1

Awareness

Normalising **MENSTRUATION**

Calls to **Action**

- **Make MHM programmes comprehensive**, providing complete information on menstruation, menstrual hygiene, product basket available, disposal and treatment, and equip girls and women with the self-confidence and self-efficacy needed to address harmful socio-cultural norms.
- **Build capacity of functionaries** at the district level and below with streamlined, comprehensive MHM messaging.
- **Include relevant influencers -** boys and men, frontline health workers, educators, health care providers, religious and political leaders in MHM conversations and programming.
- **Increase positive reporting** on MHM in media, addressing taboos.

THE BIOLOGICAL PROCESS OF MENSTRUATION IN INDIA CONTINUES TO BE SHROUDED IN A CULTURE OF SILENCE AND SHAME. INEQUITABLE GENDER NORMS MANIFEST IN THE SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS AND FOOD INTAKE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON MENSTRUATING GIRLS AND WOMEN, AND THE PERVASIVE BELIEF THAT MENSTRUAL BLOOD IS IMPURE AND THAT MENSTRUATING WOMEN ARE UNCLEAN.

Traditional practices around menstruation that may have once served to provide comfort to women during this time, have disintegrated and are now tools that entrench inequitable gender norms and power relationships. These changes have created a fundamentally negative and unhealthy narrative of menstruation.

Research on MHM in India underscores low levels of awareness, and several myths and misconceptions[1]

48% GIRLS

are aware of menstruation prior to menarche

23% GIRLS

are aware that the uterus is the source of bleeding

55% GIRLS

consider menstruation to be normal

Several socio-cultural restrictions on interactions, food consumption, religious worship etc.

Additionally, girls have few sources of correct and comprehensive information on menstruation[2]

54% GIRLS

say that mothers are the main source of information

70% MOTHERS

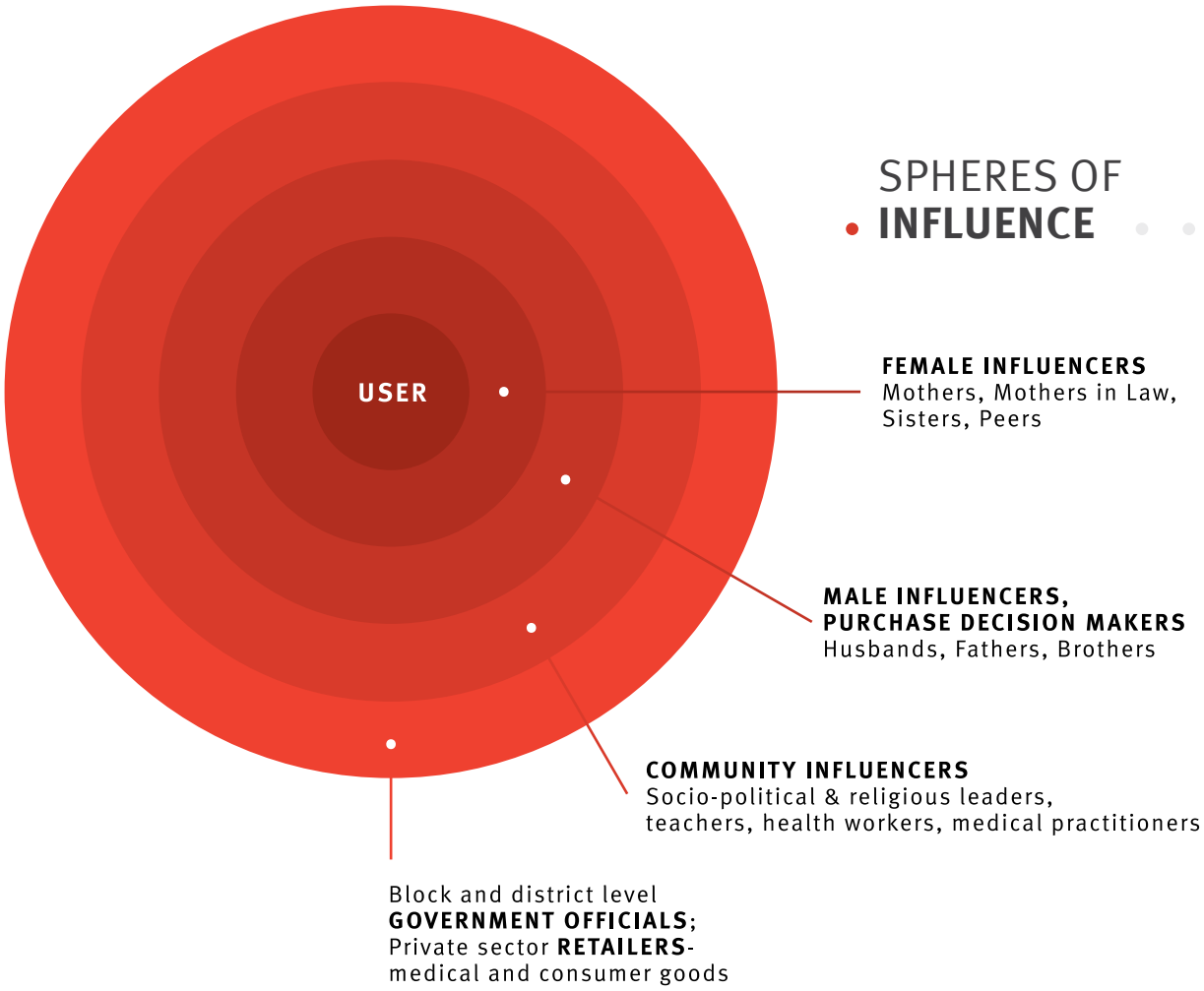
consider menstruation 'dirty', perpetuating a culture of silence

