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Awareness about menstrual cup among physical education students in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry

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Abstract

Background: Menstrual cups have been around for many decades, but their usage is restricted in India due to sanitary pads' widespread use and lack of knowledge. They are environmentally beneficial and decrease solid waste since they can be reused. Education, awareness, and access to environmentally friendly practices are critically essential when it comes to managing menstrual waste appropriately. After it is resolved, everyone will find it simple to make an eco-friendly transition.

Methods: A questionnaire was distributed to 247 female undergraduate students studying physical education. The study's goal was to evaluate students' understanding of the menstrual cup.

Results: Among 247 physical education students, 90 (36%) of students didn't know what a menstrual cup was! 157 (64%) of students were aware of menstrual cup. Students' perceptions of the materials used to make cups, how long they took to empty, and the sterilisation process were unclear. None of the 247 pupils used a menstruation cup.

Conclusions: Due to their widespread usage and marketing, sanitary pads were utilized by every student in the survey. Not many people knew about the cup. Therefore, we draw the conclusion that menstruation cups should be promoted in India. Menstruation cups should be marketed to young people since they are more open to the idea of eco-friendly items. The government must conduct awareness campaigns in rural areas and persistently work to spread the word among all socioeconomic groups if it hopes to achieve the aim of a "pad free country" a reality in the near future.

Keywords: Awareness, physical education students, Menstrual cup

Introduction

During a menstrual period, a device known as a menstrual cup is inserted into the vagina. It functions by collecting menstrual fluid. Generally, they have a bell shape with a stem and are made of flexible, medical-grade silicone. The stem makes it easier to insert and remove the cup. The bell-like shape helps it create a seal against the vaginal walls right below the cervix. Depending on how heavy the flow is, the cup needs to be removed, emptied, cleaned, and reinserted (usually every 6-12 hours).

In order to empower young women to make educated decisions and to encourage improved menstrual hygiene habits, it is crucial to ascertain the degree of awareness of menstrual cups and their use among physical education students. Developing focused educational initiatives and policies that promote the use of sustainable menstruation products and improve the general wellbeing of active young women can be aided by such findings.

The need of encouraging menstruation cups in India

As reusable, unlike sanitary pads and tampons, menstrual cups significantly minimize the trash produced during menstrual cycles. This makes it more environmentally friendly. It's also more cost-effective because it may be utilized for five or more years. The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation released the MHM Guideline (December 2015) to assist all teenage girls and women. It states that when sanitary trash is collected door-to-door, it should be disposed of alongside dry waste and packed in leak-proof pouches that the manufacturer provides.

According to the State of India's Environment (SIE) 2019 Survey, 336 million Indian women are projected to be menstruating, and 121 million of them, or 36% of the total, use disposable sanitary napkins, according to the Menstrual Hygiene Alliance of India (MHAI). This implies that India must handle 12.3 billion throwaway sanitary napkins a year, the most of which are not composting or biodegradable. According to the Solid Waste Management

(SWM) Rules of 2016, biomedical waste, such as cotton, dressings, filthy plaster casts, lines, and bedding, should be incinerated, autoclaved, or microwaved to get rid of germs. All menstrual waste shall be transferred to one of the 215 large-scale, nationwide biomedical waste incinerators, according to the SWM Rules of 2016. However, this necessitates the large-scale, organized segregation, collection, and transportation of sanitary waste, including menstrual waste. To yet, no workable models for this have been developed or put into practice. Despite being suggested as a remedy, incineration is still not used today. Let's examine the realistic situation in India.

In India, there are still issues with the disposal of sanitary pads. Girls and women feel uncomfortable when someone witnesses them throwing away a pad. Unaware of the potential choking hazard, they end up flushing them down the toilet. When discarded in open areas, used sanitary pads wind up in landfills where they can harbour numerous harmful microorganisms and take hundreds of years to break down. Sanitary napkin plastic is not biodegradable and has detrimental effects on the environment in addition to being bad for human health. Waste pickers manually remove soiled napkins from recyclables, putting workers in contact with germs that cause tetanus and hepatitis as well as salmonella, E. Coli, HIV, and staphylococcus.

