented toilet paper, tampons, or pads. Scented hygiene products can irritate the skin and impact your natural pH balance.

Drink enough liquids. This can help wash out your urinary tract and help prevent infections, like vaginal candidiasis.

Track and monitor your period. Your menstrual cycle is a valuable marker for your overall health. Irregular periods can be a sign of conditions like diabetes, thyroid dysfunction, and celiac disease. You can track your period on a calendar or with an app on your phone designed for this purpose.

Visit a healthcare provider for your annual check-up. An annual well-woman exam is a full check-up that includes a pap smear, a pelvic exam, and a breast exam. These exams are essential for good reproductive health as they can catch early signs of cancer or other health issues.

Many countries around the world still lack proper disposal of used menstrual materials. Most countries have developed techniques to dispose of their faecal and urinary waste. However, due to the lack of menstrual management practices worldwide, most women dispose of their sanitary napkins or other menstrual items in household waste or garbage bins, which ultimately end up as part of the solid waste. Toilet facilities in India lack sanitary napkin disposal containers and handwashing facilities for menstruating women to ensure menstrual hygiene. In urban areas where modern disposable menstrual products are used, these are disposed of by flushing toilets and trash cans or through solid waste disposal. However, in rural areas there are many options for disposing of menstrual waste, such as: by burying, burning, and throwing garbage or in pit latrines. In rural areas, women in particular use reusable and non-commercial hygiene materials such as reusable sanitary napkins or cloths.

Therefore, they generate less menstrual waste compared to women in urban areas who rely on commercially available disposable pads. The menstrual material was disposed of depending on the type of product used, cultural beliefs, and disposal location. In slum areas, women dispose of their menstrual waste in pit latrines because burning and burying were difficult due to limited privacy. The reason for this is that they were seen by men or used in witchcraft. In schools, girls throw their sanitary pads into the toilets due to a lack of sanitation. In some cases, girls threw away their used menstrual clothing without washing it. It was also reported that many were absent from school due to lack of disposal systems, broken toilet locks/doors, lack of taps, buckets and poor water supply. Some schools use incinerators or feminine hygiene containers to dispose of menstrual waste, but they refrained from using them out of shyness or fear of being seen by others. Women's disposal behavior differs at home and on the go. At home, they dispose of garbage by bagging it up and throwing it in the trash can with other household waste. As mentioned above, disposal habits change depending on the location. In public places, they flush the pads down the toilet or throw them wrapped up in the trash cans before realizing the consequences of flushing them. Where there are no trash cans, leave the dirty pads wrapped or unpacked in the corners of the toilet. This makes the toilets dirty and provides a breeding ground for flies and mosquitoes. They also become unhygienic for other toilet users and cleaners. In many cities, those in charge of public toilets always complain about the sewage system becoming blocked because sanitary napkins or rags are flushed down the toilet.

Objectives

- a) To Study the methods of managing menstrual hygiene.
- b) To Study the status of menstrual hygiene Management among adolescent girls.
- c) To Study the alternatives of managing menstrual hygiene and managing budget.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kaur, R., Kaur, K., & Kaur, R. (2018): This study reveals that lack of privacy is a major concern both in household and in schools. Also, ignorance, misconceptions, unsafe practices, and illiteracy of the mother and child regarding menstruation are the root causes of many problems.

Education, P. (2014): When parents and teachers lack knowledge about menstrual health and hygiene, they are unable to support girls effectively as they go through puberty. In the classroom, this means that this topic can be taught insufficiently or avoided completely by teachers. Male teachers, in particular, have a lack of knowledge.

Boosey, R., Prestwich, G., & Deave, T. (2014): In many low and middle-income countries, girls lack accurate information about and resources and facilities for effective Menstrual Hygiene Management. Consequently, they are likely to miss school or to struggle to concentrate and participate in lessons when they are menstruating. Girls who are unable to manage their menstrual hygiene at school risk missing a substantial proportion of their education and falling behind, which could lead to them dropping out of school altogether.

