



**Outcome of Monitoring and Evaluation of Eco Femmes' menstrual health education program for adolescent girls
2023-2024**

With direct and implementing partners



Data Collection process:

Evaluation of impact of menstrual health education and experience with cloth pads is an integral part of our adolescent girl “Pad for Pad” program.

- Data collection took place 3 to 6 months from the time of completing educational session and girls acquiring cloth pads (2023-2024)
- For partners, data collection was recommended for 10% of all girls reached.
- 885 girls who participated in the P4P programme via direct and partners, who reported trying the pads at least once, were selected for the evaluation process.
- Data was obtained in 2 ways:
 - Facilitated survey with multiple choice questions.
 - Focus group discussion to obtain deeper insights

Total 885 Girls surveyed 2023-2024

Direct (219 girls)	Partner (666)
Alankuppam Govt Hr Sec School (40 girls)	Maanushree Foundation (62)
Bommayapalayam Govt Middle School (4 girls)	Virago / Svaasam (28)
Gandhi Govt Middle School (29)	CEFHA (98)
Koonimedu Government Hr Sec School (24)	Rangeen Khidki (150)
Periyamudaliyarchavady Government Middle School (12)	Garbage Free India (51)
Poothurai Govt High School (20)	Sharana (119)
Kazhuperumpakkam Govt Hr Sec School (33)	Pinkishe Foundation (54)
Kuilapalayam Trust School (44)	Literati (102)
Vetha Govt High School (13)	The Study Hall Foundation (2)

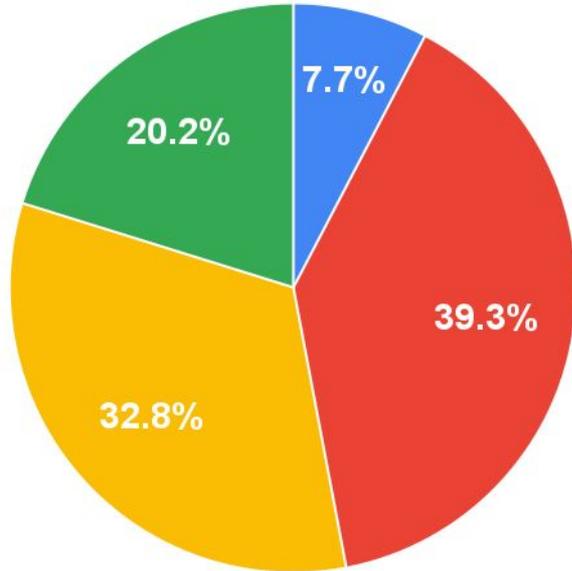
Part 1: Feedback from surveys

The data was collected between 3 to 6 months after the pad gifting session.

Multiple choice questions explored the girls' experience with cloth pads, hygiene practices and potential for future use.

101. What product did you use for your last period?

885 responses

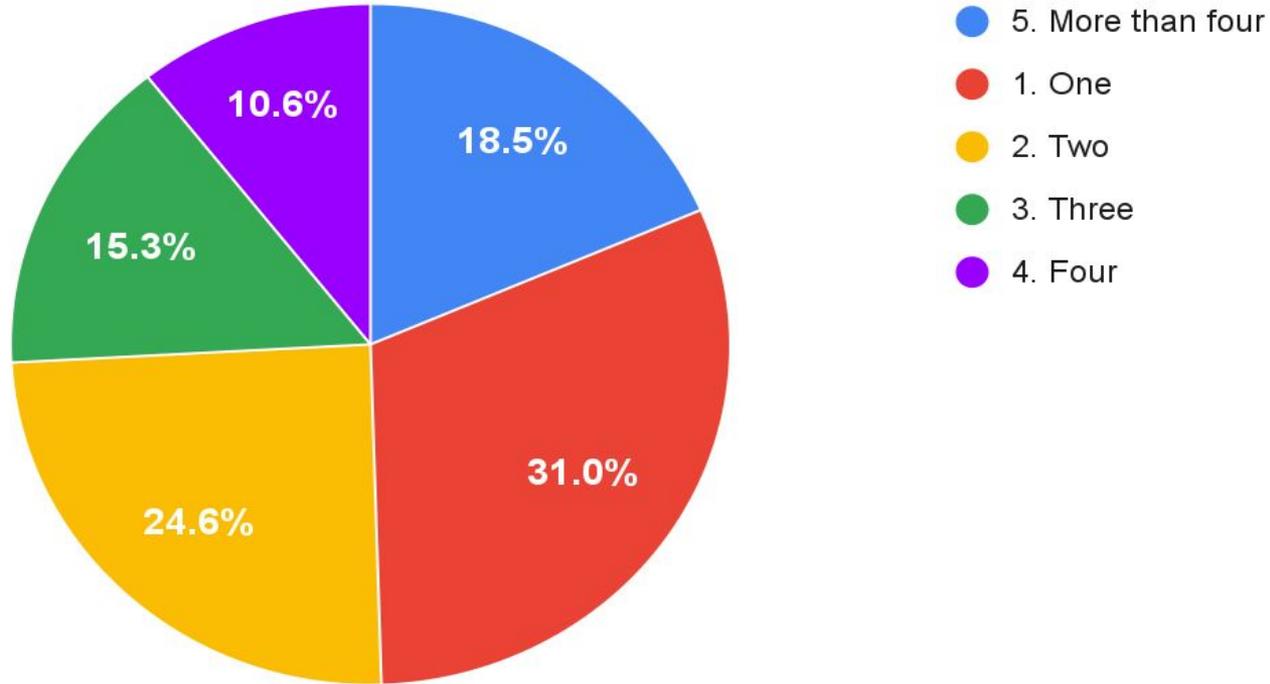


- 1. Only Cloth
- 2. Disposable sanitary napkin (eg: whisper, stayfree, etc)
- 3. Cloth pads
- 4. Combination of disposables and cloth pad

