



Facts:

- India has over 355 million menstruating women and girls, of whom millions have to deal with barriers and stigma with regard to menstrual hygiene management (MHM).
- A woman throws away 125-150 kilograms of non-biodegradable absorbents used during menstruation in her lifetime.

Background:

- Menstrual hygiene management (MHM) is a generally under-researched area in India, while vital to the promotion of women's health.
- Although there has been, particularly in recent years, some attention given to the provision of affordable menstrual absorbents, practices of treatment.
- However, disposal of the used absorbents have not received adequate attention from policymakers, and implementers, and pose ever-growing challenges to environmental sustainability and the personal health, well-being, and functioning of girls and women, with implications for the accomplishment of several SDGs.

Aims:

- This pilot aims to understand community perspectives, preferences and behavioural control related to treatment and disposal of menstrual absorbents, and the associations that women and girls make between menstrual hygiene practices and personal and environmental health.
- This pilot study also aims to estimate the environmental footprints of the menstrual hygiene management practices that come up in the data-collection.

Methods:

- This pilot study employed a qualitative and exploratory approach to familiarise with prevalent menstrual hygiene practices, and estimate their environmental footprints.
- Researchers conducted key informant interviews, and in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, and collected photographs relevant to participants' menstrual hygiene management.
- Environmental scientists estimated the carbon dioxide equivalents and water consumed in the procurement of raw material, manufacture, use, and disposal of Menstrual Hygiene Management options.

Project Cycle:

2018-2020

Partners:

WaterAid India
Share-India
OP Jindal Global University
The Energy and Resources Institute

Supporters:

The George Institute Global Women's Health Program Research Grant 2018

Impact:

- This pilot study will contribute to knowledge of perspectives and real world practices, environmental (infrastructural, social and policy) support available, and unmet needs in a range of residential settings in urban, peri-urban, rural and tribal areas near the city of Hyderabad, India.
- It will also highlight lacunae to be addressed, and potential strategies to be employed in promoting the health and well-being of girls and women, in an environment-sensitive, sustainable manner.

Contact:

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