So why should one use a menstruation cup? As was previously said, in addition to being environmentally friendly, it is also reasonably priced and has a ten-year lifespan with no health risks. reduced risk of infections and vaginal discomfort. Sexual activity can be hassle-free since the cup stops the menstrual blood from passing through the vaginal canal by holding it at the cervix. incredibly portable and seldom needs to be replaced. doesn't smell either.

Need for the study

Why aren't menstruation cups more common if they have so many benefits over sanitary pads? Most likely as a result of ignorance and the menstrual cup's underwhelming promotion, particularly in a nation like India. In addition, India remains an unreasonable conservative nation. In contrast to a period pad, a menstrual cup is placed into the vagina. Therefore, it is believed that unmarried ladies who use cups may lose their virginity. The use-and-throw mentality is becoming more commonplace than realistic thinking since we are influenced by western society! Even well-educated people know very little about menstruation cups since sanitary pads are not widely promoted or used. Therefore, the study's goal was to gauge students' awareness of the Menstrual Cup and its use.

Methods and Procedures

Among 247 Physical Education studying students from Pondicherry & Tamil Nadu were selected for the study. The students age ranged from 17 to 25 were selected. The students studying BPES, BPED, MPED & PHD students/scholars from Pondicherry University Community College, Pondicherry University, Pondicherry, Bharathidasan University, Trichy and Mass College of Physical Education, Parangini, Mailam were included for the study. Boys were excluded from the study.

A questionnaire was given to each female after they were forced to gather in a classroom. There was fifteen minutes allotted to finish it.

Test and tools

Simple questions concerning the awareness of the menstrual cup were put in the questionnaire since we wanted to know how much the physical education students knew about it. "Yes or No" was the format of the question.

The questionnaire Composed with "Are you aware of menstrual cups?" and the response collected form the students.

Statistical analysis

Data was entered into Microsoft excel sheet and analysed into descriptive statistics like percentages.

Results

A questionnaire was distributed to 247 female students enrolled in physical education. The study's goal was to evaluate students' understanding of the menstrual cup.

Among 247 physical education students, 90 (36%) of the 247 students in physical education were unaware of the existence of a menstruation cup! Menstrual cups were known to 157 (64%) of the pupils. Students' perceptions of the materials used to make cups, how long they took to empty, and the sterilization process were unclear. None of the 247 pupils used a menstruation cup.

Discussion and Findings

Table 1: Awareness on menstrual cup

Are you aware of menstrual cup?	Yes	No
N=247	157 (64%)	90 (36%)

Almost 157 (64%) of the 247 students in the total were found to be aware of menstruation cups. Additionally, 90 students (36%) did not know what a menstrual cup was.

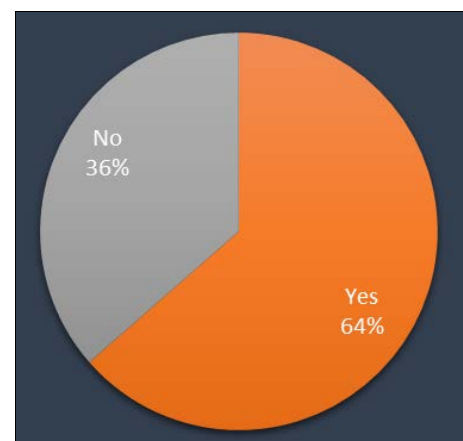


Fig 1: Awareness of Menstrual Cup

Conclusion

Due to their extensive use and advertising, sanitary pads were employed by all students in the survey. The benefits of menstrual cups compared to sanitary pads were not widely recognized. India, as a developing country with poor solid waste management, should advocate for the use of menstrual cups. Young people should be the primary focus for promoting menstrual cups, as they are generally more open to the idea of eco-friendly products. To assist advocates in achieving the vision of a "pad-free country" in the foreseeable future, the government should conduct awareness campaigns in rural areas and continuously

educate all socioeconomic groups.

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