Teachers and health workers are not common sources of information, mothers are

Various stakeholders including National and State Governments, private sector, civil society organisations and non-Governmental organisations have been working towards normalising menstruation. While making great strides in their individual spheres, these efforts have been disaggregated. It is essential to streamline efforts and messaging related to normalising menstruation and reach out to influencers at all levels (from families to policy makers) to shift the conversations on menstruation from impurity and shame to 'normal' and healthy. Normalising conversations on menstruation in all these spheres will help create a platform to provide comprehensive information, safe products, infrastructure and health services to women to help manage menstruation safely.

[1] van Eijk AM, Sivakami M, Thakkar MB, et al. Menstrual hygiene management among adolescent girls in India: a systematic review and metaanalysis. BMJ Open 2016;6: e010290. doi:10.1136/ bmjopen-2015-010290

[2] Dasra (2014). Spot On! Improving Menstrual Health and Hygiene in India



SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

In order to be effective, it is important that messaging to these various **influencers** on MHM from various organisations working on MHM, sexual and reproductive health, WASH, gender and other entities are correct and consistent.

MHM conversations have focused on addressing myths and taboos and providing information on product access and use.

However, normalising menstruation requires addressing gender inequalities and provision of correct information across the value chain of menstruation to ensure that

- Girls and women overcome stigma, shame and taboos
- Girls and women are able to manage their menstruation safely, and
- Influencers have a comprehensive understanding of their experience and barriers

WHAT IS NORMAL?

- What is menstruation – the physical process and its implications
- Socio-cultural norms and perceptions including myths and taboos
- Linkages of gender and sexual and reproductive health with menstruation

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT
VALUE CHAIN

Awareness generation on menstrual hygiene management has typically focused on use of sanitary pads. Information to users and influencers should speak to each component of the value chain from addressing social norms and taboos, choice of and access to products, hygienic use, access to facilities and waste management.

AWARENESS

- Socio-cultural norms and perceptions about menstruation

ACCESS

- Product features
- Cost to consumer (including price)
- Types of products by environmental impact
- Points of availability (community based, Government agents, retailers, schools etc.)
- Sources of information

USE

- Safe and hygienic use
- Taboos related to menstruation that affect menstrual hygiene
- Health seeking behaviours
- Access to WASH facilities
- Design of WASH facilities

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Mechanisms for safe disposal
- Considerations for on-site incineration
- Considerations for adding to solid waste stream
- Implications of throwing in fields, water bodies, sanitation systems
- Considerations for deep burial, composting
- Design of WASH facilities

Access and Use

2 MENSTRUAL HYGIENE **PRODUCTS** IN INDIA

The Evolving Landscape

Calls to **Action**

- Information on availability, user preferences, environmental impact and cost should inform
  - Product procurement for large scale Menstrual hygiene management programs
  - Product standards for the complete range of Menstrual Hygiene products
  - A comprehensive tax structure for raw materials and finished goods across the range of Menstrual Hygiene products
- Clarity on classification of menstrual hygiene products as consumer or medical goods to ensure communication of comprehensive information to consumer on product use and side effects
- Universal availability of menstrual hygiene products and appropriate water, sanitation, hygiene and disposal options in Government institutional facilities, public places (Government and private run) and schools
- Catalyse research & development for environmentally sound products by market leaders and facilitate product adoption at scale through dialogue between market leaders and innovators

DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS INC IDEAS to ACTION · PATH · WaterAid · WSSCC WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL · zariya

OF 336 MILLION GIRLS AND WOMEN EXPERIENCING MENSTRUATION IN INDIA, IT CAN BE ESTIMATED THAT APPROXIMATELY 121 MILLION GIRLS AND WOMEN ARE CURRENTLY USING LOCALLY OR COMMERCIALLY PRODUCED DISPOSABLE SANITARY NAPKINS[1]. THIS MEANS THAT 36 PERCENT OF THE MARKET IS CURRENTLY BEING REACHED THROUGH COMMERCIAL AND GOVERNMENT ENTITIES.

However, the organized sector is estimated to have a much lower penetration of approximately 15 percent[2]. The difference is presumably due to a significant increase in use of sanitary pads amongst the youth – 57.6 percent of girls in the age group of 15-24 are currently using locally or commercially produced sanitary pads[3].

This may be due to the focus on increasing adolescents' access to sanitary pads through various Government run schemes in schools and Angawadi centers. There is also a large and growing self-help group driven manufacturing industry, which sells machines for manufacturing disposable sanitary napkins. These locally-made sanitary napkins are also facilitated by schemes from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, National Rural Livelihoods Mission and various State Governments. However, there is little data about the extent to which these products are contributing to the overall market. Hence, further research is necessary to understand the detailed factors behind this increase in access to products.

Given the products currently available in the Indian market, the majority of products reaching urban and rural consumers are likely to be disposable, non-compostable sanitary pads. Private sector players including Procter & Gamble Health and Hygiene and Johnson & Johnson have historically invested in category development of products, supported with heavy advertising making them available through their pan India distribution networks. Government programs also typically procure these products owing to the cost advantage they offer because of being manufactured at scale.

Over 1 BILLION non compostable sanitary pads are making their way to urban sewerage systems, and landfills, rural fields and water bodies in India every month.

While this shows significant leaps in access to safe and hygienic products for MHM, it also raises the issue of sustainable waste management of these products, once disposed as well as the overall sustainability of the schemes. Using the interactive waste loading model developed by PATH, it is estimated that over 1 billion non compostable sanitary pads are making their way to urban sewerage systems, and landfills and rural fields and water bodies in India every month. Not only do these products take hundreds of years to decompose(LeBlanc, 2017), but because of the super absorbent polymers contained in commercial sanitary napkins, they absorb and retain thirty or

[1] Census 2011 population data and International Institute of Population Sciences (2017). National Family Health Survey – 4, 2015 – 2016: India Fact Sheet

[2] Census 2011 population data and industry reports for market share and revenue of the FMCG company with the largest market share in this segment

[3] International Institute of Population Sciences (2017). National Family Health Survey – 4, 2015 – 2016: India Fact Sheet

more times their weight in fluid.(Gupta, 2014)

Given this concern, various social enterprises and public health organizations have introduced menstrual hygiene product innovations that hope to tackle the environmental impact issue. These players have captured a miniscule share of the market within geographical clusters. Such innovations have minimal adverse impact on the environment in the long term and have potential to reach underserved communities. Unfortunately, currently their use is undermined by limited awareness and availability. This is due to cost of products being high owing to small scale and limited product awareness as they have not yet been introduced to a majority of women. The full life cycle costs of the majority of commercially available products has not been factored into decision-making. The collective challenge is to continue the work on increasing access to safe MH products while catalyzing the industry in a direction that offers more sustainable products at scale.

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE **PRODUCT LANDSCAPE**

Given the importance of considering environmental impact as a key factor in the current scenario, the overall product landscape has been segregated into three broad categories:

Menstrual hygiene products available in India defined by environmental impact:

Reusables

Products that can be **used multiple times**.

Life span of **1-10 years** resulting in minimal disposal impact.

Hygienic use **requires care and maintenance**.

One time cost maybe high but life cycle cost is usually lower than disposables.

Cloth pads

Hybrid pads (with non cloth barrier)

Menstrual Cups

Compostable Disposable

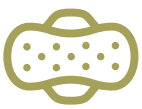
Disposable products with **high degree of compostable content.**

One time use and materials conducive to composting; **limited impact on disposal.**

Layers sealing aborbent layer should have high degree of compostability.

Limited players in India with only one product variant each.

Currently **higher cost** than non-compostable.