Sommer, M., Hirsch, J. S., Nathanson, C., & Parker, R. G. (2015): defining menstrual hygiene management as a public health issue. American journal of public health, 105(7), 1302-1311: 50% of schools across the low-income world lacking adequate water and sanitation, and an as yet unquantified number of girls lacking guidance before the onset of menstruation.

Elledge, M. F., Muralidharan, A., Parker, A., Ravndal, K. T., Siddiqui, M., Toolaram, A. P., & Woodward, K. P. (2018): The disposal of used absorbents cannot be understood and carried out in isolation, requiring user-centered design thinking to consider socio-cultural norms regarding menstruation, product availability, quality and use, and existing sanitation systems. In institutional and community settings, the design of sanitation systems

needs to be responsive to and plan for disposal of menstrual waste, incorporating it into both the sanitation and solid waste management parts of a WASH program, providing appropriate, discrete and sound solutions that minimize adverse health impacts on girls and women, sanitation workers, and broader environmental consequences. Thermal treatment is one option as a waste management and pathogen treatment approach, and with careful implementation may prove socially acceptable in many contexts, although care needs to be taken with design to ensure emissions are safe, particularly where absorbents contains chlorine or polyethene.

VanLeeuwen, C., & Torondel, B. (2018): Hardware interventions should include not only type of absorbent but also other menstrual support items (soap, underwear, torches, and wash basins); they should also focus on providing adequate WASH facilities that will cover needs (space, privacy, location, distribution, disposal, and access of water)

software interventions should include training in the use of menstrual materials, education of both boys and girls in menstrual biology and hygiene, and explore new initiatives to create a better social-support environment (counseling and self-help groups)

Adwani R. (2018) in her article High Time We Put Our Regressive Attitude towards Periods published in website Menstrupedia states that periods in India are discussed in a very hushed tone as the awkwardness still remains within the girls/women of our country. In many orthodox families menstruating girls are asked to stay miles away from sacred temples or from deities and are restricted from performing various activities. According to many Hindus, women are prohibited from living a normal life when it comes to natural processes being considered unnatural especially if it goes against some set or acceptable customs. For instance, red blood is normal if it comes out from any other parts of the body but it becomes suddenly unacceptable if it bleeds out of a vagina. The men of our country are still unknown to many problems that women go through during menstruation. The conditions are even more severe in Nepal where women are locked into menstrual huts and entirely isolated with no supply of food and water. The reach of pads in rural areas is so limited that women are forced to use dirty rags, old cloths, newspapers to stem menstrual flow whereby leading for germs to creep inside stomach causing damage to fragile reproductive organ. However, potential awareness slowly but positively is landing on the fertile land of unawareness. May the time will come where instead of blue liquids, red liquids starts to be shown in advertisement, where pads are won't be handed over in a big black plastic bags.

With the literature review it is understood that there is no correct way of managing waste. Some methods may not be viable to take into consideration due to lack of proper knowledge about menstrual hygiene among women masses.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge. One can also define research as a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic. In fact, research is an art of scientific investigation. Some people consider research as a movement, a movement from the known to the unknown. It is actually a voyage of discovery. We all possess the vital instinct of inquisitiveness for, when the unknown confronts us, we wonder and our inquisitiveness makes us probe and attain full and fuller understanding of the unknown. This

inquisitiveness is the mother of all knowledge and the method which man employs for obtaining the knowledge of whatever the unknown, can be termed as research.

Data Collection Methodology

For the current study, data was collected during the period of January 2024. The research has been conducted with the help of both primary and secondary data. A total of 136 respondents were surveyed.

➤ Primary data

Questionnaire: A specially designed questionnaire for research purpose.

Data were analyzed statistically by simple proportions.

➤ Secondary data

Collection of data by referring to various published articles, newspaper articles etc.

Methodology

Simple statistical tools like percentage are used to analyze the data.

4. DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

In order to find out the different ways of menstruation waste management, a survey of conducted among college students and working womens. The following are the discussions and finding on the survey done.