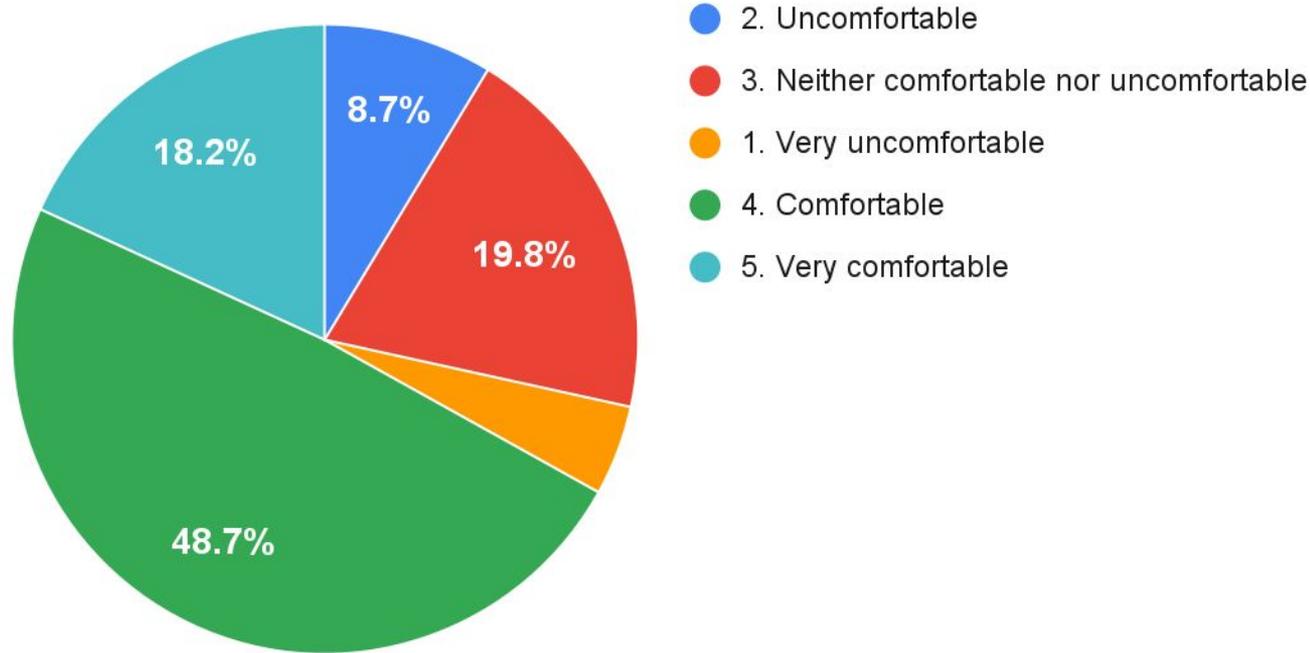
The assumption is that the products used during the last period would most closely indicate the preferred product usage for a menstrual cycle

102. How many monthly cycles have you used the Eco Femme cloth pads for?

885 responses



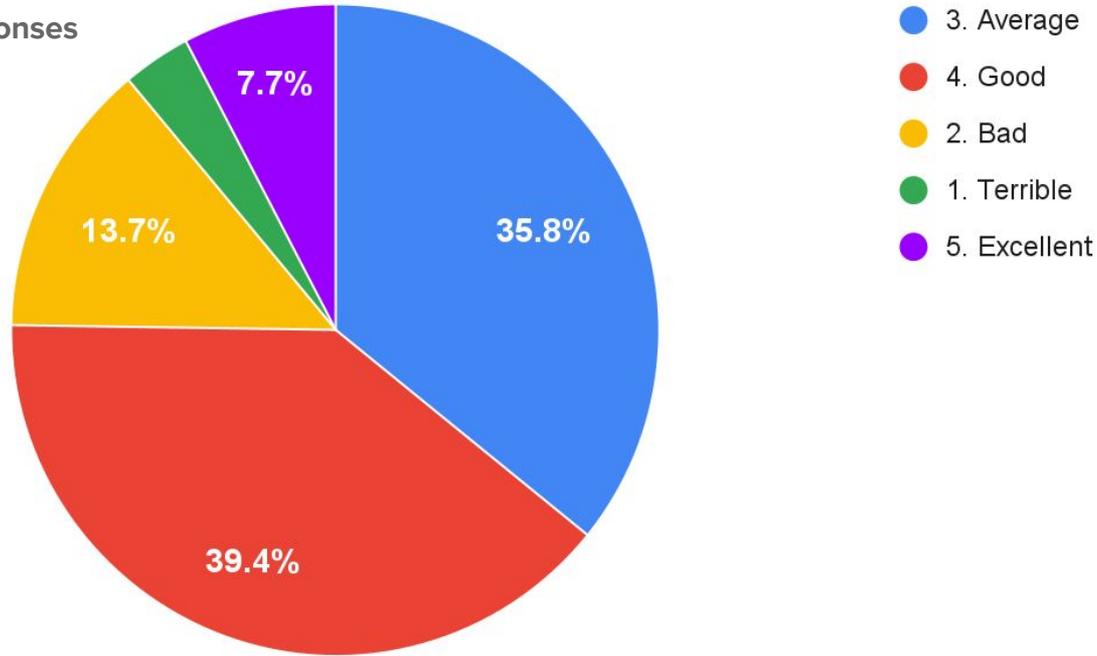
103a. How comfortable are the cloth pads?



86.7 % of respondents reported feeling comfortable about using the cloth pads and only 13.7 % reported dissatisfaction/discomfort with using cloth pads

103b. How do the cloth pads look after having been used and washed?

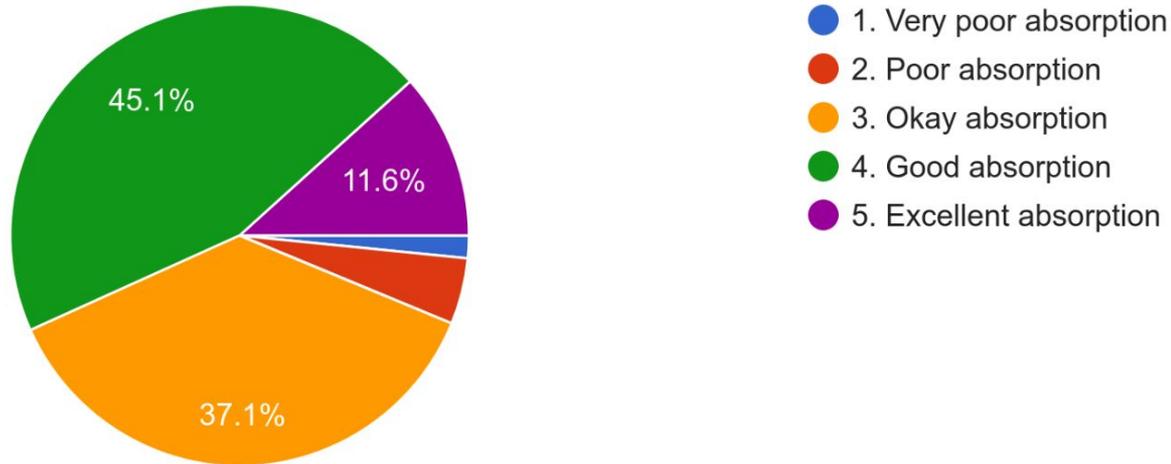
885 responses



Overall 82.9 % reported satisfaction with the aesthetic of the pads after using and washing them and 17.1% reported dissatisfaction.

103c. How effective are the cloth pads at absorbing the flow?