Sanitary pads - banana fibre or wood pulp

Tampons

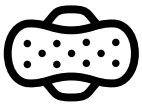
Non Compostable Disposable

Disposable products with **minimal compostability.**

One time use with compostable absorbent layer typically sealed within non-compostable layers.

Can take **250 years** to fully decompose.

Largest market share and reach in India with multiple players (MNCs, social enterprises, SHG units, Government network).



Cellulose based sanitary pads with plastic barriers or with plastic barriers and SAP

Cellulose based panty liners

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRO				
Product Attributes	**Reusable Products**			**Com**
	Cloth Pads w/ without insert	**Hybrid pads w/ non cloth barrier**	**Menstrual cups**	**Compostabl sanitary pac**
Price Range (Rs.)	**Rs. 85-400/pad (Average Rs. 250)**		**Rs. 400-3,000/cup (Average Rs. 1100)**	**Rs. 8/pad**
Per cycle cost to consumer	**Rs. 19** (assuming use for one year)		**Rs. 85** (assuming use for one year)	**Rs. 96**
ENVIRONMENTAL I				
Reusable ● **Disposable** ●	●	●	●	●
Compostable ●	●	◐	○	●
USER PREFEREN				
Low cost per purchase				
Basic needs	●	●	●	●
No maintenance				●
Intensive physical activity				
Requires learnt behaviours			●	
No chemicals/ plastics	●	●	●	
Low life cycle cost	●	●	●	
Policy				
Awareness	Low income clusters and high income			Low
Availability	Low income clusters and online			Limited, two manufactu
Manufacturer	Ecofemme, Goonj, Gramalaya, Shomota, Soch, Uger, Saafkins		She Cup, Silky Cup, Moon Cup, Luna Cup, VCup, ALX, Rustic art, stonesoup wings	Aakar (Anandi p Saathi Pads Sakhi (Vatsal Wager Hygie

DUCTS IN INDIA

	postable Products	Non-compostable Products		
le ds	Tampon with cardboard applicator	Cellulose based Sanitary pads w/plastic barriers	Cellulose based ultra thin pads w/ plastic barriers	Cellulose based panty liners
	Rs. 8/tampon and above	Rs.2-6.5/pad (Average Rs. 4)	Rs. 7-12/pad (Average Rs. 9)	Rs. 4.5/liner and above
	Rs. 96 and above	Rs. 48	Rs. 108	*Not for use for regular/ heavy flow*
MPACT				
	●	●	●	●
	●	◐	○ *Additional SAP*	◐
CES				
		●		
	●	●	●	●
	●	●	●	●
	●		●	●
	●		●	●
		• SWM guidelines require appropriate disposal considerations • Regular sanitary pads procured for Govt. distribution • BIS standards for materials, size		
	Low	Very high pan India	Very high in urban	Only urban high income
urers	Medical stores in few urban high income clusters, online	Pan India Rural low income limited till medical shops at district/block, Schools, AWW centers	Pan India urban and peri-urban, online	Medical stores in urban high income clusters, online
pads) s, ya), ne	Unicharm (Sofy), ob, Tampax, other imported brands	P&G (Whisper), J&J (Stayfree, Carefree), KCC (Kotex), Unicharm (Sofy), SHG based units like Vatsalya foundation, Sakhi retail etc.	P&G (Whisper), J&J (Stayfree), Saral Designs (Aisha), Wager Hygiene	J&J (Carefree), Unicharm (Sofy), other imported brands

PRODUCT CONSIDERATIONS ACROSS **THE MHM VALUE CHAIN**

It is important for market players (private sector and Government) operating at scale as well as consumers to be cognizant of a host of factors while choosing menstrual hygiene products

AWARENESS

- Myths and taboos
- Menstrual hygiene as a human right
- Need for safe, hygienic MH products
- Awareness of product and brand
- Point of sale, price
- How to use product
- Hygienic use of product - no overuse
- Hygienic cleaning & maintenance (for reusables)
- Health seeking behaviours

ACCESS

- Cost to the consumer
- Ease of access - physical reach
- Point of retail should allow for choice - multiple products, brands
- Can the woman/girl interact with retailer to get information on product
- Purchase decision-makers should be engaged
- Luxury taxes and duties

USE

- *Products should account for user consideration*
- Basic consumer needs - absorption, fluid retention, no wetness, no irritation
- Aspirational needs
- Societal barriers - vaginal insertion pre-marriage is discouraged
- Hygienic maintenance (for reusables)
- Access to private water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Raw materials and ability to degrade
- Frequency of disposal
- Quantum of waste generated
- Ease of segregation
- Community systems for waste management suitable for product
- Disposal bin in sanitation facilities
- Responsibility for collection and disposal of menstrual hygiene waste