3) Are you aware of Periods or Menstruation hygiene ?

136 responses

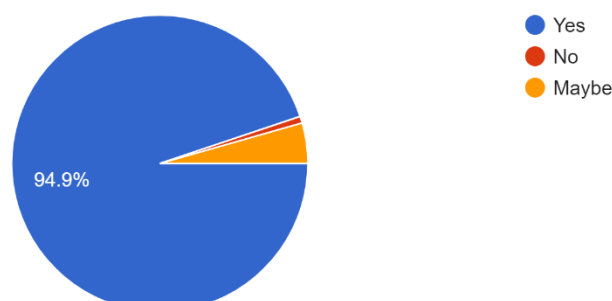


Figure 1: the awareness of girls is very important, so we asked the question about menstruation awareness, 94.9% i.e., 129 out of 136 responded that they were aware of menstruation, 0.7% of the total respondents were not aware about menstruation and 4.4% where not sure of their awareness about menstruation.

4) Do you Menstruate?

136 responses

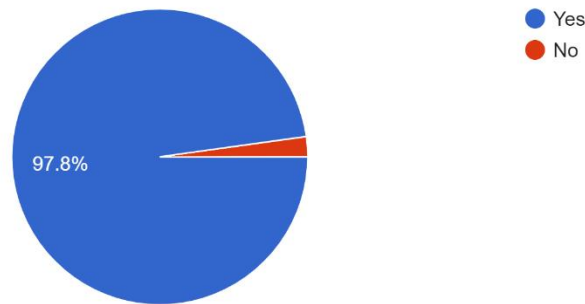


Figure 2: Menstruation is part of life of adolescent girls and women, out of 136 respondents 133 were in the age of menstruation, 2.2% i.e., 3 out of 136 don't menstruate.

5) What is the Average number days you Menstruate?

136 responses

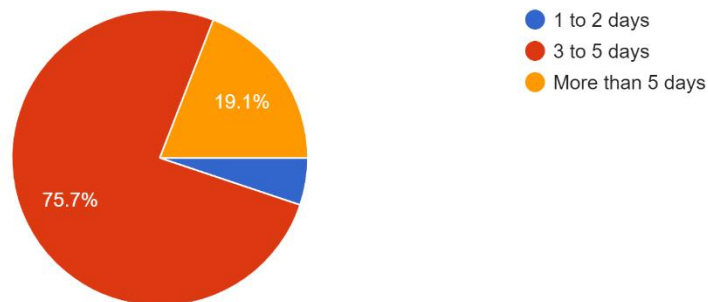


Figure 3: It was seen that 75.7% of the total respondents menstruation last for 3 to 5 days, 5.1% menstruate for 1 or 2 days, and only 19.1% menstruate for more than 5 days.

6) Which Absorbent you use for Menstruation?

136 responses

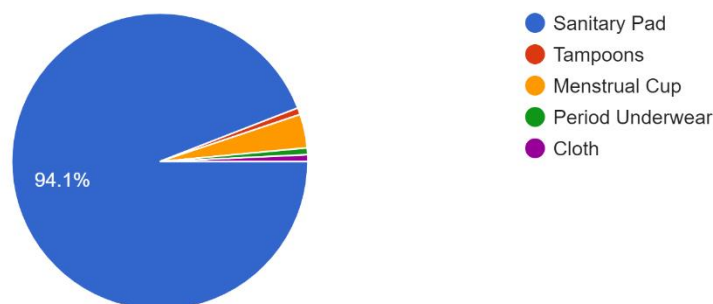


Figure 4: our major concern is menstruation waste management and it was seen that majority i.e., 94.1% of the total respondents use sanitary pads, 0.7% use tampons, 3.7% use menstrual cups, 0.7% use period underwear and cloth for menstruation.

7) What is your average Monthly spending on Menstrual products?