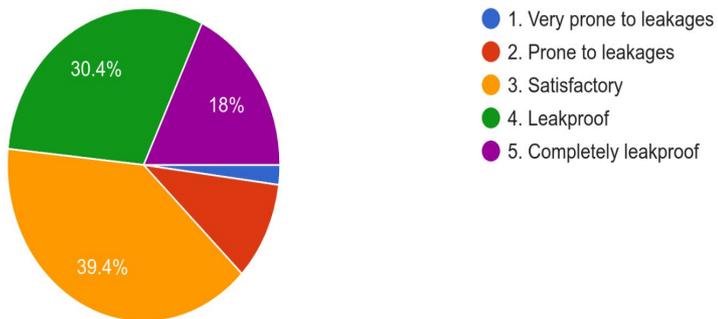
885 responses



Overall 93.8 % of the girls reported satisfaction with the absorption capacity of the pad and only 6.2% reported dissatisfaction.

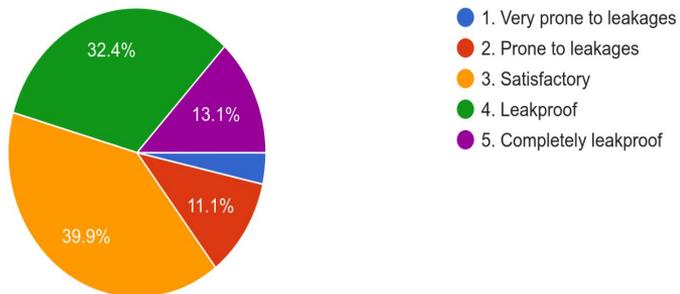
103d. How effective are the cloth pads at preventing leaks during day time?

885 responses



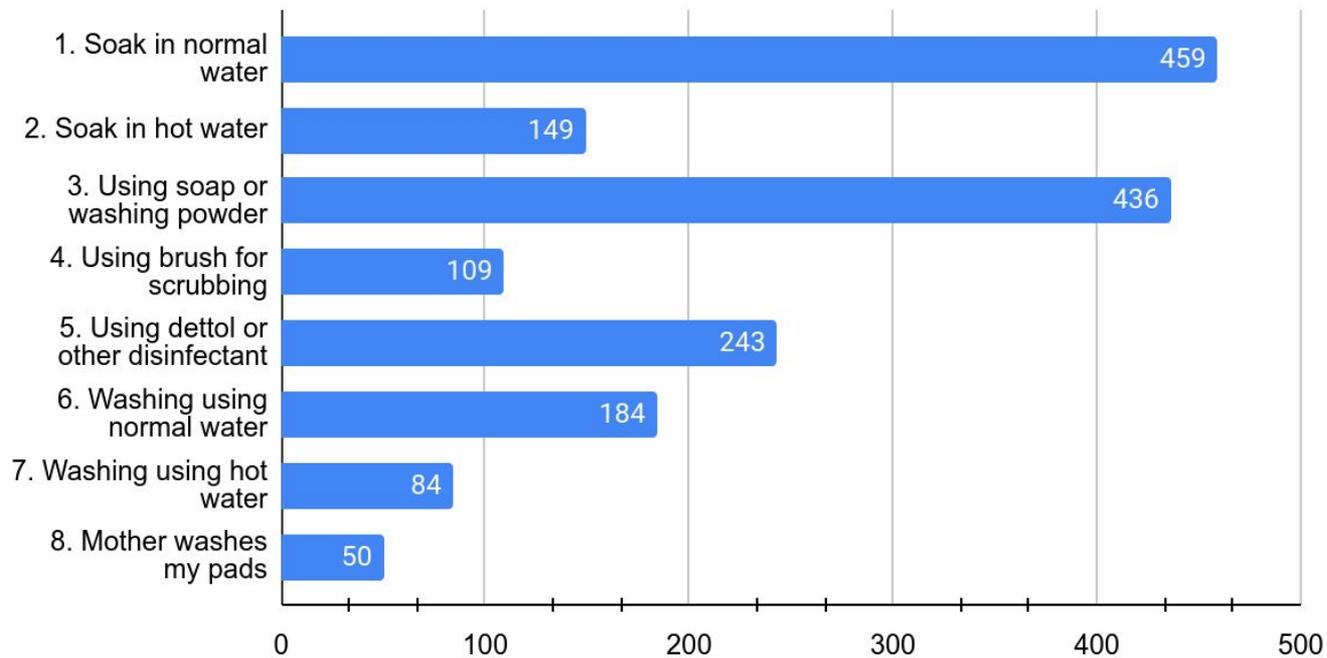
103e. How effective are the cloth pads at preventing leaks during night time?

885 responses



Only 12.2% of respondents reported issues with leaking during day and 14.6% at night.

104. How do you wash your cloth pads? Choose all that applies.

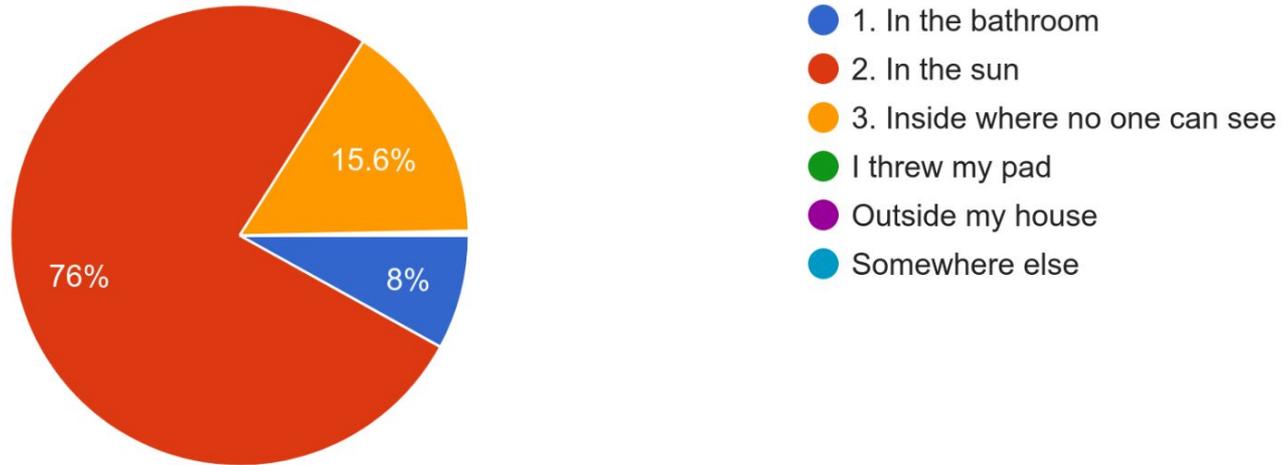


Multiple responses possible

885 responses

105. Where do you dry your cloth pads?

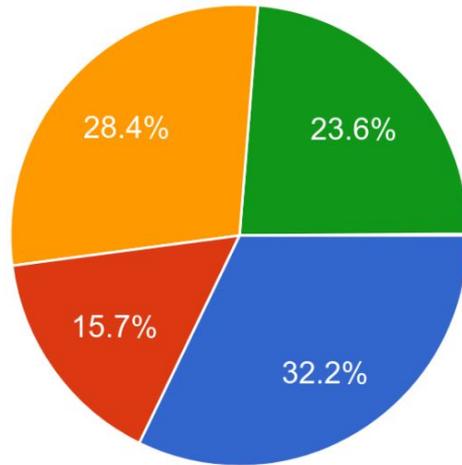
885 responses



Sun drying is the practice recommended during educational session. 76 % of the girls reported observing this recommended practice. 15.6 % of the girls reported discomfort with drying the pads outside where they might be seen by others. This is consistent with a later question on what the girls don't like about the pads, where 15.6% reported discomfort with drying them in a visible place.