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS
In India

Disposal and Treatment

3 MANAGEMENT OF **MENSTRUAL WASTE**

Calls to **Action**

- Management of menstrual waste to include the entire value chain including awareness, access, use, and waste management across urban and rural settings, and communities and institutions.
- Menstrual hygiene management programs to incorporate effects of disposal and treatment for the complete range of menstrual hygiene products (reusable, compostable and non-compostable disposable products) on users and on the environment.
- Clarity and agreement needed on classification of menstrual waste as solid waste or bio-medical waste across government departments and other stakeholders.
- Uniform standards and guidelines to be drafted and implemented for currently available menstrual waste management technologies, especially incinerators, composting pits, and waste to resource technologies
- Catalyse support for research and development of environmentally sound waste management

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INCREASED AWARENESS OF AND ACCESS TO SAFE AND HYGIENIC MENSTRUAL ABSORBENTS IS ESSENTIAL TO PROMOTE MENSTRUAL HYGIENE. THE MENSTRUAL PRODUCT LANDSCAPE IS RAPIDLY CHANGING IN INDIA, WITH MORE GIRLS AND WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE HAVING ACCESS TO AND USING DISPOSABLE SANITARY PADS THAN EVER BEFORE.

The government of India has been a global leader in it's concerted efforts to make sanitary pads available to young women across the country, and sanitary pad manufacturers are making a variety of products available in urban as well as rural settings. The latest National Family Health Survey 4 survey (2015-16) reflects such efforts with 57.6 percent of women aged 15-24 years reporting the current use of safe, hygienic products[1].

Increased availability and use of disposable sanitary pads underscores the need for appropriate and safe management of menstrual waste.

Two main concerns are central to the management of menstrual waste in India: first, many girls and women lack access to appropriate waste management options that may lead to the unhygienic use of safe absorbents, for instance, girls using a single pad for 12 hours[2].

Secondly, the paucity of disposal and treatment options may lead to the unsafe management of a mounting volume of menstrual waste.

If an estimated 121 million girls and women are currently using an average of eight disposable (non-compostable) sanitary pads a month, the waste load generated in India is estimated to be[3]:

- **1.021 BILLION**
  PADS DISPOSED MONTHLY
- **12.3 BILLION**
  PADS DISPOSED ANNUALLY
- **113,000 TONNES**
  OF MENSTRUAL WASTE ANNUALLY

Against this backdrop, two solutions currently exist. Incinerators have emerged as a favoured disposal and treatment option, particularly in schools. With impetus from the Swachh Bharat Mission, specifically the MHM Guidelines for Schools and the recently released gender guidelines by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, the use of incinerators is likely to grow. On the other hand, cities like Bangalore and Pune are implementing solid waste interventions to effectively segregate and identify menstrual waste during routine garbage collection. These two solutions meet a growing need

[1] International Institute for Population Sciences (2017). National Family Health Survey -4, 2015-2016: India Fact Sheet.
[2] Based on anecdotal evidence from MHM interventions in India
[3] These figures have been calculated based on the National Family Health Survey 4 data, market penetration data, and census data.

DISPOSAL SYSTEMS
what exists and at what scale?

TABLE 1: MENSTRUAL WASTE DISPOSAL PRACTICES AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN INDIA[4]

Disposal of menstrual absorbent	Total pooled proportion*	Rural pooled proportion*	Urban pooled proportion*	Slum pooled proportion*	Concerns with disposal method
Throw with routine waste/dustbin	45	28	70	51	Menstrual waste enters the solid waste stream and is subject to the same treatment as other solid waste – placed in landfills to disintegrate over hundreds of years
Thrown away in the open (open spaces, rivers, lakes, wells, roadside etc.)	23	28	15	30	Menstrual waste can contaminate water sources, clog drains
Burning (open)	17	15	23	-	Burning of commercially available pads at low temperatures can create odours and expose nearby population
Burying	25	33	12	-	Burial is not done effectively, and without appropriate composting, waste will take hundreds of years to degrade
In toilets (flushing down the toilet, throwing in pit latrine)	9	10	7	-	Used pads mixed with faecal sludge, complicates disposal of that sludge (in the case of septic tanks) or interferes with the production of usable manure (in the case of leach pits)

Source: van Eijk et al (2016). Menstrual Hygiene management among adolescent girls in India: a systematic review and meta-analysis

*Pooled proportion is a percentage that has been derived from data in studies included in the above systematic review.

to manage menstrual waste appropriately. However, challenges exist in terms of cost and variations in incinerator technologies and their effectiveness in emission reductions, scale of operations, product use and environmental impact (refer Table 2). What is clear is that the management of menstrual waste is lagging far behind the fast growing disposable product market. If sanitary pads are to be a safe, hygienic option for girls and women, safe management of menstrual waste must be part of programmatic and policy dialogues. The voices of girls and women, as well as of waste collectors need to be incorporated to ensure that appropriate solutions are implemented.

