PADS FOR SISTERS
Affordable access to cloth pads for all!

#JoinTheClothPadRevolution

eco • femme
**WHAT IS IT?**

*Pads for Sisters* is an Eco Femme not for profit program created to make cloth pads accessible to economically disadvantaged women (over 19 years old) who would not otherwise be able to afford or access the pads at commercial pricing.

Cloth pads are

- made from organic cotton,
- contain a leakproof layer and snaps,
- stitched by rural women collectives ensuring them a living wage.

They have been extensively tested with rural women and have found widespread acceptance across different geographies.
HOW DOES IT WORK?

Pads are offered:

- At **cost price** to organisations and individuals who wish to **sponsor/gift pads** to economically disadvantaged women.
- At a **subsidised rate** (Rs. 60 - 100) for women to purchase for their own use.

30 partners across India

- **Maharashtra**
  - TATA Trusts
- **Ahmedabad**
  - Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
- **New Delhi**
  - STINER: Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region
  - Tara projects
- **Uttar Pradesh**
  - Vatsalya
  - Project KHEL
  - Study Hall Foundation
- **Karnataka**
  - Saahas NGO
  - Amie Foundation
  - AyurYoga Eco-Ashram
  - Santrupthi Foundation
- **Tamil Nadu/Auroville/Pondicherry**
  - Just Change (TN)
  - NCC (Pondicherry)
  - Sharana (Pondicherry)
  - Youth with a mission (Chennai)
  - Nadukkuppam Environmental Education Centre (NEEC)

- **Rajasthan**
  - Anitha
- **Sikkim**
  - Uden
- **Himachal Pradesh**
  - Central Tibetan Administration
  - ISA HEINI
- **Kerala**
  - ATREE
  - Maanushi
- **Madhya Pradesh**
  - Rural Development Trust
  - Timbuktu Collective
- **West Bengal**
  - Rangeen Khidki
  - Udayani Social Action Forum
- **Goa**
  - Sulochana Pednekar
  - Human Touch Foundation
- **Pune**
  - Yardi Pune
  - Baadlav Social Reform Foundation
MENSTRUAL HEALTH EDUCATION

Pads are typically offered along with a **menstrual health awareness** session that covers the following topics:

1. Female Anatomy, menstruation and menstrual cycle

2. Taking care of ourselves during menstruation: Hygiene, Nutrition, Exercise and natural remedies

3. Menstrual product analysis to engage informed choice

4. Safe space for speaking about menstruation
Between launching the program in 2013 and March 2022 Eco Femme has provided over 166,000 pads to low income beneficiaries.

**PROGRESS TO DATE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Total number of pads given out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
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<td>2021-2022</td>
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</table>

**Total no of pads given out 2018-2022**

- **Total number of pads given out**
- **Target**
PROGRESS TO DATE: 2

Number of pads sold at subsidized price and cost price

Average model repartition 2013-2022

- **All in One model**
- **Foldable pad model**
IMPACT

Are cloth pads a viable menstrual absorbent for women and girls from low income backgrounds?

Sample: The following data is compiled from 4 different product user studies collected from 374 women and adolescents across 6 different locations (Sikkim, Tripura, Nagaland, Hyderabad (Telangana), Tirupur (TN), Lucknow (UP)). All the respondents had received the pads at least 3 months prior to data collection.

Age split of participants was as follows:

- 0-19: 33.2%
- 20-30: 29.4%
- 31-40: 34.0%
- 40+: 3.4%
PRODUCT PREFERENCE

The following graphs show

What product(s) they used last month: indicates what a typical pattern of product use is, now they have the cloth pads for at least 3 months.

Pad model preference: 2 different cloth pad models - Foldable and All In One have typically been tried by all women in a user study. This graph shows the preferred model,
The following graph shows the kind of menstruation related symptoms women reported prior to starting to use cloth pads.

After using the cloth pads, 30% more women overall saw a REDUCTION in rashes and allergic reactions as compared to disposable sanitary napkins.
A common assumption is that women won’t pay because cloth pads are too expensive. This question probed willingness to pay and again we were surprised to see that when they have had a positive user experience, they are willing to pay a subsidised rate.
PERCEPTIONS ABOUT FUTURE USE

The following graphs reveal women’s perceptions about:

How long they believe they can use cloth pads before replacement:

- 3 months: 38.2%
- 6 months: 6.6%
- 1 year: 0.3%
- More than 3 years: 6.0%
- 2-3 years: 0.9%
- Don’t know: 45.8%
- No answer: 2.2%

Intentions for future use:

- Yes: 84.2%
- No: 14.4%
- Don’t know: 1.3%
PERCEPTIONS ABOUT FUTURE USE

Willingness to recommend the cloth pad to others

- Yes: 93.3%
- No: 5.1%
- Don't know: 1.6%
CONCLUSIONS

Are cloth pads a viable menstrual absorbent for women and girls?
The answer to this question is a resounding YES!

Is protecting the environment the only reason to switch to a reusable menstrual product?
There are in fact many compelling reasons beyond not burdening the earth, to make the switch.

Feedback from women from low income backgrounds who live in many different parts of India provides evidence that cloth pads:
- Perform well compared with disposable sanitary napkins and are easy enough to maintain.
- Potentially result in beneficial health outcomes
- Are attractive for purchase to women when offered at an affordable rate!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsidized pads / year</th>
<th>Cost price pads / year</th>
<th>Total pads for 2021-2022</th>
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<tr>
<td>15000</td>
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