106. What do you use the Eco Femme storage pouch for?

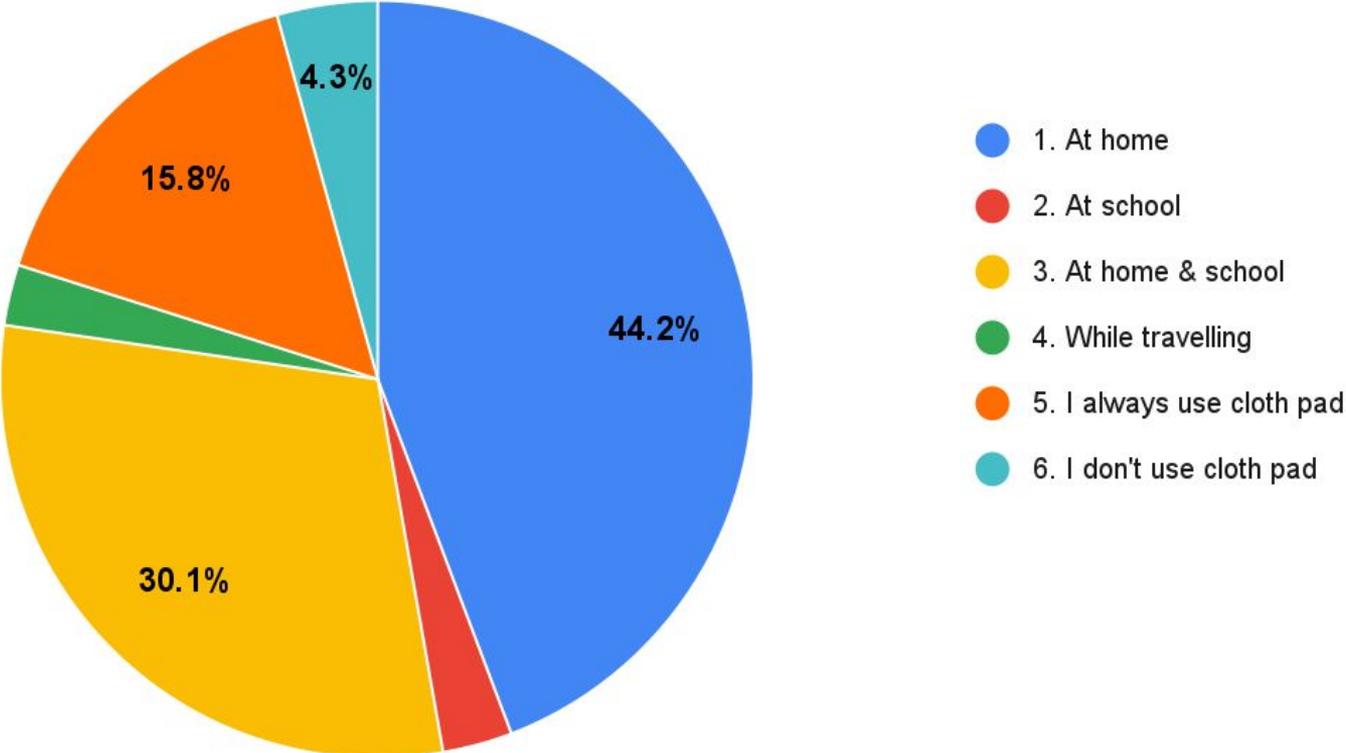
885 responses



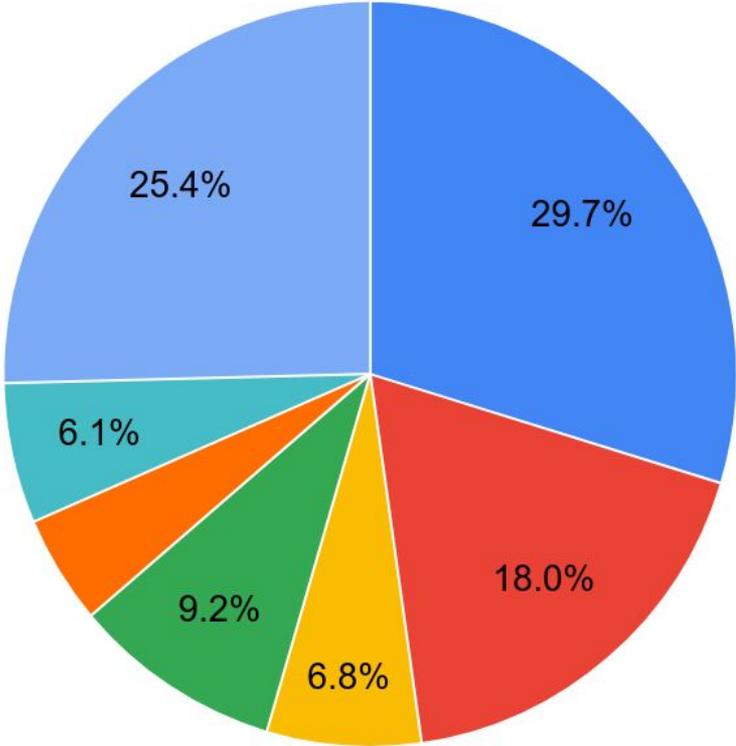
- 1. For carrying/storing clean cloth pad
- 2. For carrying used cloth pad
- 3. For carrying/ storing clean & used cloth pad
- 4. Do not use it
- Pencil bag

A storage pouch is provided as part of the sustainable period kit.
Compared with previous year, the usage of the storage pouch has increased by 15%.