[4] van Eijk AM, Sivakami M, Thakkar MB, et al. Menstrual hygiene management among adolescent girls in India: a systematic review and metaanalysis. BMJ Open 2016;6: e010290. doi:10.1136/ bmjopen-2015-010290

TABLE 2: OPTIONS FOR MANAGE

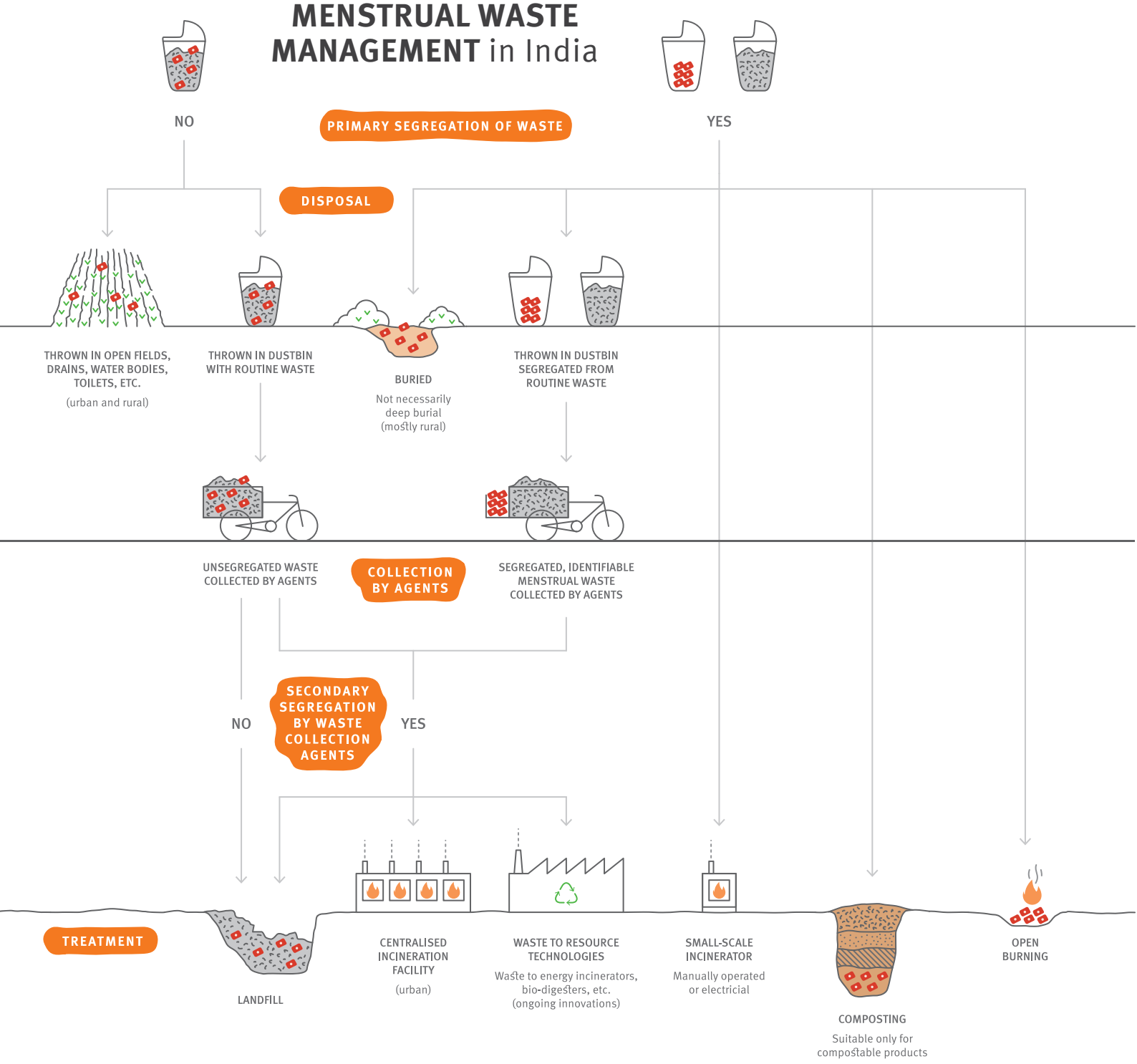
	Waste management option	Advantages	
	Clay pots (matka)	• Low-cost • Matkas easily available in neighbourhood markets • Easy to use, particularly in rural households • Use locally available fuel (e.g., paper, kerosene, wood)	•
	Low-cost, locally made incinerators • Ashudhhinashak incinerator • Manually operated, fire based incinerators (MHM Guidelines, Technical Guide 2)	• Low-cost • Easy to install in institutional settings: schools, community toilet complexes • Easy to use and maintain • Use locally available fuel (e.g., paper)	•
	Electric incinerators • Lakshmi Associates • E.R Ventures • Hindustan LifeCell • Wager Hygiene	• The more expensive incinerators have emission control features (e.g., filters) • Runs on electricity, no need for other fuels • Installed in institutional settings: schools • Some models have quality certifications	•
	High-temperature incinerators for bio-medical waste • Bio-medical waste treatment facilities	• Waste burned in large scale incinerators designed to deal with bio-medical waste • Waste burned together at a central incinerator facility typically located away from populated areas • Can incinerate all types of pads (those with high cellulose content, high moisture content, and those with SAP)	•
	Incinerators with waste to energy technology • RTI International • Shubhankar Gupta and colleagues in West Bengal	• Waste is incinerated to produce energy/electricity (i.e., productive use of waste) • Combustion happens in highly controlled environments carefully regulating temperature and pressure, potentially controlling for emissions even at low temperatures • Innovations in waste to energy incinerators for community and institutional use are underway. • Can incinerate all types of pads (those with high cellulose content and those with SAP)	•
	Segregation and identification of menstrual waste • Red Dot Campaign	• Used pads are wrapped individually and segregated at source (by the waste generator) to allow for safe collection by waste collectors. Campaigns such as Red Dot Campaign (Pune) call for the identification of menstrual waste with a red dot to alert waste pickers of the nature of waste. • Secondary segregation at waste collection centres further separate menstrual waste for final disposal or treatment (i.e., landfill or incineration at a central facility) • Option to deal with all types of pads (those with high cellulose content and those with SAP)	•
	Composting pits for biodegradable menstrual products	Composting pits can be made in communities (both urban and rural), and schools, encouraging for community based and community led composting	Co na
	Technologies that make productive use of waste/waste to resource technologies • Bio-digester technology for (compostable) menstrual waste • Recycling of menstrual waste • Vermiculture	Can potentially be a sustainable solution for compostable menstrual waste	•