136 responses

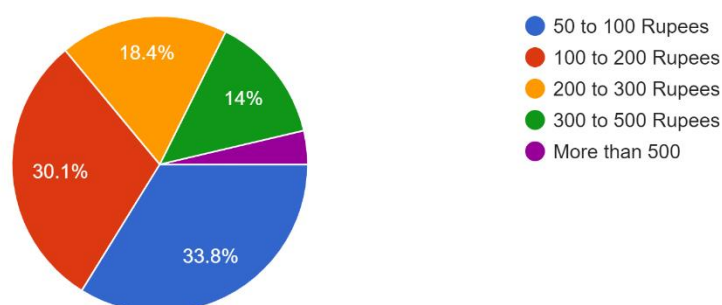


Figure 5: 33.8% of the total responses average monthly spending on menstrual products is 50 to 100 rupees, 30.1% spends about 100 to 200 rupees, 18.4% spends 200 to 300 rupees, 14% spends 300 to 500 rupees and 3.7% of the respondents spends more than 500 rupees on an average.

8) What is your frequency of changing menstrual absorbent?

136 responses

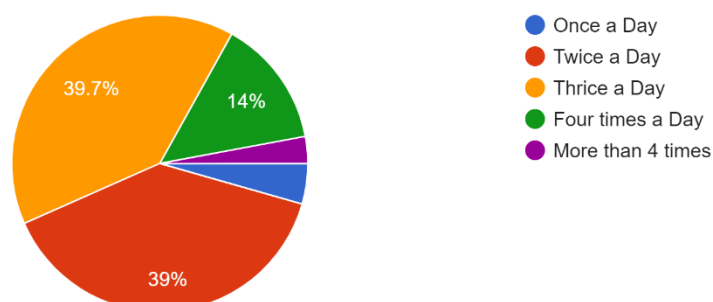


Figure 6: 4.4% of the total respondents change the menstrual absorbent once a day, 39% change it twice a day, 39.7% does it three times a day, 14% does it four times a day and 2.9% change it more than 4 times.

9) Do you use any external cleaning agent?

136 responses

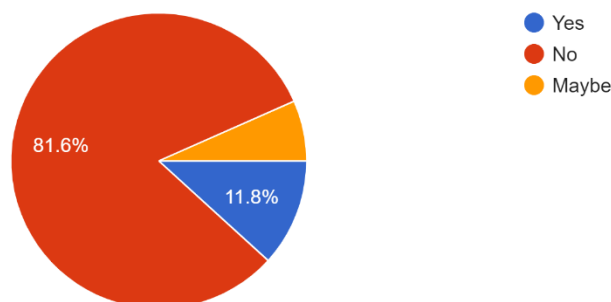


Figure 7: 11.8 % of the respondents use external cleaning agent during menstruation, 81.6% do not use it, 6.6% are not sure whether they use it or not.

10) What is the tendency of carrying menstrual absorbent?

136 responses

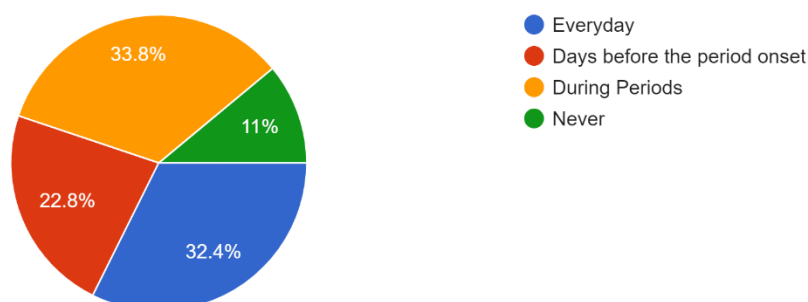


Figure 8: 32.4% of the respondents carry the menstrual absorbent every day, 22.8% carry it before the period onset, and 33.8% during the periods, 11% never carry.

11) Do you take leave from School/College or office due to Menstruation?