107. Where do you use the cloth pad?



**108. What do you most like about the cloth pads?
Choose not more than 3 options.**

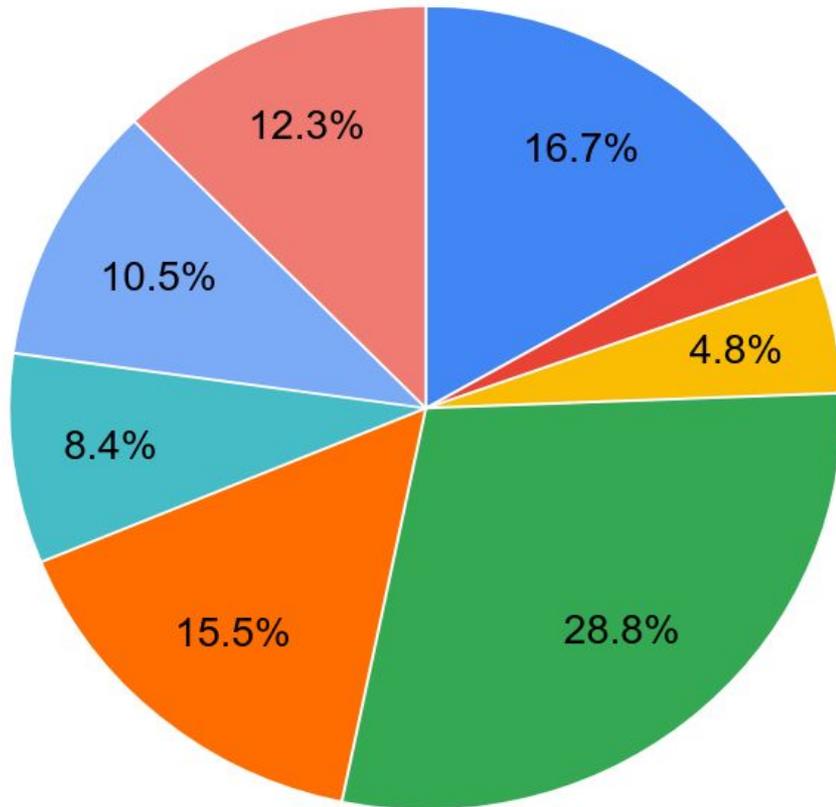


- 1. Soft and comfortable
- 2. Look nice
- 3. Does not keep shifting
- 4. Leakproof
- 5. Easy to dry
- 6. Easy to wash
- 7. Good for the environment

Multiple responses possible

Easy to dry is 4.7%

109. What do you not like about the cloth pads? Choose not more than 3 options.



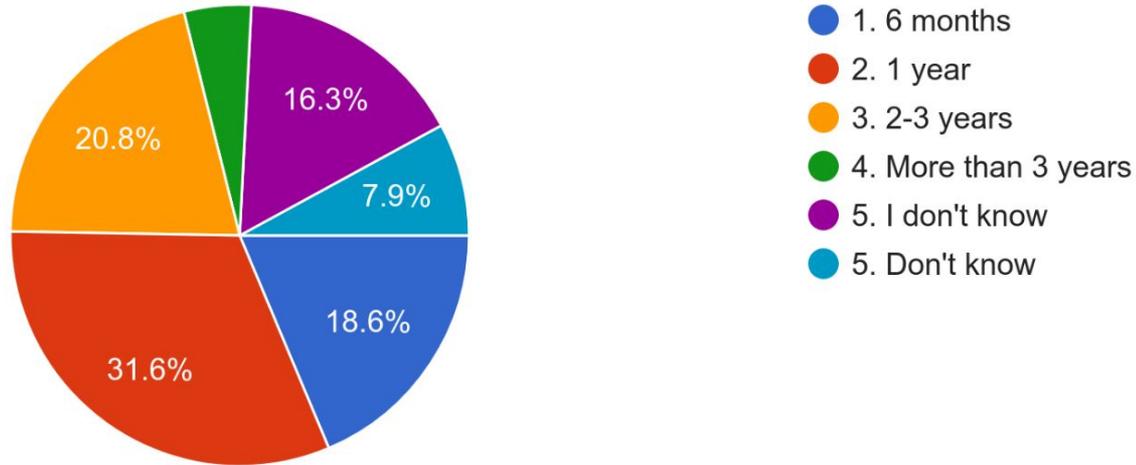
- 1. Stain do not come out with washing
- 2. Does not absorb the flow
- 3. The pad leaked
- 4. I don't like to wash
- 5. I am uncomfortable drying it outside
- 6. I don't like how it looks after use
- 7. The pad moves around in my panty
- 8. I don't have any complaint

Multiple responses possible

2.9% Does not absorb

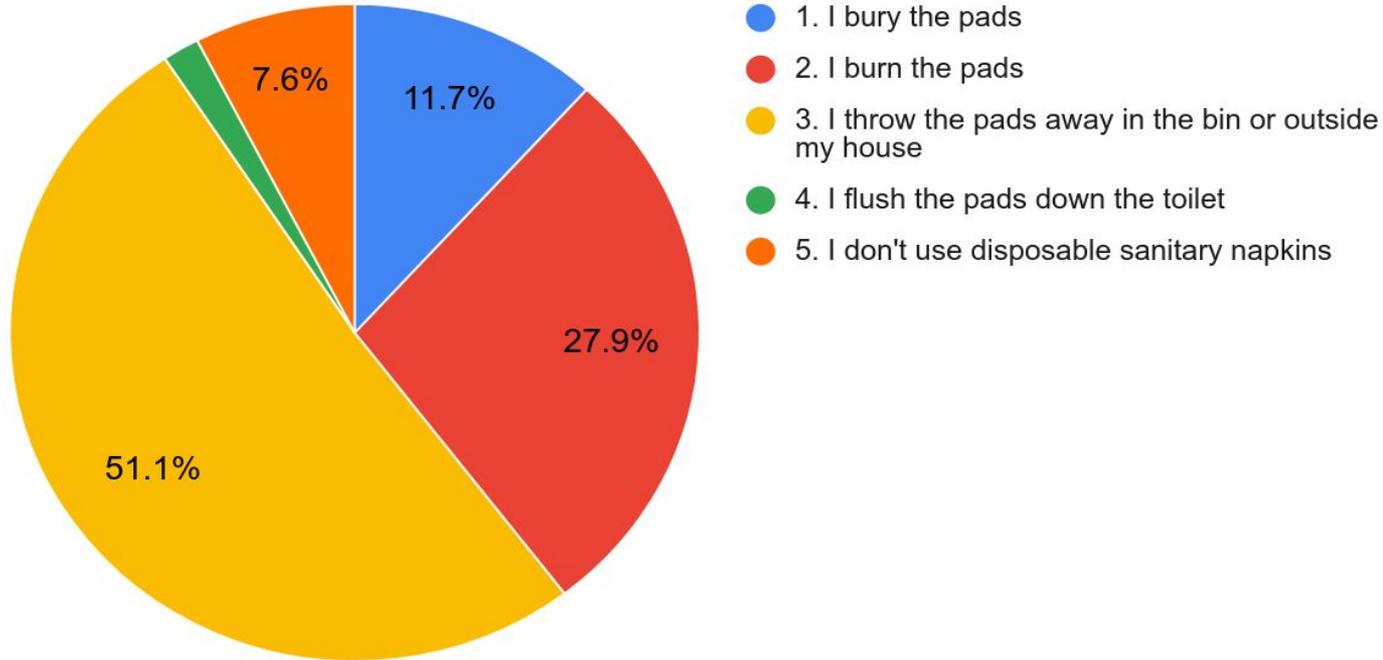
110. How long do you think the cloth pads can last before replacement?