MENT OF MENSTRUAL WASTE

Disadvantages	Critical considerations for use
No measures to control toxic emissions produced when burning plastics and chlorinated products used in bleaching cellulose. Toxic emissions potentially harmful to human health, especially when incinerator is stalled in populated areas or in households, schools Burns at low temperatures not exceeding 300 degrees Celsius and may not be efficient burners (residues may include ash, crystals, and even charred plastic). Depending on moisture content, may take considerable time to burn. More suitable for unbleached pads and those with high cellulose content, not those with SAP. Ash may not be safe to use for gardening purposes High variability in design- do not adhere to CPCB* standards for emissions Best suited for pads with high cellulose content, not those that have SAP**	• Type and composition of product disposed of • Setting for use and placement of incinerator in setting • Volume of product to be incinerated at one go • Minimum and maximum burning temperatures • Emission control measures, adherence to CBCP standards • Cost • Operations and maintenance
Dependent on electricity supply Costly Unclear whether they can efficiently burn pads with high moisture content and SAP Variation in the extent to which these incinerators adhere to CPCB* standards Require trained operator and routine operations and maintenance No standard quality certification	
Requires collection, storage, transportation of segregated menstrual waste to the central bio-medical waste treatment facility for incineration. Limited facilities exist in India at present Would necessitate classification of menstrual waste as bio-medical waste requiring treatment by all stakeholders	
Few waste to energy plants exist in the country, and those that do operate at a large scale at select locations Costly Waste to energy innovations applicable to community and institutional settings are still under development and will take time to pilot, test for efficiency and safety, and be available in the market	
Calls for waste generators to be committed to segregating waste, and for producers of disposable sanitary pads to provide covers for easy wrapping and disposal. Less focus on final disposal or effective treatment of segregated menstrual waste – once collected, majority of this waste still goes to a landfill and will take years to disintegrate. Concentrated in select metro cities, with little or no penetration in a majority of cities and rural areas.	• Effective source segregation of menstrual products • Collection and transportation of segregated waste to central facility • Secondary segregation • Safe and effective treatment of segregated waste
ompposting a feasible option only for compostable sanitary pads (e.g., made of atural fibres), not pads made of bleached cellulose, SAP, and plastic covering.	• Type and composition of product disposed of • Composting pits constructed according to specifications to facilitate composting
• Not much is known about these innovative methods, requires research and development • Likely dependent on the use of compostable pads	• Type and composition of product disposed of