136 responses

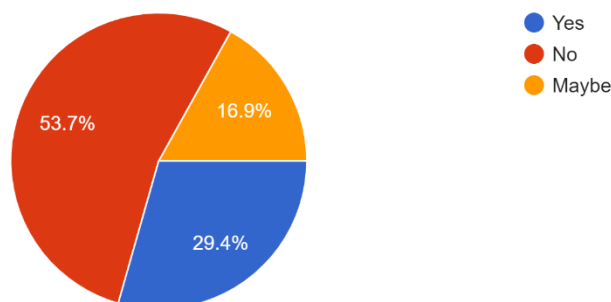


Figure 9: 29.4% of the respondents take leave while they menstruate, 53.7% don't take leave, and 16.9% sometimes take leave during menstruation according to their condition.

12) Do you suffer from any genital problems or injuries due to menstruation?
136 responses

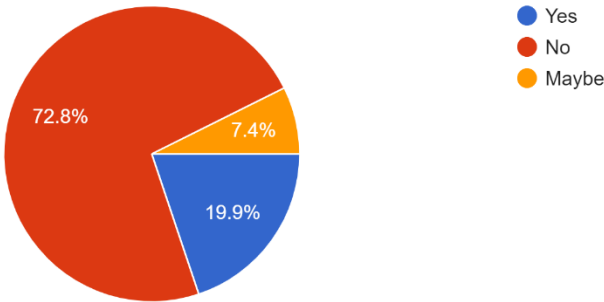


Figure 10: 19.9% of the ladies suffer from genital problems and injuries during menstruation, 72.8% doesn't have any problem and 7.4% sometimes suffer from such injuries.

13) How do you dispose off your menstrual waste?
136 responses

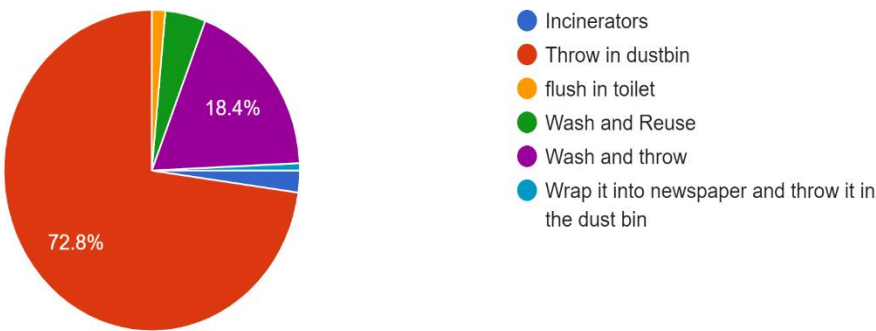


Figure 11: 2.2% of the respondents use incinerators for menstrual pad disposal, 72.8% of the total respondents throw it in the dustbin, 1.5% flush in the toilet, 4.4% wash and reuse, 18.4% wash and throw in the dustbin, only 0.7% wrap it into newspaper and throw it in the dustbin.

14) Do you get hygiene sanitation facility at your home/School or Workplace?

136 responses

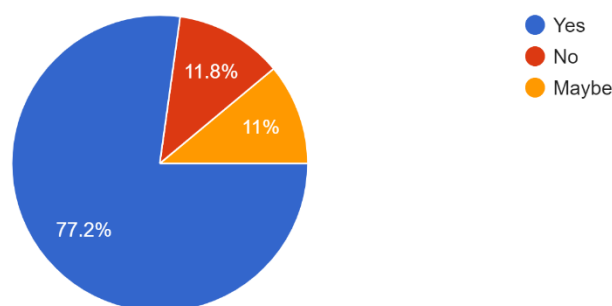


Figure 12: 77.2% out of the total respondents get hygiene sanitation facility at home/school or workplace, 11.8% does not get hygiene sanitation facility, 11% sometimes get hygiene facility.