885 responses



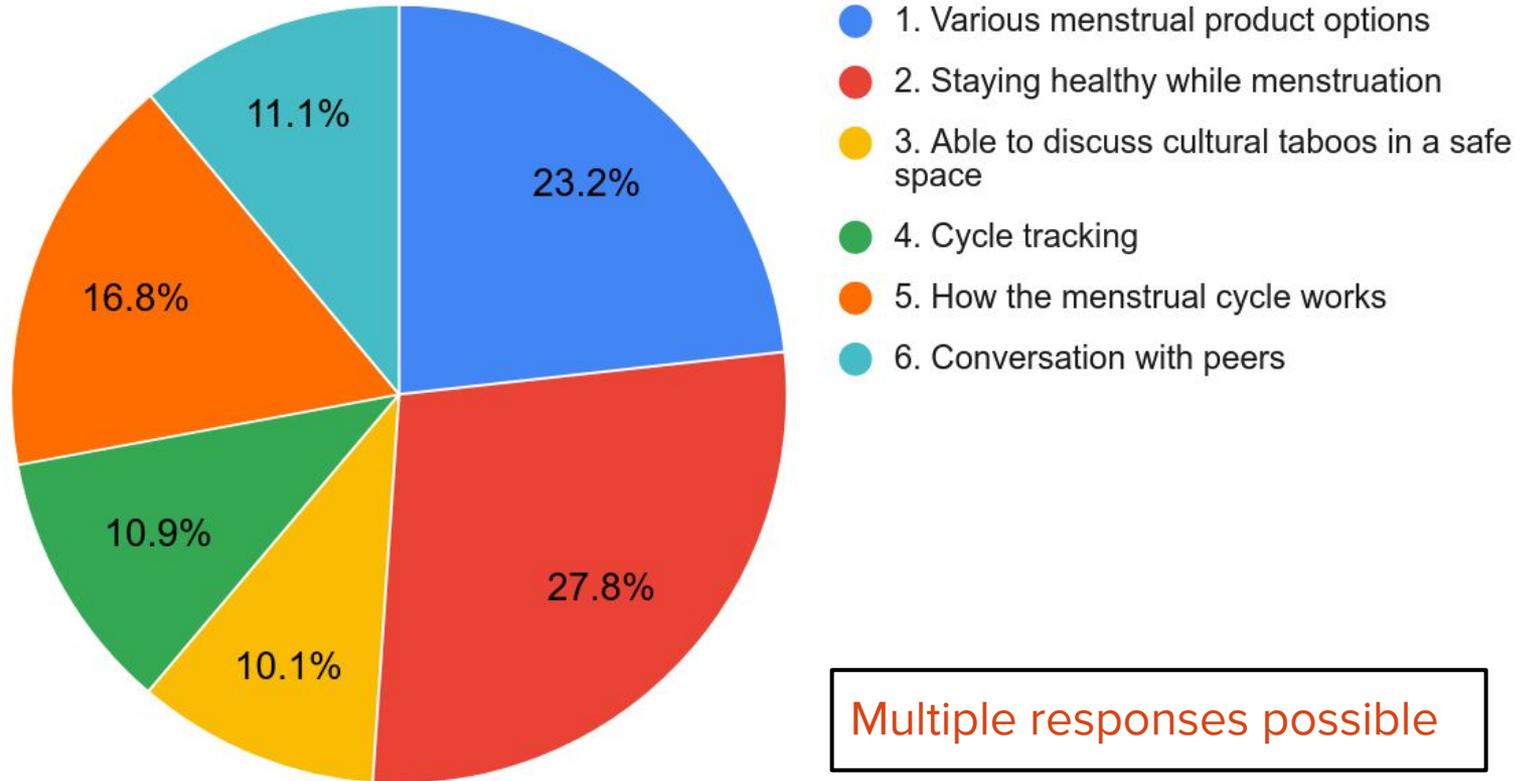
Given, 31.6% of girls report 1 year (as opposed to the right answer of 2-3 years) and that 24.2% report that they don't know, this result indicates that this point needs to be emphasised further by facilitators during sessions.

111. If you are using disposable sanitary napkins, how do you dispose of them ? Choose ALL that applies.

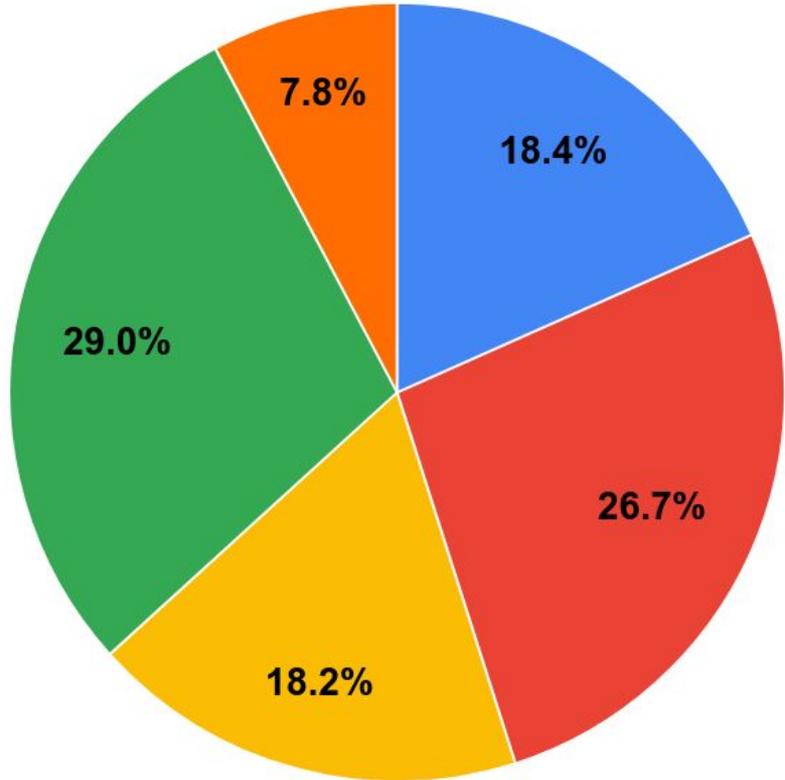


Disposal practices vary a lot across geographies. **Multiple responses possible**

