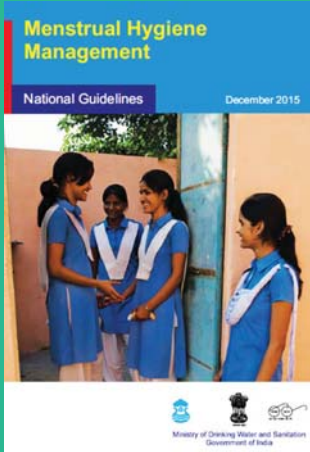


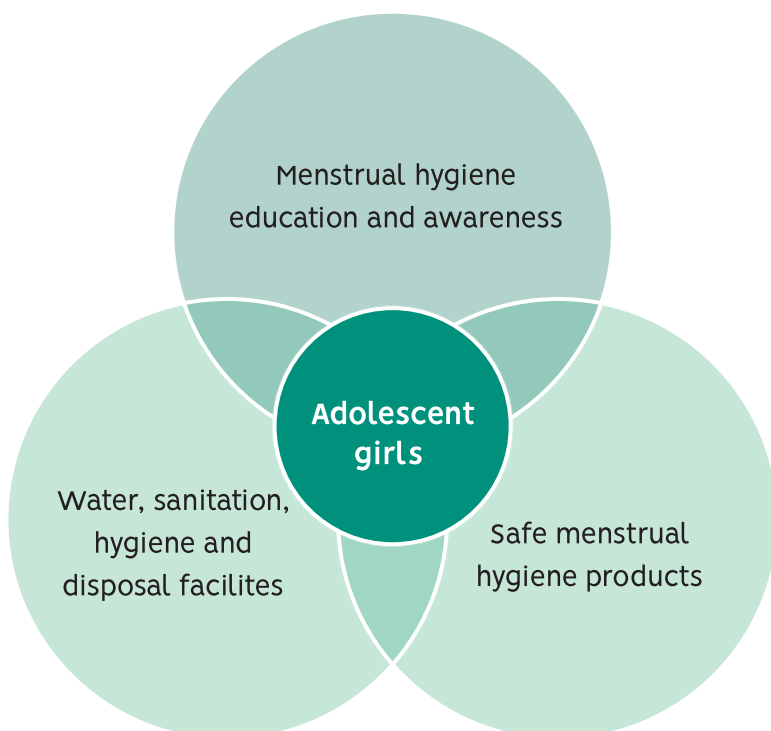
MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT

Policy Frameworks



Menstrual Hygiene is a vital, but often overlooked, component of sanitation. Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHHM) guidelines were released by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation in 2015.

Socio-cultural norms affect the three pillars of menstrual hygiene



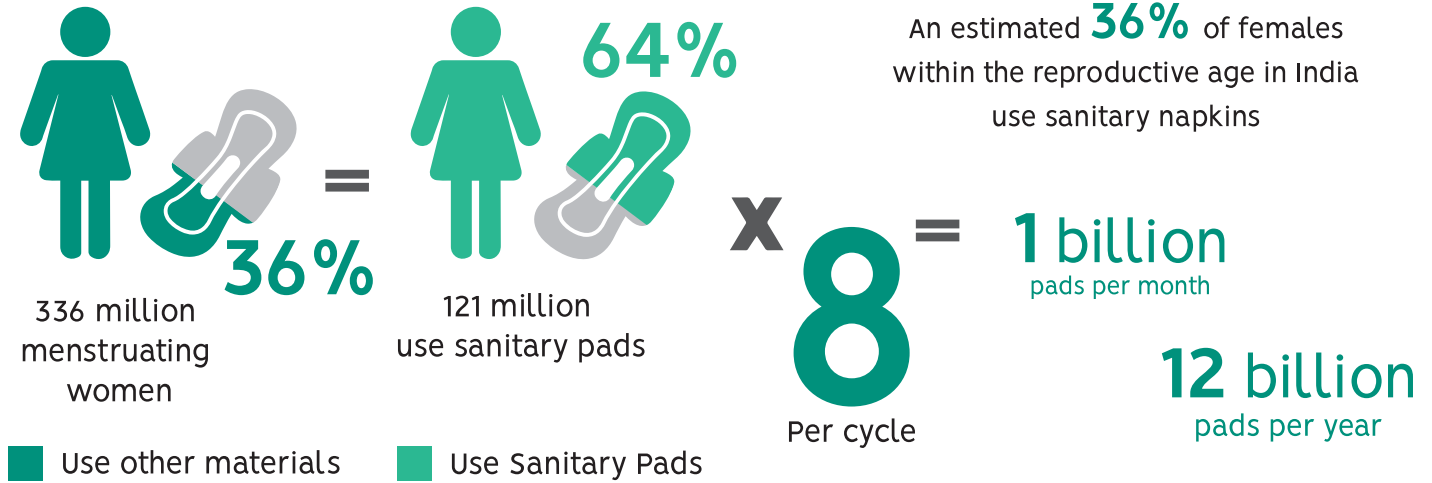
Managing menstrual wastes

Menstruation is a normal physiological phenomenon, yet it is surrounded by taboos, myths and stereotypes that make it challenging for girls and women to manage their monthly periods in a safe and hygienic way. Poor menstrual hygiene makes girls and women susceptible to reproductive tract infections (RTIs), stress, anxiety, and gender-based violence. It also contributes to absenteeism from school and the workplace.

