Are Cloth Pads a Viable Menstrual Absorbent for Women and Girls from Low Income Backgrounds?

Presenting evidence from user studies across India | March 2020 | The Period Junction Conference, Bangalore

Key insights, revealed through evaluating school-going girls and women, about their experiences after using our cloth pads. These surveys have been conducted with users who we directly serve in our local bioregion as well as with our partners who work in remote areas across India. Prior to being introduced to cloth pads, almost all the respondents had been using disposable pads, often supplied under the government-free pad distribution scheme. All data has been collected between 1st April 2018 and end of February 2020.

Conclusions

Are cloth pads a viable menstrual absorbent for women and girls from low income backgrounds? The answer is a resounding YES! For girls in particular, to sustain use may require engaging mothers more proactively to support girls’ choice to make this switch at home.

PAD FOR SISTERS

What?

Affordable access to cloth pads for women who would like to make the switch to cloth pads but cannot afford premium priced pads

How?

Pads are offered:
- At cost price to organisations and individuals who wish to sponsor/gift pads
- At a subsidised rate (Rs.60 - 100) for these women to purchase for their own use

PRODUCT PREFERENCE

What?

Pad model preference

How?

Products used during the last period

3.2% Eco Femme pads only
3.6% Cloth
2.0% Ondisposables
1.7% Cloth pads only
1.9% Dettol or other disinfectant
0.8% Nothing to complain
0.1% Cannot dry it
0.5% Uncomfortable
0.3% Very uncomfortable
0.4% Very comfortable

PERCEPTIONS: FUTURE USE

What?

Suspicion: After using cloth pads

How?

Symptoms: After using cloth pads

3.0% No symptoms
2.9% Abdominal pain without diarrhoea or menses
6.2% Vaginal wash / itchiness
4.2% Abnormal vaginal discharge
3.5% Genital ulcers or sores
1.9% Other
0.5% Don’t know
0.2% Don’t answer

PERCEPTIONS: USE

What?

How would you use Eco Femme cloth pads in the future?

How?

Intention to use in the future

4.3% Yes
4.8% No
66.7% Don’t know

DIFFERENTIATION

What?

Does it keep her hygiene?

How?

Soft and comfortable
6.9%

Where do you dry your Eco Femme pad?

Inside where no one can see
36.8%

Uncomfortable
9.1%

Leakproof
3.2%

The pad leaked
41.5%

I don’t like how it looks
34.3%

The pad moves in my panties
31.6%

Cotton bag
19.4%

Nothing to complain
31.6%

How do you wash your Eco Femme pad?

Water only
66.7%

Uncomfortable drying it in the sun
5.1%

With water and soap
19.4%

I don’t like how it looks
15.4%

I am not the one who washes
23.0%

The pad leaked
19.4%

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How effective are Eco Femme pads at preventing leaks?

Very comfortable
10.9%

How comfortable are the Eco Femme pads?

Very comfortable
10.9%

Comfortable
4.4%

Uncomfortable
1.3%

Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
3.4%

Does it keep her hygiene?

60.0%

Water only
66.7%

Uncomfortable drying it in the sun
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