The girls should be educated about menstruation by their teachers through seminars, workshops etc. in schools/colleges before the onset of menstruation. Mothers should also be educated by organizing seminars in schools/colleges. Pad vending machines should be installed in colleges/schools. Adequate disposable facilities should be provided for girls/women. Taxes on sanitary pads should be reduced and subsidized or made tax-free.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Through the above survey, we learn that the majority of women do not know how to properly deal with menstrual discharge. There is no point in throwing menstrual waste into the trash can because the menstrual waste is sent to the landfill where cattle and other animals walk around the trash. They eat the waste we throw away, which can make them sick and also spread other types of diseases to humans and other animals. The best way is to use incinerators to dispose of the pads. Schools, colleges, residential buildings, offices, etc. should install such incinerators for disposal of menstrual waste.

In villages and panchayat areas that do not have access to conventional incineration facilities, used natural tissue/paper/cloth/cotton homemade sanitary napkins as well as reusable commercial cotton napkins can be disposed of in small burial pits more than 50 cm deep in pit latrines. For commercial plastic sanitary napkins and pads, low-cost incinerators such as the Matka Incinerator are operated in open areas (e.g. open backyard, open fields, terrace of house, etc.).

The best way to manage menstruation is using menstrual cups which can be used easily and also does not require a monthly or yearly budget, if a menstrual cup is purchased it can be used for 10 years without any problem, also one can flush out the dirt and reuse it again and again.

Manufacturers should try to produce environmentally friendly absorbents that can be used over and over again without compromising the hygiene of adolescent girls and women.

6. CONCLUSION:

We can conclude that poor menstrual hygiene has a major impact on increased susceptibility to reproductive tract infections (RTI). Currently, millions of women suffer from RTI and the infection is transmitted to the offspring. It would be ideal if women had knowledge about menstrual hygiene then they would be less susceptible to RTI and its consequences. Therefore, improved knowledge about menstruation from puberty onwards will help alleviate the suffering of millions of women. Various studies indicate that there is a major information gap regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls in rural and urban areas. Girls should be educated about the facts of menstruation, the physiological effects, the importance of menstruation and proper hygiene practices during menstruation. It is also necessary to take them out of traditional beliefs, taboos, misunderstandings and restrictions. This can be achieved using media, sex education in the curriculum and targeted group discussions. All mothers should be encouraged to reduce their inhibitions about talking to their daughters about menstruation and menstrual hygiene. Through social marketing, the universal use of sanitary pads can be advocated for every girl. Menstrual hygiene management is also an integral part of the Swachh Bharat Mission guidelines. The Menstrual Hygiene Management Guideline is issued by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation to support all adolescent girls and women. It sets out what needs to be done by the state government, the district administrations, the engineers and technical experts in the specialist departments as well as the school principals and teachers.

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Appendix

1) Name of the Respondent*

Your answer

2) Age*

- 12 to 20 Year
- 21 to 30 Year
- 30 to 40 Year
- 41 to 50 Year



3) Are you aware of Periods or Menstruation hygiene ?*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

4) Do you Menstruate?*

- Yes
- No

5) What is the Average number days you Menstruate?*

- 1 to 2 days
- 3 to 5 days
- More than 5 days

6) Which Absorbent you use for Menstruation?*

- Sanitary Pad

Tampoons
Menstrual Cup
Period Underwear
Cloth
Other:

7) What is your average Monthly spending on Menstrual products?*

50 to 100 Rupees
100 to 200 Rupees
200 to 300 Rupees
300 to 500 Rupees
More than 500

8) What is your frequency of changing menstrual absorbent?*

Once a Day
Twice a Day
Thrice a Day
Four times a Day
More than 4 times

9) Do you use any external cleaning agent?*

Yes
No
Maybe

10) What is the tendency of carrying menstrual absorbent?*

Everyday
Days before the period onset
During Periods
Never

11) Do you take leave from School/College or office due to Menstruation?*

Yes
No
Maybe

12) Do you suffer from any genital problems or injuries due to menstruation?*

Yes
No
Maybe

13) How do you dispose off your menstrual waste?*

Incinerators
Throw in dustbin
flush in toilet
Wash and Reuse
Wash and throw
Other:

14) Do you get hygiene sanitation facility at your home/School or Workplace?*

Yes
No
Maybe