CPCB: Central; Pollution Control Board **SAP: super absorbent polymers

MENSTRUAL WASTE MANAGEMENT in India



POLICY **CONSIDERATION**

- Classification of menstrual waste as solid waste, bio-medical waste has implications for how it can be disposed of, transported, contained and finally treated
- Prioritise waste management objective from amongst volume reduction, sterilisation, and changing the physical nature of waste
- Appropriate and safe disposal and treatment value chain needed for urban and rural settings, communities and institutions
- Menstrual waste disposal to consider use of non-biodegradable sanitary pads (increasingly available and preferred for use) as well as bio-degradable, compostable products
- Waste management recommendations to consider effects of disposal and treatment on user as well as the environment
- Test/pilot innovations that are potentially environmentally sound (e.g., waste to energy incinerators, treatment systems that can produce productive waste)

CALLS TO ACTION FOR MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT (1 of 2)

	What exists across the MHM value chain					Calls to Action
	Awareness	**Access**	**Use**	**Disposal**	**Treatment**	
Convergence across Ministries						The key Ministries noted here to form an inter-ministerial group to support implementation of coordinated, comprehensive MHM programs across the country
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	Menstrual Hygiene Scheme Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram					• Offer a wider product basket, including disposable sanitary pads, reusable products (cotton pads, menstrual cups), and compostable pads. • Expand availability and access to information, support structures and services across the MHM value chain in communities and institutional settings • Endorse implementation of MHM programs in schools and rural communities, as well as urban communities, and worksites.
Ministry of Women and Child Development	SABLA, through Anganwadi centers					
Ministry of Rural Development	National Rural Livelihood Mission					• Capacitate and enable self-help groups and small scale manufacturing units producing sanitary pads to follow standards • Support research and development of pads with high content of biodegradable or compostable elements.
Ministry of Human Resource Development	National Guidelines for MHM in schools					• Operationalize guidelines at the state and district level with corresponding budget allocations • Model convergence across government departments for MHM programming
Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation	SBM (Gramin) Guidelines on gender issues in sanitation			SBM (Gramin) Guidelines on gender issues in sanitation		• Raise awareness on MHM and break the silence and stigma around menstruation. • Enable safe management of menstruation for all women and girls inside and outside the home. • Offer safe and appropriate waste management solutions in addition to incinerators, specifying their suitability for various types of products, and their environmental impact • Encourage the operationalization of the MHM Guidelines in Schools • Disseminate and capacitate stakeholders at all levels on SBM gender guidelines and how they can be integrated into ongoing work, including collective behavior change, resource allocation, monitoring and verification of open defecation free status.

CALLS TO ACTION FOR MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT (2 of 2)

	What exists across the MHM value chain					Calls to Action
	Awareness	**Access**	**Use**	**Disposal**	**Treatment**	
Ministry of Environment and Forests				Solid Waste Management Guidelines 2016 • Manufacturer responsibility for product cover design • User responsibility for waste segregation • Bio-medical Waste Management guidelines • Specifications for transportation and incineration for bio-medical waste		• Communicate the categorization of menstrual waste to all relevant stakeholders • Specify standards for waste management, including their suitability for various types of products • Align categorization and positioning of menstrual waste across Government Ministries • Develop and disseminate IEC materials on menstrual waste management (from segregation, disposal, transportation, containment, and treatment)
Ministry of Urban Development				SBM (urban)		• Offer safe and appropriate waste management solutions in addition to incinerators, specifying their suitability for various types of products, and their environmental impact. • Development of protocols, standards and accreditation for incinerators
Bureau of Indian Standards		Standards only exist for disposable sanitary napkins				• Develop standards for a wider basket of menstrual hygiene products, including reusable products, disposable pads, and compostable pads. • Existing standards to go beyond guidance on product dimensions and materials to include environmental impact, user preferences, hygienic production and packaging, and accurate and comprehensive product information on packaging.