201. What did you most appreciate learning in the education session? Choose not more than 3 options.



202. I know when to expect my next period because....
Choose ALL that applies.

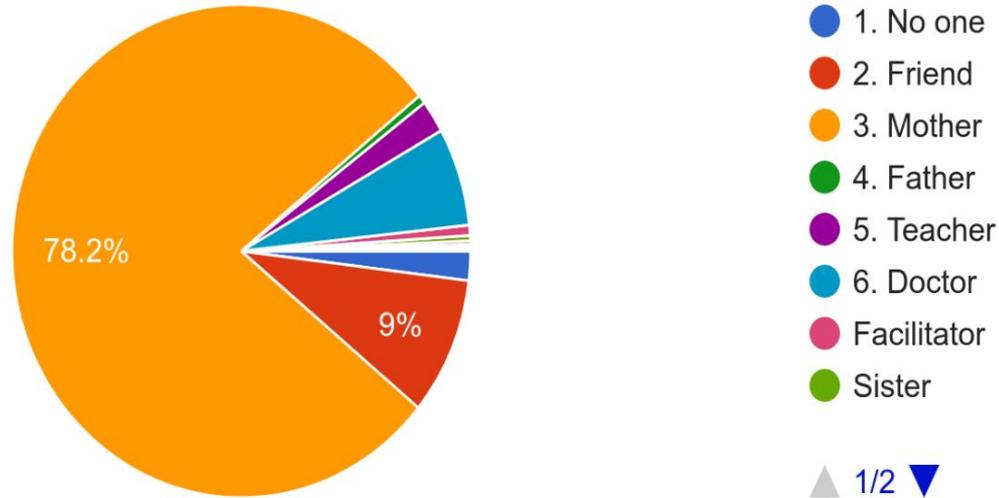


- 1. I track my cycle on a calendar/ dairy/ mobile app
- 2. I don't physically track, but I remember the date
- 3. I know through mood change that my period will come the next day
- 4. My body indicates that it is coming through signs like pimples, pain etc
- 5. I do not track my period and I dont know when to expect my next period

Multiple responses possible

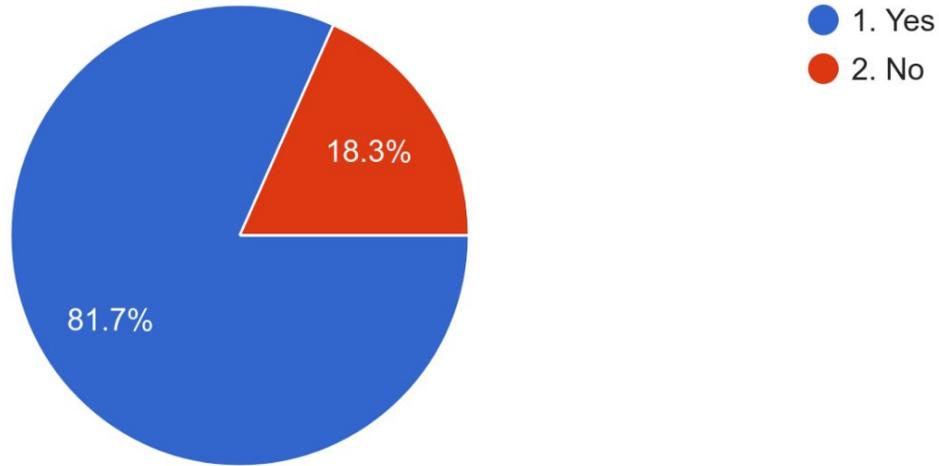
203. If you have questions about menstruation and reproductive health, who do you ask first?

885 responses



78.2% of girls reported asking their Mother, 9% reported going to a Friend first, Doctor is third with 6.4%.

301. Will you use cloth pads in the future?



81.7% of girls intend to keep using cloth pads

Part 2: Feedback from Focus Group Discussions

In addition to the survey, facilitated focus group discussions (45 minute conversations) were conducted with the same small group of girls to harvest deeper insights about their learning from educational session and experience with cloth pads. These sessions are recorded by a note taker in a field notes journal.

Focus group discussions were held for 419 girls in total- through direct 219 girls and through partners 200 girls(Cefha -98 girls and Literati -102 girls)



Summary of Focus Group Discussion.

1. What do the girls remember from the menstrual awareness session?

Via partners- Most of girls remember:

- How the reproductive system functions.
- The different phases of menstruation.
- The various menstrual product options, usage, and their pros and cons, especially when it comes to disposable sanitary napkins and cloth pads.
- How to track the period using calendar, and also to identify their ovulation.
- How to take care of oneself during menstruation.

Continued...

Via Eco Femme Direct sessions- Girls can recall and expressed:

- The names of female reproductive organs, anatomy and its function.
- How the menstrual process works and the various stages /phases.
- The various menstrual product options, usage and pros and cons of different products related to health and environment.
- What is normal & abnormal period and feeling confident to express when to seek help if needed.
- Learning about iron rich food which are locally available for healthy diet.
- Learning yoga asanas and exercises that helps to relieve menstrual cramps and manage pain.
- Learning about puberty

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Continued...

Via Eco Femme Direct sessions- Girls can recall and expressed:

- Increased confidence and comfort in how they feel about their own body.
- Learning about period tracking. Girls report increased ability to express when to expect their next period either by tracking or by noticing bodily changes or emotions.
- Discussion on cultural practices, myth and taboo related to period.
- How to stay healthy during period.
- The learning on the 3 openings in the vulva area and their functions.

Key takeaway : Girls remembered much of the key information covered during educational session. Girls expressed an increased positive attitude towards period. They reported starting to embrace their body after the session.

2. Are the girls tracking their cycle? How?

- About 20% to 35% of girls report routinely tracking their period using monthly period tracking sheet/diary/phone apps. They indicated confidence in knowing when to expect their next period.
- Most than half of the girls know when to expect their next period by remembering their last period date approximately as well as by observing body's indication like pimples, tenderness in breast, white discharge or mood swings.
- Less than 10% of girls report not knowing when to expect their next period.
- One girl shared that she cried for no reason 2 days before her period. She clearly stated that it was because of her mood swing related to premenstrual syndrome.

Key takeaway: Since the session, many girls reported starting to befriend their body and menstrual cycle. They are able to figure out their ovulation and anticipate menstruation by observing their bodily changes and mood swing.