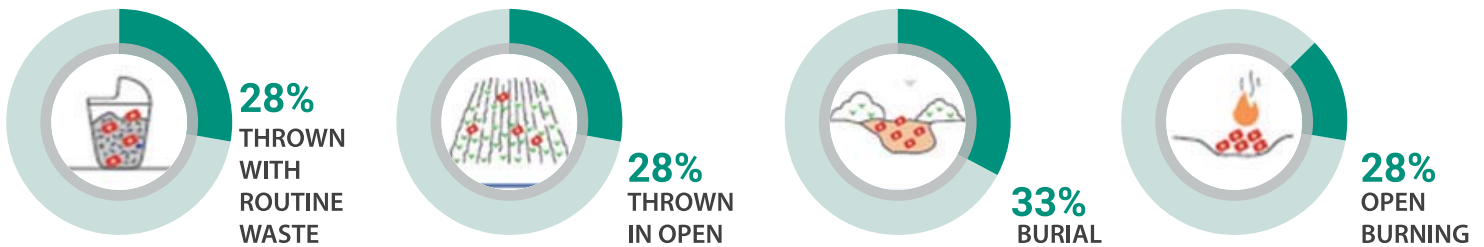
As a consequence of government, private sector, and NGO efforts to make sanitary napkins more available, an increasing number of girls and women are now using disposable non-biodegradable sanitary napkins. The National Family and Health Survey-4 (NFHS-4) reported that 58% of women in the age group of 15-24 years used a hygienic method of menstrual protection, i.e., sanitary napkins. However, while sanitary napkins may offer a hygienic option for girls and women their disposal is an increasing concern.

Menstrual Waste Load in India

An increasing number of women and girls in India are using disposable sanitary napkins. However, in a culture of silence, not all know how to use such pads safely and the the impact of their disposal on the environment is poorly understood.



Where are the 12 billion pads being disposed of?



Did you Know?

- ❖ Menstrual waste is blood, bloody tissues and used menstrual absorbents (cloth, sanitary napkins and other materials used to absorb menstrual blood)
- ❖ Solid Waste Management Rules (SWM 2016) consider menstrual waste as sanitary waste under solid waste. Rules specify the responsibilities of users, GPs and manufacturers.
- ❖ Safe Menstrual Waste Management should consider the following steps to ensure environment friendly procedures for disposal - [Segregation - Collection - Transportation - Treatment]

Informed Product Choice for Appropriate Menstrual Waste Management

Informed choice is the ability of a girl or woman to CHOOSE a menstrual hygiene product using unbiased and comprehensive information on all types of menstrual hygiene products, so that it best satisfies her personal, reproductive health and socio-economic needs. Women need to understand the advantages and disadvantages of products for menstrual management. Waste management solutions must reflect the quantity and type of menstrual hygiene products being used.

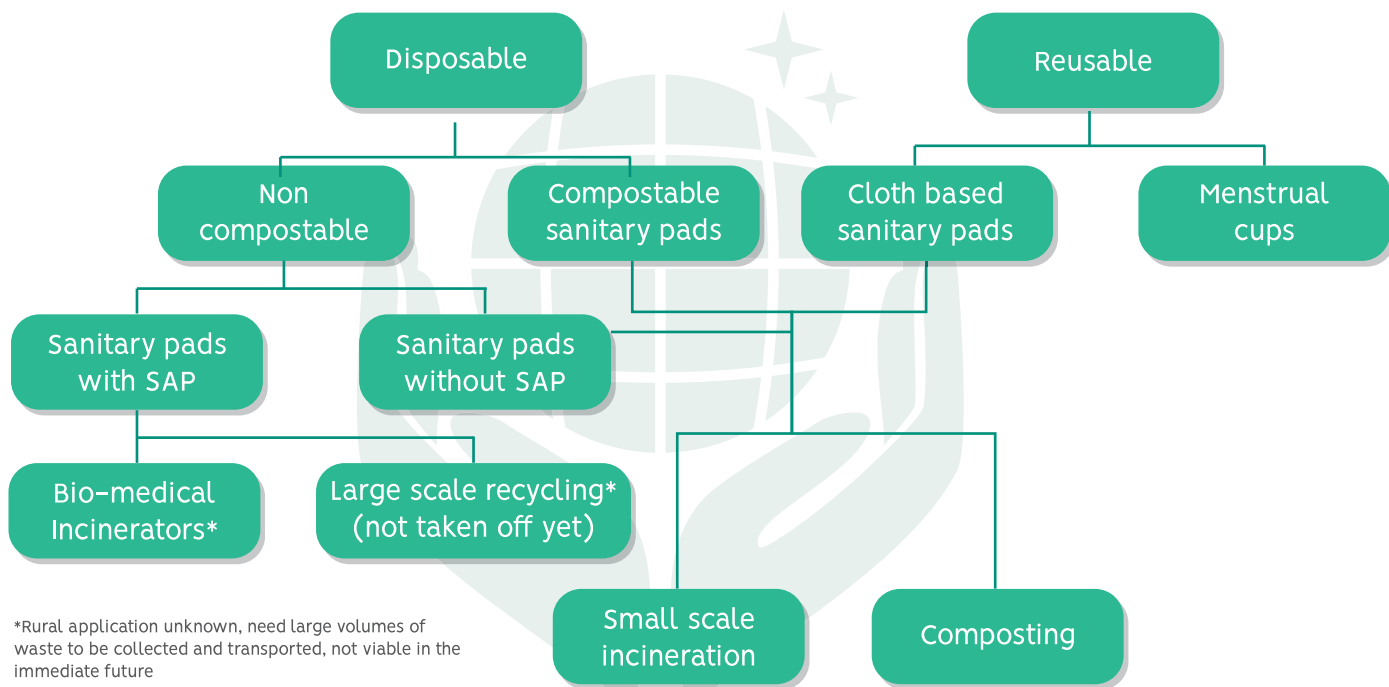
Did You Know?

- ❖ Many sanitary pads are manufactured using materials such as super-absorbent polymers (SAP), plastic, glue, etc, which may take upto 500 to 800 years to decompose.
- ❖ SAPs allow sanitary pads to absorb and retain 30 or more times their weight in fluid, causing blockages in sanitation systems. SAPs do not allow the, otherwise compostable, absorbent core to degrade either.
- ❖ When large amounts of non-compostable waste ends up in fields and water bodies, it can cause long term deterioration of water and soil quality.

PRODUCT CATEGORY	NON – COMPOSTABLE/ DISPOSABLE SANITARY NAPKINS	COMPOSTABLE PRODUCTS	REUSABLE PRODUCTS
Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Without SAP ❖ With SAP in absorbent core 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Compostable sanitary napkins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Cloth pad variants ❖ Menstrual cups
Life span	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Single use ❖ 800 to 900 years to decompose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Single use ❖ 3 to 6 months to decompose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Multiple use ❖ 1 to 10 years
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Variants available across price range 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Currently higher cost than non-compostable version 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lifecycle cost is usually lower than disposables
Quality standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Performance and hygiene parameters – BIS IS 5405 (currently under revision) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Performance and hygiene parameters– BIS IS 5405 (currently under revision) ❖ Compostability– IS 5404 (currently under revision) OR ISO 17088 from a government authorized testing facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ BIS standards for both are currently under development

Options for Menstrual Waste Management

Waste management solutions according to type of products being used or promoted:



*Rural application unknown, need large volumes of waste to be collected and transported, not viable in the immediate future

Menstrual Waste Load in India

SMALL-SCALE INCINERATION

disposed of

- ❖ Incineration involves high temperature combustion converting waste into gases and ash
- ❖ India uses a range of small scale incinerators (tin, matkas, brick and electrical) which differ in capacity/quality/emission control
- ❖ Incineration can be used at community or institutional level.
- ❖ Appropriate for sanitary napkins without SAP, certified compostable and cloth pads
- ❖ Gases are released to the atmosphere after emission control measures; ash can be disposed of in designated ash pits or landfills
- ❖ When incineration occurs in unsafe conditions, hazardous gases may be released
- ❖ The design should account for the number of users and volume of waste
- ❖ Should be located outside toilets and away from student areas (schools and hostels)
- ❖ Should be constructed with appropriate materials, single/dual chamber and stack of appropriate height to minimize gases
- ❖ Should meet emission standards of Central and State Pollution Control Boards
- ❖ O&M roles and processes should be assigned: who will operate/when and how will ash be removed/disposed of?

COMPOSTING

- ❖ Composting is a process of complete degradation by biological processes yielding carbon dioxide, water and inorganic compounds in a defined period of time, without visible, distinguishable or toxic residue
- ❖ Employs regular compost pits, bio-digesters, vermi-composting
- ❖ Appropriate for sanitary napkins without SAP, certified compostable pads and cloth pads
- ❖ Can be undertaken at household, community or institutional levels
- ❖ Pits/digester dimensions must be appropriate for the amount of waste. Can be covered with a sheet to stop excessive water and trap the heat for faster composting. Organic materials need to be added to facilitate decomposition
- ❖ Plastic is bio-degradable but NOT compostable
- ❖ Products claiming compostability should be tested according to parameters being developed by Bureau of Indian Standards(BIS) (as Annexure to IS 5405) or ISO 17088