3. Did girls share the information received from the session with anyone?

- Most of the girls shared with their mother, followed by friends, sisters, aunties and grandma. Very few girls shared with their father.
- Many of the girls expressed that their mother showed positive attitudes and were very receptive to their sharing. They shared that their mothers felt happy about the awareness and education on this topic given to their daughters.
- The girls shared that mothers encouraged their daughters to use cloth pads and some even supported their daughter by washing their pads.
- One of the girls mother started adding more spinach to her diet after listening to her learnings on nutrition intake and the impact on her menstruation.
- Some girls shared their pads with their mother as they showed interest in using them.
- Some girls expressed that their mothers were not comfortable with openly discussing or talking about period with their daughters and remained silent.
- Some of the girls still do not feel comfortable to share information with anyone.

3. Did girls share the information received from the session with anyone?

Key takeaway: Mothers are the primary source from where girls get instructions on how to manage and behave during their cycle (including cultural beliefs, misconceptions, do's and don'ts related to menstruation). Mothers play a vital role as allies in supporting girls in their menstrual experience. The girls' reports indicate an encouraging shifts in attitudes and increased openness to this education.

4. Check if the girls have all tried the Eco Femme pads. How and when did they use cloth pads?

- **More than 50% of the girls tried the cloth pads first time at home** as they were unsure about leaks. They reported that after trying at home, they felt comfortable, confident in the leakproof capacity and started using them at schools also.
- **25% of the girls tried the pads for the first time at school.**
- **More than 50% are using the combination** of cloth pad and disposable pads to manage period. One third are only using cloth pads.
- The **remaining girls reported using disposable pads** for the ease of throwing away and not needing to wash. Some girls shared feeling uncomfortable to carry the used pads in school bag.
- Some girls shared that they choose to use disposable pads during rainy time as four cloth pads were not sufficient to meet their needs.

5. What reasons do the girls give for their various product choices?

Cloth Pads	Disposables
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● No more rashes and itchiness.● Absorption, leakage and comfort is much better than disposable and pad does not shift.● Provides better comfort than disposable pads.● Good for health and environment.● Conscious decision taken keeping health and environmental factors in mind.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ease of using and throwing away.● Washing and drying feels extra work.● Rainy season difficult to manage period with 4 pads.● Lack of time due to long hours of school & homework.

Key takeaway: Girls reported needing time to adapt to cloth pads and to make the shift. Disposables remain a viable product for them for their seeming convenience and ease of use, especially in the monsoon.

6. What do the girls dislike about the cloth pads?

- Primary reason for most of the girls is **washing** as they needed to **deal with blood** which is totally new and also **felt like extra work & effort**.
- Secondary reason is **drying outside** as they still feel discomfort and shame.
- Half of the girls feel **uncomfortable to change and carry the used pads at school**.
- A few girls experienced **leakage issue**.
- Few girls experienced pads getting hard over the period of time.
- Some girls discontinued finding it hard to dry on monsoon as they had limited pads in numbers.
- One third of girls had no complaints and were happy with the cloth pads.
- Few girls felt uncomfortable as their mother washed their pads which felt embarrassing.

Key takeaway: Dislike of washing **their menstrual blood** remains the main factor reported by the girls.

7. What do the girls like about the Eco Femme pads?

- Most of the girls primarily like cloth pad for its **comfort as it feels soft on the skin and no more irritation** issues.
- Secondly they find cloth pads **leak proof and absorbs** well than disposables.
- Third reason is they **love the pad's look & design** plus finds it beautiful.
- Prevents **polluting the environment and makes us guilt free**.
- **Stays in position and doesn't shift around**.
- **Don't have to think about how to dispose**.
- **Don't have to buy disposable pads every month**.
- Good for the health as **it doesn't cause itching and rashes**.

Key takeaway: There are many attributes that girls like about cloth pads - that they provide comfort, prevent irritation, itching and rashes, save money and are good for the environment.

8. How do the girls take care of the cloth pads?

Direct	Indirect (Partners)
Most of the girls report washing and taking care of the pads as per instruction : Soaking in normal water, washing in cold water using normal soap, drying under the sun and using the big bag to store them all together.	Most of the girls are soaking the pads in cold water, then hot water and washing their pads in both hot and cold water .
Few girls report using dettol to rinse the pads after washing.	They are using dettol and other disinfectant mostly .
Few girls report still using a brush to scrub the pads.	
For some girls, their mothers help to wash their pads	
The travel pouch is used to carry both the soiled /fresh pads	They report storing the pads in the pouch but keeping it in a distance with other clothes.
Girls find it empowering to wash and dry their pads.	They report difficulty to dry pads outside and ending up drying in a place where no one can see.

8. How do the girls take care of the cloth pads?

Key takeaway: Most girls **via direct report observe the correct practices** for safe use of cloth pads as they were conveyed during session. Findings from partners show that **more training need to be done in terms of pad care**. Further emphasis also needed on pads lasting 2 to 3 years if taken care of.

Other observations from the focus group and survey

- Some girls reported that although they like cloth pads, how they look, their functionality, environmental, health, and economical benefits, **they still opted for disposables as they feel hesitant to wash a used and bloody pad.**
- Some didn't try cloth pads at all as they needed **more time** to make the shift.
- Some girls **shared their pads with their mothers and sisters** as they showed interest in using them.

Upon probing, we realised how deep the story of menstrual blood being dirty and untouchable runs, being constantly reinforced by the girls' society and kin. Many girls reported needing more time to make the shift. Most of the girls said they are ready to use cloth pad in future.

Overall findings:

Regarding Cloth pads:

- Approx **60% of girls sustained use of cloth pads** for several months and about **40% stopped** after using them for sometime.
- Overall **performance of cloth pads** on multiple parameters (look, function, absorption, comfort) is very good.
- **Washing is the primary obstacle** to sustain the use of cloth pads. Secondly carrying the used pads at school. Thirdly drying outside under the sun. (**All these obstacles are closely related with the social conditioning** of the girl portraying menstrual blood as dirty and shameful). The girls needed more time to make the shift and were totally ready to use the cloth pads in future.
- Given that **only 20.8% of girls** were able to answer that **cloth pads can last 2 to 3 years**, more emphasis is needed on this key point during training.
- Girls **like cloth pads for their comfort, prevention of irritation, itching & rashes, saving money, and freedom from guilt of polluting environment.**

Overall Findings:

Educational impact:

- Girls reported **embracing their body and feeling more confident** about how best to manage their period.
- 25% of the girls reported tracking their period using app/calendar, more 50% reported not using tools to track, but indicated knowing when they would get their next period through observation of their bodily symptoms and mood swings.
- Girls shared that there were many **misconceptions around the menstrual cycle that were cleared up in the session**, which they found helpful.
- The girls mostly **shared their learnings with their mother**. Some girls had, for the first time, an open conversation about period with their mother. Thus the educational impact spreads further to the girl's mothers. One of the girls' reported that her mother started adding more spinach to her diet after hearing the importance of iron for anemia etc.

Thank you for your interest!



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